

Recommendations to Address Red-Faced Research

Pretendians and Publications: The Problem and Solutions to Redface Research offers recommendations to provide a foundation for addressing pretendianism in academia, based on existing Indigenous identity verification policies at Canadian universities. While many institutions are still working through these issues, fewer than half have fully developed verification processes, highlighting the urgency of this issue.

01 Cultural Competency

Cultural competency is essential to addressing pretendianism. The phenomenon results from settler colonialism, and understanding its impact is crucial. Policies must avoid replicating violent and/or assimilationist strategies. And, so, policy discussions must be trauma-informed. Addressing pretendianism can be emotionally taxing, evoking histories of exclusion. McMaster University, for instance, does not cut off services to students unable to verify identity. Still, training on pretendians should be integrated into hiring practices, evaluation committees, and research ethics boards.

02 Community Engagement

Indigenous voices must shape identity fraud policies. The University of Saskatchewan's verification policy involved Elders, Knowledge Keepers, staff, and students. Universities should create spaces for Indigenous input without overburdening communities.

03 Navigating Verification Policies

Verification policies create additional labor for Indigenous people. Yet, misappropriation of Indigenous identity requires transparent procedures and Indigenous oversight. The University of Manitoba emphasizes Indigenous representation on committees to ensure fairness. Verification typically requires proof from a recognized Indigenous community. Some universities, like Waterloo, established Indigenous Verification Advisory Committees (IVAC) to review applications, ensuring representation from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. The University of Manitoba allows alternative authentication methods such as oral traditions.

04 Strategies for Confirming Indigenous Identity

Verifying Indigenous identity is complex. Universities such as Carleton and McGill require multiple forms of documentation: Status, Beneficiary, or Citizenship Documents (e.g., Indian Status Cards, Métis Citizenship, Inuit Enrollment Cards); Self-Declaration of Indigenous Identity linked to a specific community; Community Endorsement from an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, or community leader. Questionable advocacy groups cannot override Indigenous nations' rights to determine membership. Policies must uphold honesty while respecting Indigenous identity complexities shaped by colonial history.

- 05 Knowledge Contribution in Data Collection**
Indigenous identity fraud affects research integrity. Current self-identification methods are inadequate, often relying on simplistic checkboxes. A more rigorous approach includes specifying community and family ties. Grounding Indigenous identity in community relationships is central to data integrity. Publication results should include identity verification methodologies for transparency.
- 06 Representation in Publications**
Academic publications legitimize knowledge. Journals should establish Indigenous advisory groups and increase Indigenous representation in editorial boards and peer-review processes. Review mechanisms should document authors' Indigenous identity, community collaboration, and research protocols.
- 07 Policy Re-Evaluations**
Policies must be reviewed regularly. The Tri-Agency framework requires re-evaluation within two years of implementation. Policies must evolve to remain effective and responsive across the spectrum of red-faced research.
- 08 Policy Application and Layering**
Verification policies should extend beyond hiring to grants, promotions, and bursaries. They should apply at every level where Indigenous research is being undertaken, ensuring consistency and minimizing fraud.
- 09 Legal Implications**
Legal consultation ensures compliance with employment laws while addressing pretendianism. Policies must balance fraud prevention with protections for reconnecting Indigenous people. The University of Manitoba emphasizes fraud investigation, appeals, and repercussions.

From the Yellowhead Institute Special Report, *Pretendians and Publications: The Problem and Solutions to Redface Research* by Amy Shawanda and Gabriel Maracle.

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