

# Indigenous Policy

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Indigenous Policy (the policy) aligns UTS with the international principles detailed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and with national Indigenous higher education objectives.
- 1.2 To realise the commitments and sentiments in the [UTS Reconciliation Statement](#), UTS will:
  - set clear Indigenous education, research and employment objectives
  - establish principles that underpin the implementation of these objectives
  - embed Indigenous protocols and acts of cultural recognition into UTS's ceremonial life
  - establish governance structures, accountabilities, planning requirements and reporting processes to help UTS achieve the objectives under this policy.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all UTS staff and students. It should be read in conjunction with the [UTS Reconciliation Statement](#), the [Indigenous Education and Research Strategy 2019–2023](#) and the [Wingara Indigenous Employment Strategy 2019–2023](#).

## 3. Principles

- 3.1 UTS acknowledges Indigenous Australians as Australia's first peoples and the ongoing custodians of Country who occupy a unique place in Australian society. UTS takes pride in, identifies with, and celebrates Indigenous Australia.
- 3.2 UTS is committed to an environment for Indigenous people that is welcoming, respectful, non-discriminatory and free of harassment.
- 3.3 UTS is committed to Indigenous self-determination. Self-determination is the internationally recognised right of indigenous peoples to control their own affairs, maintain their culture and heritage, and determine their own future.

At UTS, self-determination means the right of Indigenous people to celebrate their culture and identity and to determine the direction of Indigenous education, research and employment (in line with UTS's rules, management and governance structures).

- 3.4 As part of its commitment to Indigenous self-determination, UTS will:
  - be accountable to the Indigenous community regarding its plans, activities and achievements
  - facilitate Indigenous participation in UTS decision-making, where practicable, by targeting places for qualified Indigenous people to join major and strategically

significant committees, advisory groups and working parties, including those that are not specifically Indigenous

- consult Indigenous people in planning and implementing initiatives in support of this policy.

3.5 Indigenous education, research and employment are priority areas of operation and are core UTS business.

3.6 This policy and its objectives must be considered when developing all UTS strategies, plans, programs and reviews.

## 4. Policy statements

### Implementation and resourcing

4.1 All areas of UTS share responsibility for implementing this policy and progressing its objectives. Performance measures are included in the university's staff performance management system.

4.2 UTS will provide additional financial resourcing to support Indigenous education, research and employment, where appropriate.

### Education and research

4.3 Indigenous education is for all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike. For Indigenous Australians, this means the opportunity to gain a tertiary education, pursue excellence and achieve full participation in Australian society. For non-Indigenous Australians, this means the opportunity, for the first time in generations, to gain a deeper understanding of our nation's Indigenous heritage and its uniqueness. It is fundamental to nation-building.

4.4 The UTS commitment to Indigenous education extends to providing our community of international students, scholars and staff with the opportunity to gain an understanding of Indigenous Australians.

4.5 UTS is committed to the achievement of educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians that are at least equal to those of other Australian students.

4.6 To contribute to building an inclusive Australian identity and raising the standard of professional service delivery to Indigenous Australians, UTS is embedding an Indigenous graduate attribute and/or Indigenous course intended learning outcome into every UTS course. All graduates will have knowledge of Indigenous Australians.

4.7 UTS is committed to ethical research principles founded on respect for Indigenous self-determination. Research that involves Indigenous people should have best practice ethical standards and consider human rights principles.

Indigenous people must be informed about any UTS-related research project that concerns them. This includes ensuring that:

- the project is fairly negotiated and with prior and informed consent
- Indigenous participants share an understanding of the aims and methods of the research
- Indigenous participants share the results of the work and are involved with decisions over how the results are used
- Indigenous participants maintain control over their knowledge, with Indigenous intellectual contributions being properly attributed in relevant research findings
- material collected during the course of the research is properly preserved and protected.

## **Employment**

- 4.8 UTS is committed to the recruitment, retention and career development of Indigenous people.
- 4.9 UTS will recognise Indigenous staff members' committee participation as an additional workload element and accommodate appropriately (owing to the relatively small numbers of Indigenous staff and the considerable committee responsibilities they have).
- 4.10 UTS is committed to the development of Indigenous professional competency among its non-Indigenous staff.

## **Objectives**

In developing and delivering Indigenous education, research and employment, UTS aims to:

- 4.11 achieve Indigenous undergraduate and postgraduate student enrolment rates that are at least reflective of state population parity
- 4.12 achieve Indigenous undergraduate and postgraduate progression and completion rates that are at least equal to those of other undergraduate and postgraduate students at UTS
- 4.13 ensure that all courses specifically offered to Indigenous students are of a high quality, appropriately supportive, academically rigorous and aligned to the expectations of students, the Indigenous community and potential employers
- 4.14 develop Indigenous competency among its students by creating an environment in which all UTS students have the opportunity to gain knowledge of Indigenous Australians
- 4.15 ensure that all UTS graduates have a professional capacity to work with and for Indigenous Australians
- 4.16 develop and promote Indigenous research across UTS
- 4.17 encourage the internationalisation of Indigenous education and research

- 4.18 encourage acts of Indigenous cultural affirmation and raise the status and visibility of Indigenous people and culture across UTS
- 4.19 achieve Indigenous staff employment rates that are at least reflective of state population parity, and Indigenous retention rates that are at least equal to those of UTS non-Indigenous staff
- 4.20 offer Indigenous staff professional development opportunities to enable them to fully realise their potential within their discipline or profession
- 4.21 offer non-Indigenous staff at all levels the opportunity to learn about Indigenous Australia, improve their cultural understanding, and undertake training to build their Indigenous professional competency.

## **Committees**

- 4.22 UTS has established two Vice-Chancellor's committees in recognition of the importance UTS places on Indigenous education, research and employment.

### **Vice-Chancellor's Indigenous Advisory Committee**

- 4.23 The [Vice-Chancellor's Indigenous Advisory Committee](#) (VCIAC) is the premier body in terms of the university's relationship with the external Indigenous community. The committee's members are Indigenous people from outside UTS, drawn from the Indigenous community, industry and/or the higher education sector.
- 4.24 UTS discourages the creation of multiple or alternative Indigenous advisory bodies or committees unless otherwise endorsed by the VCIAC.

### **Vice-Chancellor's Indigenous Strategies Committee**

- 4.25 The [Vice-Chancellor's Indigenous Strategies Committee](#) (VCISC) is UTS's senior strategic committee in relation to the progression of Indigenous education, research and employment. The committee's membership includes senior executive staff, directors, Indigenous professors and others who hold key academic and management positions at UTS.
- 4.26 VCISC monitors the development and progression of Indigenous objectives outlined in this policy and its two associated strategies, the [Indigenous Education and Research Strategy 2019–2023](#) and the [Wingara Indigenous Employment Strategy 2019–2023](#).
- 4.27 VCISC may establish sub-committees or working groups to provide specialist advice on any matter relating to the progression and monitoring of this policy's objectives.

## **Indigenous recognition and cultural protocols**

- 4.28 UTS will seek either a Welcome to Country or give an Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners at all significant UTS events where appropriate. Refer to the [Guiding Principles for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country \(PDF\)](#).
- 4.29 In affirming Indigenous culture and identity, and in recognising the wisdom, knowledge and special status of Elders within Indigenous communities, UTS will seek to engage with Indigenous Elders in the advancement of Indigenous education, research and employment at UTS.

- 4.30 UTS will permanently display the Australian National Flag and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags beside each other in a prominent location on the UTS campus. The flags will also be displayed in a prominent position at all significant UTS events.
- 4.31 All Indigenous students, with prior approval from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement) or nominee, are able to graduate wearing elements of academic dress that have Indigenous cultural relevance and that celebrate their Indigenous identity. This also applies to Indigenous staff forming part of the academic procession at graduation ceremonies.

## 5. Policy ownership and support

- 5.1 **Policy owner:** The **Provost** is responsible for the enforcement, compliance and review of this policy.
- 5.2 **Policy contact:** The **Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement)** is the primary source of leadership and advice to senior staff on the implementation of this policy and good governance of Indigenous education, research and employment across UTS.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement) is also responsible for implementing, facilitating and monitoring the progression of the [Indigenous Education and Research Strategy 2019–2023](#) and the [Wingara Indigenous Employment Strategy 2019–2023](#).

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement), or nominee, also approves requests from Indigenous students and staff to incorporate elements of Indigenous cultural relevance in academic dress worn at graduation ceremonies, including in the academic procession. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement) or nominee liaises with the Director, Student Administration Unit or nominee to ensure this is reflected in central graduations processes.

### 5.3 Others

**Academic Board** considers any matter referred to it by the VCISC that is relevant to its [functions and powers](#).

**Deans** are responsible for implementing this policy in their faculty in line with relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) and other performance measures. Deans must ensure that this policy and the progression of its objectives are specifically included in all faculty strategies, plans, programs and reviews.

Deans will report at least annually to VCISC on their implementation of this policy and its objectives, as well as the progression of Indigenous initiatives detailed in the [Indigenous Education and Research Strategy 2019–2023](#) and the [Wingara Indigenous Employment Strategy 2019–2023](#).

**Directors of non-faculty units** are responsible for implementing this policy in their unit in line with relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) and other performance measures. Directors must ensure that this policy and the progression of its objectives are specifically included in all unit strategies, plans, programs and reviews.

## Indigenous committees

The following committees have the responsibilities that are outlined in sections 4.23–4.27 of this policy and in their terms of reference:

- [Vice-Chancellor's Indigenous Advisory Committee](#)
- [Vice-Chancellor's Indigenous Strategies Committee](#)
- [Indigenous Research Committee](#)
- [Wingara Indigenous Employment Committee](#).

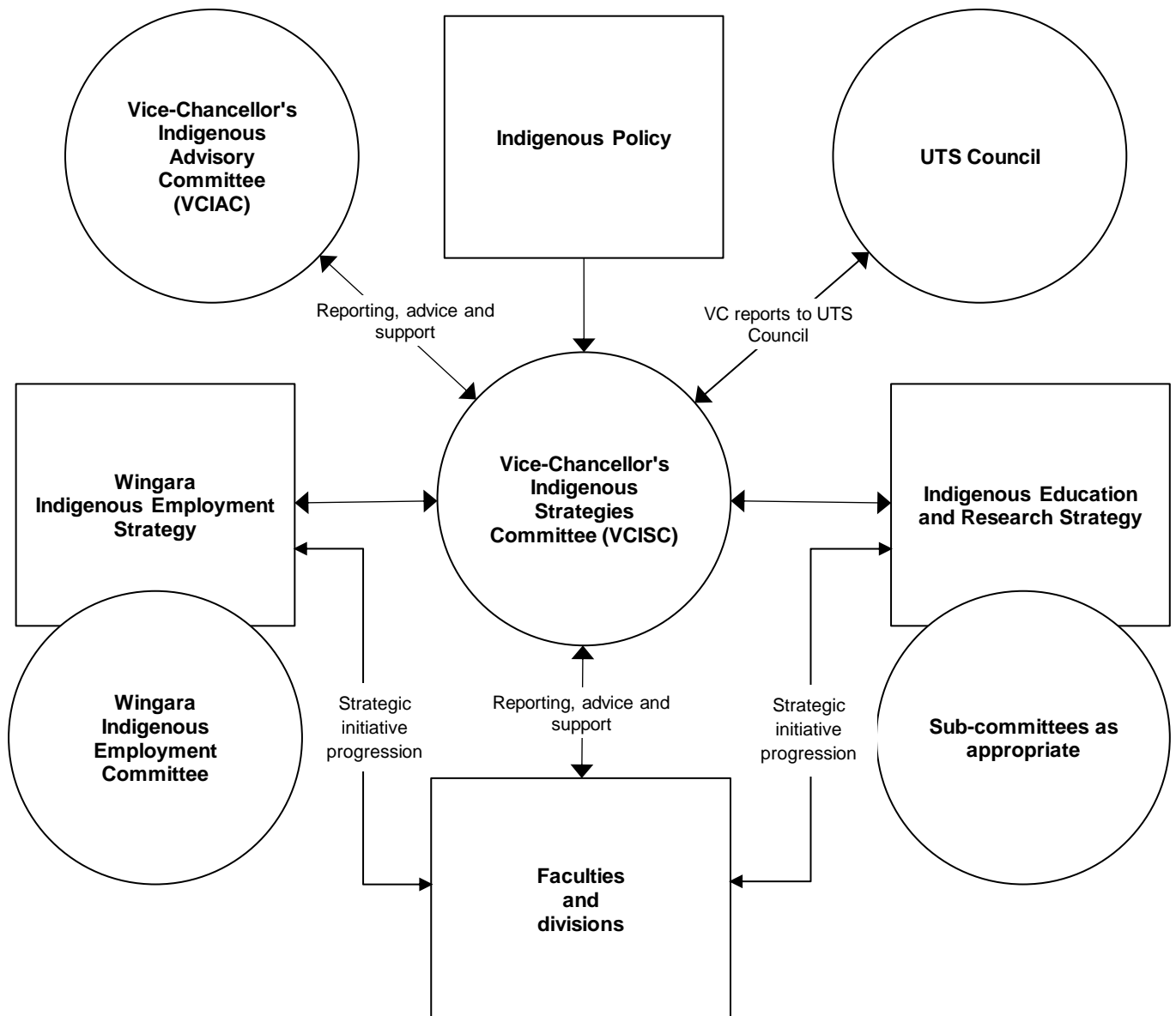
The **Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement)** provides cross-university leadership in UTS Indigenous initiatives.

**Supervisors and managers** (including deans and directors) must include relevant KPIs and performance measures in the workplans of academic and professional staff in areas relating to Indigenous access and support, teaching and learning, research, engagement, internationalisation and employment.

The **University Leadership Team** must ensure that relevant KPIs and other performance measures are included in the workplans of senior staff in areas relating to Indigenous access and support, teaching and learning, research, engagement, internationalisation and employment.

The **Vice-Chancellor** will broadly report to Council on matters relating to Indigenous education, research and employment.

## Indigenous governance diagram



## 6. Definitions

The following definitions apply for this policy. These are in addition to the definitions outlined in [Schedule 1](#), Student Rules.

An **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander** is defined<sup>1</sup> as any person who:

- is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent
- identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and
- is recognised by the Indigenous community in which they live as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

1. This definition is based on the definition of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander that has been adopted by the Australian Government for administrative purposes.

**Indigenous** means Indigenous people or a thing pertaining to Indigenous people.

‘Indigenous populations are composed of the existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them and, by conquest, settlement or other means, reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial situation...’ (United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, ref E/Cn.4./Sub.2/L.566,1982).

In this policy, with the exception of the reference to international indigenous peoples, the term Indigenous refers to the Indigenous people of Australia who are otherwise known as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

**Indigenous education** means the entire Indigenous higher education enterprise. This includes:

- equal opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous Australians
- the opportunity and processes for all Australians to gain knowledge about Indigenous Australians
- Indigenous research
- Indigenous cultural recognition
- Indigenous community engagement
- Indigenous internationalisation.

**Indigenous employment** means the employment of Indigenous Australians. Indigenous employment includes the employment of Indigenous people into Indigenous-identified positions as well as positions not specifically identified for Indigenous people. Indigenous employment includes not only the hiring of Indigenous staff but also their professional development and their physical, cultural and emotional wellbeing and safety.

**Indigenous research** means research about and with Indigenous Australians by either Indigenous or non-Indigenous researchers. The term also refers to research conducted by Indigenous researchers on topics that may or may not be Indigenous in nature. The development of Indigenous research includes:

- creating research opportunities for Indigenous students and staff
- encouraging research not only relating to Indigenous people but relevant to Indigenous people
- ensuring that research relating to Indigenous people is ethical.

## Approval information

Policy contact	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement)
Approval authority	Vice-Chancellor
Review date	Three years post approval
File number	UR15/214
Superseded documents	None



## Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
1	Vice-Chancellor	17/04/2019	23/05/2019	New policy.
1.1	Director, Governance Support Unit (GSU)	11/12/2014	29/01/2015	Changes (approved under Delegation 3.17) to implement 2014 Senior Executive restructure.
2	Academic Board, AB/16-2/31	30/03/2016	20/07/2016	Amendments made during the scheduled review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• renumbering, reorganisation and rewording of Policy principles and objectives</li> <li>• addition of new section to clarify Indigenous committee roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• clarification of roles and responsibilities of other positions/committees</li> <li>• updating references to Traditional Owners following closure of Kuring-gai campus</li> <li>• minor editorial amendments.</li> </ul>
2.1	Director, Governance Support Unit	30/05/2017	30/05/2017	Changes approved under Delegation 3.17 to implement 2017 change of name to Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research.
2.2	Academic Board, AB/17-5/102	15/11/2017	15/11/2017	Minor amendments to reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the creation of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement) position and its responsibility for cross-University leadership</li> <li>• the transfer of Indigenous employment responsibilities from the Director, Equity and Diversity Unit to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement)</li> <li>• the creation of the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous</li> </ul>

				Leadership and Engagement) as a new organisational unit, and to clarify the Office's role as distinct from that of Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research.
3	Academic Board, AB/19-3/61	31/07/2019	28/10/2019	<p>Amendments made during scheduled review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• align with new policy template</li> <li>• policy title change (as policy covers more than Indigenous education and employment)</li> <li>• streamline and restructure policy principles and statements</li> <li>• include a statement on what Indigenous education means at UTS</li> <li>• updating of deans' reporting responsibilities</li> <li>• clarification of approval authority for Indigenous students incorporating elements of Indigenous cultural relevance into academic dress for graduations (and extension of this option to Indigenous staff).</li> </ul>

## Acknowledgements

### Australian Government Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

The [Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People](#) proposes that universities, governments, professional bodies, the business sector and communities work together to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through higher education.

### United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Adopted by General Assembly Resolution 61/295 on 13 September 2007.

The [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) is a set of principles describing equality, non-discrimination, partnership, consultation and cooperation between Indigenous peoples and governments and their institutions. This declaration was officially endorsed by the Australian Government on 3 April 2009.

## **Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy**

The [Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2017–2020](#) articulates commitments by Australian universities to advance Indigenous participation and success in higher education.

## **Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies**

The principles contained in the [Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies](#) by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) are founded on respect for Indigenous peoples' inherent right to self-determination, and to control and maintain their culture and heritage. AIATSIS considers these principles to not only be a matter of ethical research practice but of human rights.

## **Ethical guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples**

The National Health and Medical Research Council has produced [ethical guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#) to provide relevant advice about ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

## **Protocols for working with Indigenous artists**

The Australia Council for the Arts has produced [protocols for working with Indigenous artists](#) that set out the legal, ethical and moral considerations for the use of Indigenous material. The protocol guides endorse the rights of Indigenous people to own and control their cultural heritage. The five guides relate to media arts, music, performing arts, visual arts and writing.

## **References**

[Guiding Principles for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country \(PDF\)](#)

[Indigenous Education and Research Strategy 2019–2023](#)

[UTS Reconciliation Statement](#)

[UTS Wingara Indigenous Employment Strategy 2019–2023](#)

Relevant [UTS Enterprise Agreements](#) for sections relating to Indigenous Australian employment and professional development.