

Balance Co-Lab

Micro-credential: Indigenous-led Impact Assessment



Background Information

Current Impact Assessments (IA) have major flaws, as they:

- Lack understanding of values, valued components (VCs), and indicators
- Offer inadequate guidance as to how VCs should be identified and prioritized
- Fail to account properly for the values and knowledge of local communities, and
- Fall short of national and international commitments to respect Indigenous Rights (K. Kwon et. Al, 2024).

To address these shortcomings, a new approach is emerging: Indigenous-led Impact Assessments. An Indigenous-led Impact Assessment is a community-led process that Indigenous communities and organizations can use to identify what matters to them. The process is based on the values, knowledge, and governance system of the local Indigenous community.

This is a deliberate, community-driven approach that centers Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, culture, and values along with western science to better address community goals and well-being regarding IAs and cumulative effects assessments (CEAs). This is a fundamental shift from reactive project-based IA to proactive community-based Indigenous-led IAs to support Indigenous control and self-determination at the project, territory, and regional scale.

Why are we creating these courses?

In the field of Indigenous-led Impact Assessment there are very few resources or courses available to those who wish to learn the skills necessary to support an assessment. These courses are meant to fill this need for Indigenous communities and organizations, and contractors and advisors who support their work. This course does not provide all the information you will need to create an Indigenous-led IA, but it gets you started on understanding the key concepts on relationship building, review of current Indigenous-led IA case studies, and learn from experts who have done this before.

Course Introduction	
Intended Learning Outcomes	Upon completion of this course, you will be able to... <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand the Canadian context for Indigenous Rights, and the different elements of Self-determination, Governance, and Ways of Knowing and Being, and what is required to uphold and protect them.2. Understand how Cumulative Impact Assessment processes support the fulfillment of rights, reconciliation, and interests of Indigenous Nations.3. Apply Indigenous Knowledge with Western Science in Impact Assessments.4. Utilize methods of Indigenous community-based research to identify Indigenous laws, governance practices, values, valued components for Impact

	<p>Assessments, and indicators of well-being for application in Impact Assessments systems.</p> <p>5. Understand what an Indigenous-led Impact Assessment is and support their development and implementation.</p>
<p>Overview of the Course</p>	<p><u>Pre-course learning</u> Set of readings / videos for learners to review and explore before the course begins to build foundational understanding</p> <p>Assignments throughout the course will take between 1 - 4 hours each to complete. The total time for the course will be approximately 40 hours to complete.</p> <p><u>Topic 1 History and Effects of Colonization</u> <u>Week 1: History and Effects of Colonization</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Video interview: Indigenous governance and environmental stewardship before colonization; the imposition of colonial systems; global history and ongoing impacts of colonization and links to economic system.</i> • <i>Readings</i> <p><u>Week 2: Health Impacts of Colonization</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Video interview: We focus on how colonization affects women in Aotearoa; displacement of Indigenous women from governance roles.</i> • <i>Readings</i> • Assignment #1 for Topic 1 content <p><u>Topic 2: Environmental Impact Assessment</u> <u>Week 3: Canada Impact Assessment Evolution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Video interview: Global and Canadian approaches to IA; the shift to Canada's Impact Assessment Act (2019); limitations of current approaches.</i> • <i>Readings</i> • Assignment #2 for Topic 2 content. <p><u>Topic 3: Cumulative Impact Assessment</u> <u>Week 4: Cumulative Impact Assessment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Video interview: What cumulative impacts are and how they interact; methods of CIA including valued component, effects-based, and stressor-based approaches; management strategies and what makes a meaningful CIA.</i> • <i>Readings</i> • Assignment #3 for Topic 3 content. <p><u>Topic 4: Indigenous-led Cumulative Impact Assessment</u> <u>Week 5: Introduction to Indigenous-led Approaches</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Video interview: What is Indigenous-led impact assessment? Discussions from Canada and Aotearoa.</i> • <i>Readings</i> <p><u>Week 6: Supporting Indigenous-led Approaches</u></p>

- *Video interview: How can settlers support Indigenous-led approaches?*
- *Readings*

Week 7: Actioning Indigenous-led Assessment Systems

- *Video interview: Exploring two Nation assessment systems in Canada that have been implemented.*
- *Readings*

Week 8: Community-based Engagement and Research Methods

- *Video interview: How can these research methodologies serve Indigenous peoples?*
- *Readings*
- *Assignment 4 due for Topic 4 content.*

Topic 5: Tools

Resources shared with students that can be utilized to further their work