

Lakehead University: Customs Clearance Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

This SOP outlines the process for handling customs clearance for imports at Lakehead University. It provides step-by-step instructions for university departments and vendors to ensure compliance with Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) regulations, minimizing delays and additional costs.

The Lakehead University Procurement Department is responsible for assisting campus purchasers and recipients with importing goods into Canada, ensuring compliance with government laws, regulations, and policies. The Procurement Department works closely with customs broker Thompson Ahern, who processes all import documentation per CBSA regulations, including tariff classifications and the calculation of duties and taxes.

1. **Import Process Overview:** An import includes any item(s) shipped from outside of Canada, whether purchased, donated, loaned, repaired, or gifted. All items must clear Customs, regardless of their value. Items must be valued “as if there were a sale,” even if no cost is involved. The following sections outline the required documentation and steps for both university departments and vendors.
2. **Guidelines for Document Submission**
 - **P-Card Purchases:** For all P-Card purchases, submission of the Lakehead University - Customs Clearance Form is mandatory.
 - **PO Purchases:** For purchases made through a Purchase Order (PO), the Customs Clearance Form is optional, as all relevant details will be accessible to the Procurement Department within the Purchase Requisition (PR) system.
 - **Commercial Invoices:** Vendors must ensure that commercial invoices include the Lakehead University PO/BPO number for accurate tracking and billing. Step-by-Step Process for Importing Goods

Step 1

University Department Shipment Preparation

- **P-Card Purchase:** For P-Card purchases, ensure the following information is included on the shipment's mailing label before placing an order:
 - Employee Name
 - Department Name, Building, and Office
 - Lakehead University <Campus Name>
 - Full Address and Postal Code
- **PO Purchase:** For purchases made through a Purchase Order (PO), confirm the following details are on the shipment's mailing label to ensure proper identification upon arrival:
 - Employee Name
 - Department Name, Building, and Office
 - Lakehead University <Campus Name>
 - Full Address and Postal Code
 - Lakehead Purchase Order / Blanket Purchase Order number

Step 2

Submission of Documents to the Procurement Department by the University Department

University departments must submit the following documents to the Lakehead University Procurement Department prior to the shipment's arrival:

1. Commercial Invoice provided by the vendor/exporter. It must include:
 - Basic and detailed description of goods.
 - Shipper's address.
 - Itemized value of goods.
 - Itemized country of origin for all items.
2. Certificate of Origin provided by the vendor/exporter.
 - Specifies where the goods were manufactured (not necessarily the country they were shipped from).
3. CUSMA/USMCA Certification Form (if applicable)
 - For goods originating from Canada, the U.S., or Mexico. This form allows duty exemption on applicable items.
 - The vendor or purchaser can complete this form, but it's recommended that the vendor completes it. Refer to APPENDIX B on this document for CUSMA certification form template.
 - A blanket certification, valid for one year, can be applied to repeat shipments from the same vendor.
4. Lakehead University Customs Clearance Request Form
 - Refer to APPENDIX A of this document for the form and this is to be filled by the requesting department and sent to the Procurement Department at procurement.fin@lakeheadu.ca
5. Handling Instructions (for perishable items)
 - Ensure that handling instructions, expiration details, and emergency contact information are included if the shipment involves perishable items.
 - Provide procurement.fin@lakeheadu.ca with the tracking information and ticket number for immediate clearances.

Submission of Documents from Vendor to Customs Broker

Vendors are responsible for submitting the following documents to Thompson Ahern for customs clearance:

1. Commercial Invoice provided by the vendor/exporter. It must contain:
 - Detailed item descriptions.
 - Shipper's contact information.
 - Lakehead PO/BPO if issued.
 - Country of origin and value of the goods.
2. Bill of Lading/Air Waybill
 - Required for shipment tracking and customs clearance.
3. Packing List (if applicable)
 - A list detailing the contents of each package in the shipment to ensure accuracy.
4. Certificate of Origin
 - Proves the manufacturing country of the goods, which helps determine duty charges.
5. CUSMA/USMCA Certification (if applicable)
 - If applicable, the vendor should provide a CUSMA/USMCA Certification Form for duty-free treatment of goods from Canada, the U.S., or Mexico.
6. Tracking Information
 - Vendors should provide the tracking number and notify prealerts@taco.ca to initiate customs clearance before shipment arrival.
7. Special Instructions for Perishable Items (if applicable)
 - Ensure proper labeling and handling instructions are followed for perishable goods to avoid damage and delays.

Step 3: Additional Considerations

- Perishable Items: Special instructions must be clearly marked on the package, and tracking information should be shared with procurement.fin@lakeheadu.ca for immediate clearance. Any additional costs for expedited handling or special trips by cross-border courier services will be charged to the department.
- Donations or Free-of-Cost Items: Donations or free items to the University require a letter from the donor/vendor (on official letterhead), stating:
 - A description of the goods.
 - Verification that the items are a donation.
 - A realistic value for customs purposes.
 - Country of manufacture.
- Customs Documentation (Imports from outside Canada/US/Mexico): For shipments outside Canada, the U.S., or Mexico, the vendor must provide all necessary documentation, such as the Bill of Lading.

Step 4: Costs and Billing and Miscellaneous

- All costs associated with the import process are billed to the University and will be charged to the department placing the order. These costs may include duties, GST, courier fees, warehouse fees and brokerage fees.
- Contact Information: For questions related to customs clearance or document submission, please contact the Lakehead University Procurement Department at procurement.fin@lakeheadu.ca
- Under no circumstances should personal items be shipped to the University's mailing addresses or in any way be associated with Lakehead University (including listing the University on shipping documents).

Appendix A: Lakehead University Customs Clearance Request Form

To be filled in by the requesting department and sent to the Procurement Department. Mandatory for P-Card purchases. Optional for Purchase Orders.

1. Requester Information

Department Name:

Contact Person:

Phone Number:

Email:

Date of Request:

2. Description of Goods

Item	Description of Goods	Quantity	Value (CAD)	Supplier Name	Country of Origin
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

3. Reason for Import/Export

4. Import/Export Information

Shipment Type:

Expected Arrival/Departure Date:

Mode of Transport (Air/Sea/Land):

Carrier Name (if known):

Tracking Number (if available):

Port of Entry/Exit (if known):

5. Financial Information

Budget Code (17 digits):

Budget Approved By:

Budget Amount (CAD):

Purchase Order Number (if available):

6. Special Handling Instructions or Additional Information

Please provide any additional instructions regarding the handling of the shipment, if needed

7. Declaration and Approval:

I hereby confirm that the above information is accurate, and the requested customs clearance is required for the university's operations. I understand that incomplete or incorrect information may result in delays.

Requester Signature:

Requester's Name:

Requester's Title: