



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Education and Support Policy

CONTENTS

1	PURPOSE.....	1
2	POLICY STATEMENT	1
3	PROCEDURE	2
	Guidelines	3
	Records management.....	3
4	DEFINITIONS	3
5	RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS	3
6	FEEDBACK.....	4
7	APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS.....	4

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy provides the Institute's commitments and objectives for developing and supporting participation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- 1.2 This policy has been developed, having regard to a number of contemporary reports. These include Australia's national and international obligations including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, endorsed by the Australian Government; the [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy](#); [Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2017 – 2020](#); The [Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies \(AIATSIS\) Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies](#) and the recommendations in the [Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People Final Report 2012](#).
- 1.3 This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Institute's [Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy](#), [Graduate Attributes](#).

2 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Institute will work to establish itself as a site of exemplary practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' education.

Principles

- 2.2 The following principles underpin the Institute's approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' learning and teaching:
 1. A whole-of-Institute and equitable approach across the student life-cycle;
 2. Accountability of all members of the Institute, senior staff and educators across Schools;
 3. Student retention, completion, growth and success at all levels of education;
 4. Respect and civility among and between staff and students;
 5. Opportunities for engaging in the governance, decision making, planning, delivery and evaluation of education and research; and
 6. Proactive support of students and staff through co-creation, collaboration, consultation and inclusion.

Commitments

- 2.3 The Institute makes the following commitments in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' education:
 1. Education:
 1. recognising the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to self-determination and engagement in decision making that impacts on their own lives and maintaining, controlling, protecting and developing their heritage and culture;
 2. acknowledging that a greater understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, knowledges, skills, values and contemporary issues will advance our communities;



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Education and Support Policy

3. embedding lead practice and collaboration with government and higher education providers to improve support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' education.
2. Transition to higher education:
 1. enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples access, grow and succeed in higher education;
 2. providing admission pathways to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
 3. building on partnerships with schools and vocational educational institutions to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to transition to higher education;
 4. working with professional associations and employers to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to undertake higher education.
3. Student success:
 1. providing socio-economic, cultural and academic support to achieve parity in the access, participation, retention, completion and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
4. Teaching and learning programs
 1. supporting and mentoring staff to ensure that learning environments, curricula, resources and assessments enable students to achieve the required Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduate attributes;
 2. building the capacity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to progress into teaching and learning positions within the Institute;
 3. recognising the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' identified roles in developing and contributing to teaching and learning programs;
 4. responding to issues that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' socio-economic and cultural priorities;
 5. ensuring the Institute has the ability to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as an education provider of choice.
5. Knowledge and research
 1. recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' systems of knowledge and worldviews are vital to shaping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' education and research;
 2. preserving, promoting, protecting and appropriately attributing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' knowledge.
6. Cultural and pastoral support
 1. providing dedicated staff and services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' experience at the Institute;
 2. ensuring the Institute's campuses and study locations are welcoming, respectful, supportive, non-discriminatory and free of harassment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff, and provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with study spaces where they feel culturally safe; and
 3. equipping all Institute members with critical skills to recognise and counter prejudice in all its forms.
7. Career transition
 1. supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' career choices and employment opportunities both within and beyond their communities;
 2. working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, government, industry, professional associations, employer groups, and other non-government organisations to meet workforce requirements and grow the number of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates;
 3. encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership of professional bodies; and
 4. encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to undertake post-graduate education.

3 PROCEDURE

- 3.1 All areas of the Institute are jointly responsible for implementing this policy and it will be reflected in the Institute's staff performance management system.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Education and Support Policy

3.2 The Institute endorses consultation in planning and implementing activities initiated in support of this policy.

Guidelines

- 3.3 This policy was developed having regard to the following:
1. Council of Australian Governments' Education Council, [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015-2016](#)
 2. Commonwealth Department of Education and Training, [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy](#)
 3. [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council \(ATSI HEAC\) Recommendations](#)
 4. Universities Australia, [National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities](#)
 5. [Closing the Gap, Australian National Report on Schooling, Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage](#)
 6. [United Nations, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2008](#)
 7. [Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Ethical Research: Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies](#)
- 3.4 The [NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977](#) makes racial discrimination and vilification unlawful in New South Wales. The Institute's [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) set out its commitments to providing an environment free from unlawful discrimination, unlawful harassment, vilification, victimisation, and unlawful adverse action and ensuring that employees and students are treated with integrity and respect.

Records management

- 3.5 Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy and procedure in a recognised Institute recordkeeping system.

4 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 The following definitions apply for the purpose of this policy:
- 4.1.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competence and capabilities means student and staff knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures, histories, contemporary realities and protocols, and proficiency to engage and work effectively in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' contexts and expectations (adapted from Universities Australia, [Guiding Principles for Developing Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities](#), October 2011).
 - 4.1.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples mean (as adopted by the Commonwealth of Australia for administrative purposes) any person who:
 - a. is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent;
 - b. identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; and
 - c. is accepted by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in which they live as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
 - 4.1.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Education means:
 - a. educational opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
 - 4.1.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' worldviews, histories, cultures, law and lore, values, beliefs, languages, lifestyles and roles;
 - 4.1.5 Parity means 'equality' or 'equivalence' of participation and outcomes in higher education between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other Australians;
 - 4.1.6 Student means any student admitted to undertake an Institute's course;
 - 4.1.7 Student Life-Cycle means the recurring Institute's processes and experiences for individuals from prospective student, applicant, student, alumni, and possible donor or parent of a future student; and
 - 4.1.8 Worldview means a set of beliefs and values that are honoured and held by a number of people.

5 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

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Page 3 of 4

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Education and Support Policy

Higher Education Standards Framework

6.2.1(f) which states:

educational policies and practices support participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and cultures.

6 FEEDBACK

6.1 Institute staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@pia.edu.au

7 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Administrator	Dean