



Indigenous Governance Policy

(Note: In respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Curtin University's preference when referring collectively to Indigenous Australians is to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, however other acceptable terms are used throughout this policy.)

1. STRATEGIC PLAN THEME AND COMPLIANCE OBLIGATION SUPPORTED

Strategic Plan Theme: [People and Culture](#)

2. PURPOSE

To acknowledge the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the nation's First Peoples and to affirm Indigenous governance as integral to the University's governance framework.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1. The University acknowledges that :

- (a) the Bentley campus, near the meeting of the Canning and Swan rivers, is of particular significance to the Nyungar people of Western Australia;
- (b) other Western Australian University locations are situated in lands of cultural importance and Aboriginal tradition;
- (c) one effect of the settlement of Australia in the past two centuries has been the dispossession of Indigenous Australians, and
- (d) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders continue to face social and economic disadvantage, accentuated by misunderstanding, prejudice and racism.

3.2. To ensure the University works inclusively with its Indigenous community in ways that respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and traditions, the University will include Indigenous ways of working in University decision making structures, processes and rules through which:

- (a) employment and education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are determined;
- (b) engagement with the external community in relation to Indigenous matters is entered into; and
- (c) development of its physical environment is undertaken.

3.3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will have direct and active involvement in decisions about:

- (a) the University's core activities of learning and student experience, and research;
- (b) the principles for enhancing the access, participation, progression and graduation of Indigenous Australians in academic award programs;
- (c) the provision of employment and training of Indigenous Australians in academic and professional positions throughout the University; and
- (d) protocols for engagement with the community in relation to Indigenous matters.

3.4. Indigenous governance will be evidenced in the University's planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies and plans addressing:

- 3.4.1. **Indigenous staff employment and development opportunities:** to increase the level of employment of Indigenous people in the University, in line with the demographics of Indigenous representation in the Western Australian community.
- 3.4.2. **Indigenous cultural awareness and cultural competencies for staff and students:** to enhance staff and student knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australians and their culture as a means of promoting reconciliation and social justice; the benefits of a culturally inclusive curriculum; active support of diversity, and an informed respect for Indigenous peoples.

- 3.4.3. **Indigenous student access and retention services:** to improve the educational achievement levels, access, retention, progression and graduation rates of Indigenous students by offering appropriate support services.
- 3.4.4. **Indigenous Australian studies:** to recognise Indigenous Australian Studies as a distinct discipline to be incorporated into the range of units and courses offered by the University.
- 3.4.5. **Research of benefit to, and involving, Indigenous people and communities:** to promote and support research that is of benefit to Indigenous communities, and which increases the Indigenous research capacity of Indigenous Australians.
- 3.5. The Indigenous Governance structure through which this policy will be implemented is shown at Appendix A. The respective roles and responsibilities of the governing bodies are:
- 3.5.1. **Curtin University Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee (CUATSIAC)**
- As per [its constitution](#) the Curtin University Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee (CUATSIAC) will assist the Vice-Chancellor in developing appropriate ways of responding effectively and sensitively to the educational needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people.
- 3.5.2. **Curtin Indigenous Policy Committee (CIPC)**
- As per [its constitution](#) the Curtin Indigenous Policy Committee (CIPC) will advise the Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Executive Team on strategies for implementation of this policy by way of its meeting minutes and annual reporting.
- Faculties and non-faculty areas of the University will contribute to strategies to achieve the policy objectives stated in section 3.4, and report outcomes for inclusion in the annual reporting of the CIPC.
- 3.5.3. **The Indigenous Leadership Group (ILG)**
- As per [its terms of reference](#) the Indigenous Leadership Group will provide collaborative guidance to the University on:
- (a) addressing Indigenous perspectives to enhance the position of Indigenous Australians in Australian society;
 - (b) enhancing relationships with Indigenous Australian communities;
 - (c) understanding and respecting Indigenous Australian cultures;
 - (d) developing and implementing strategies and programs to increase the participation and retention of Indigenous students and staff in higher education;
 - (e) developing Indigenous research and researchers;
 - (f) providing and promoting relevant information to Indigenous communities in cooperation with relevant individuals, Indigenous-controlled organisations, and non-Government and Government agencies; and
 - (g) ensuring Indigenous ethical perspectives and cultural sensitivity are appropriately reflected in relevant policies and procedures.
- 3.5.4. **The Centre for Aboriginal Studies (CAS)**
- The Centre for Aboriginal Studies (CAS) holds for Aboriginal people a sense of belonging, autonomy and strength and has significant standing as the University's cultural hub with regard to the education and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and Indigenous research. The CAS will:
- (a) actively contribute to the University's core activities of teaching and learning, and research and development through CAS courses, CAS-sponsored research, and through collaboration with the Faculties, Curtin Learning and Teaching, and Research Office at Curtin;
 - (b) encourage the development of Indigenous studies in all academic areas, including the development of double degrees, majors and other partnerships in teaching and learning;

- (c) advise the University on ethical perspectives impacting on Indigenous education or research; and
- (d) contribute to the variety of support services available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in University enabling programs and academic award courses.

3.5.5 The Elder in Residence (EiR)

Curtin's Elder in Residence (EiR) is a senior leadership position occupied by a Nyungar Elder, which leads the development and implementation of Indigenous Cultural Competency at Curtin. The EiR also contributes to undergraduate and post-graduate teaching, learning and research, and provides advice and leadership in Aboriginal studies, education, research and innovation.

4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION, COMPLIANCE MONITORING, MEASURING AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

- 4.1. The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for ensuring that decision making about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is aligned with this policy.
- 4.2. The Indigenous Governance bodies are responsible as advisory committees to the Vice-Chancellor for matters as set out in their respective constitutions.
- 4.3. Executive Managers are responsible for the implementation and compliance monitoring of this policy across their portfolios.

5. SCOPE OF POLICY

All staff, students and members of the University community and visitors.

6. DEFINITIONS

(Note: Commonly defined terms are located in the [Curtin Common Definitions](#). Any defined terms below are specific to this document)

Indigenous governance

The inclusion of Indigenous ways of working in University decision making structures, processes and rules.

Indigenous ways of working

The ways by which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples use important relationships, networks, values, cultural laws and traditions, beliefs and behaviours for decisions and getting things done together.

7. SUPPORTING PROCEDURES

Nil

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS/LINKS

[Curtin University Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee Constitution](#)

[Curtin Indigenous Policy Committee Constitution](#)

[Indigenous Leadership Group Terms of Reference](#)

[Reconciliation Action Plan](#)

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Approval Authority	Senior Executive Team
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REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved/ Amended/ Rescinded	Date	Committee / Board / Executive Manager	Approval / Resolution Number	Key Changes and Notes
New	Approved	25/07/2006	Planning and Management Committee	PMC 59/06	Document No 00757/06 as amended
	Administratively Updated	20/03/2008	Director, Legal and Compliance Services		Reformatted and Amended to Reflect Organisational Chart
	Administratively Updated	19/08/2009	Director, Legal and Compliance Services		Formally Reviewed, Minor Text Amendment
	Administratively Updated	17/06/2010	Director, Legal and Compliance Services		Amended to Reflect Organisational Change
	Administratively Updated	04/03/2014	Director, Legal and Compliance Services		Title change from Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic to Provost and Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor
	Administratively Updated	06/10/2015	Director, Legal and Compliance Services	EC 76/15	Executive Manager Title Changes
	Approved	21/09/2017	Planning and Management Committee	PMC 67/17	Attachment C to Item 15 (includes title change)

APPENDIX A: CURTIN INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE MODEL

