

Flinders University Indigenous Engagement Framework (FIEF)

Recitals

In 2009 the Government of Australia declared its support for the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Flinders University endorses the declaration and in particular Article 15 (1) recognising that Indigenous Peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations. The University strives to ensure that these rights are appropriately reflected in education and public information.

Flinders University recognises that Indigenous people are the descendants of the first people of the lands and waters of Australia and have occupied, enjoyed, utilised and managed these lands and waters since time immemorial. The University acknowledges the continuation of their cultures upon their traditional lands and waters and their right to pursue economic, social and cultural development. The University also acknowledges and respects the rights, interests and obligation of Indigenous people to speak and care for their lands and waters in accordance with their practices, customs, beliefs and traditions.

Flinders University recognises Indigenous people's rights to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue their development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations.

As a publicly funded institution Flinders University recognises its role and responsibility to promote and facilitate a respectful and collaborative partnership approach to Indigenous economic, social and cultural development.

Flinders University recognises that Indigenous engagement is a whole of university responsibility and is core to the University's long standing commitment to enhancing educational opportunities for all and to its being a leader within the communities in which it is located.

Flinders University, in partnership with Indigenous people, shall consider the role and interests of Indigenous peoples in access, participation and success in higher education, teaching and learning, research, employment and governance.

Flinders University values a culturally aware and safe environment. The University supports the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation's vision of:

A united Australia which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice and equity for all.

Introduction

Flinders University has committed itself, through its Strategic Plan (Inspiring Flinders Future: Strategic Plan 2010 – 2014), to a vision of cultural inclusivity for Indigenous peoples. Enhancing the prominence and status of Indigenous cultures, knowledge and studies, and increasing the participation of, and opportunities for, Indigenous staff and students is a core part of this vision.

As a University engaged with its communities, Flinders is working towards building and strengthening its connections within southern Adelaide, regional South Australia and western Victoria and the Northern Territory. These areas have significant Indigenous populations and Flinders acknowledges that the University and its staff must have a conscious commitment to working collaboratively with Indigenous communities to ensure that the University is an inclusive, responsive and welcoming place for Indigenous peoples, and that it delivers innovative, quality, community-engaged research and teaching programs.

The University has made a commitment through Key Strategy 1 of its Strategic Plan 2010 – 2014 and in the complementary refreshed Strategic Plan 2012-2016 to implement the Flinders Indigenous Engagement Framework (FIEF) to meet these objectives. The involvement of University staff, at all levels, is integral to this goal and there are seven key objectives where this can be achieved:

1. Valuing our People (KS7): The University aims to increase the diversity in the workforce through the employment of Indigenous peoples in both academic and professional staff positions and to increase the participation of, and opportunities for, Indigenous staff.
2. Enhancing Educational Opportunities (KS2): The University is at the forefront in developing alternative entry pathways that support the complementary national objective of facilitating university participation rates amongst less advantaged social groups, including Indigenous Australians. The University has set a target of doubling the number of Indigenous students enrolled from 119 (2006 data).
3. Enhancing the Student Experience (KS3). The University is committed to enhancing opportunities for effective student participation and advocacy, including Indigenous students, by providing culturally appropriate services that focus on learning, health and welfare and graduate opportunities.
4. Research: The University aims to ensure that research that involves or impacts on Indigenous peoples is culturally aware and respectful, and is conducted in a culturally competent way in partnership with Indigenous peoples and communities. The University also seeks to increase the level of high quality research activity in Indigenous research, to foster and promote further inter-disciplinary Indigenous research collaborations and to support an increase in the number of Indigenous research higher degree students.
5. Curriculum, Teaching and Learning: The University is committed to integrating Indigenous Australian perspectives in its courses where they are relevant to the curriculum and course content. In its course development, teaching and other educational activities, it will endeavour to promote greater understanding between Indigenous Australian peoples and the broader Australian community.
6. Building Supportive Communities (KS1): The University is committed to establishing and maintaining relationships with Indigenous Nations in order to support the educational participation of Indigenous people. The University recognises that real improvements in Indigenous wellbeing, social justice, reconciliation and 'closing the gap' requires long-term collaborations between Indigenous nations, universities, government, research organisations and industry.
7. University Governance (KS2): The University seeks to have Indigenous people, staff and students actively involved in University governance and management.

Why is an Indigenous Engagement Framework needed?

Indigenous people do not come empty handed to Australia's higher education system but bring significant strengths, both in knowledge capital and human capital that enriches higher education in Australia. The recognition of Indigenous peoples' contribution as well as needs, is critical to full Indigenous engagement in higher education (IHEAC submission, p2)

In comparison to the broader Australian community, Indigenous Australians experience disproportionate and unacceptable levels of disadvantage in living standards, life expectancy, education, health and employment. The Flinders Indigenous Engagement Framework is needed to provide staff with a central point to become aware of and implement the University's commitment to improving the lives and well-being of Indigenous Australians and 'closing the gap'.

Flinders acknowledges that it has a responsibility to create an environment that is culturally inclusive in all aspects of its business. Strategies outlined in the FIEF will directly contribute to increasing the level of Indigenous participation, retention and success in higher education, contributing to higher levels of economic and social participation for Indigenous peoples and their communities.

The recommendations and strategies outlined in the recently released Behrendt Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, the Universities Australia Cultural Competency Framework and the National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy are all congruent with the objectives of the FIEF.

Sources for the Framework

The Framework draws from a number of internal and external documents. Whilst its implementation forms part of Key Strategy 1 of the Flinders University's Strategic Plan 2010 – 2014 it is also supported by a number of key national strategies and internal Flinders policy. The FIEF builds on the following:

National

- The Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People Final Report July 2012, commissioned by the Federal Government
- MCEETYA, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy
- Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy (NIHEW)
- Universities Australia Guiding Principles for Developing Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities Project October 2011
- Review of Higher Education Final Report, December 2008

Flinders

- Inspiring Flinders Future: Strategic Plan 2010-2014
- Flinders Future Focus: Strategic Plan 2012-2016
- Flinders University 2013 Compact with the Commonwealth Government
- Graduate Qualities
- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Cultural Diversity and Inclusive Practice Statement
- Ethical Guidelines for Social and Behavioural Research
- Indigenous Admissions Scheme and Indigenous Entry Scheme (BMBS)
- C2R2 Guidelines
- Teaching and Learning Plan

The Framework

The FIEF is based on three underlying principles:

1. Recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples, knowledges and cultures;
2. Integrated, university wide strategies, policies and programs; and
3. High expectations with clear goals.

FIEF is a strategic working document that aims to assist in focusing priorities and activities. The Framework is based on six key goals which are set out in the matrix which follows. The goals are derived from Key Strategies 1, 2, 3 and 7 of the University's Strategic Plan. Detailed strategies for implementing the goals of the Framework have not been specified as Faculties, Schools, Departments and administrative divisions and units are encouraged to develop implementation strategies that are relevant to their areas to operationalise the FIEF. Reporting of best practice is encouraged and the Framework will be amended and modified where the need has been identified.

Implementation and Accountability

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Dean of Indigenous Strategy and Engagement, through the DVC(A), are responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for overseeing the implementation of the Flinders Indigenous Engagement Framework. Where appropriate they will work with key members of staff, as outlined in the matrix, to complete each element of the plan within the given timeframe.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) in conjunction with the Dean of Indigenous Strategy and Engagement will monitor progress in the implementation of the Indigenous Engagement framework and report on it to Academic Senate. The implementation of the Framework and the achievement of key specific goals will be integrated with the University's Operational Plan.

Goals for the Flinders Indigenous Engagement Framework

Key Actions	Responsibilities	Timeline	Indicators of Success
Goal 1: Indigenous Employment			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the diversity of the Flinders workforce through the employment, retention and career progression of Indigenous people 			
<p>That the number of Indigenous people employed, and retained, in both academic and professional staff positions is increased through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a range of entry-level positions, via cadetships, traineeships, student employment, graduate development and work experience programs Providing career opportunities for existing staff through academic promotion and preferential lateral transfer where qualified Developing training and mentoring programs that assists Indigenous staff to achieve academic promotion 	<p>Vice-Chancellor ESIA Committee DISE Executive Deans Director: HR</p>	<p>2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of Indigenous staff (from 40 in 2012 to 60 in 2016). Career progression for Indigenous staff is on a par with non-Indigenous staff

Key Actions	Responsibilities	Timeline	Indicators of Success
Goal 2: Indigenous Education			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the enrolment, participation, retention and success of Indigenous students 			
<p>That the enrolment, participation, retention and success of Indigenous students are increased by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with Indigenous communities and key stakeholders to lift aspirations for Indigenous student participation in higher education Ensuring that alternative entry pathways are responsive to Indigenous people's needs Providing academic and pastoral support for Indigenous students Ensuring that the university environment is supportive, culturally competent and safe, and free from discrimination Consolidation of the University's Indigenous engagement with Charles Darwin University and in the Northern Territory Medical Program 	<p>Vice-Chancellor Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) DISE Director, Yunggoendi Director, Student Recruitment Director, Marketing and Communications Executive Deans All staff Dean, School of Medicine</p>	<p>2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of Indigenous students enrolled at the University reaches the 2016 targets (as set in the 2013 Compact) of 115 Indigenous student commencers and 182 Indigenous students overall. The participation, retention and success rates of Indigenous students are improved towards parity with non-Indigenous students, with the Indigenous student attrition rate reaching the 2016 target (as set in the 2013 Compact) of 16%. Alternative entry pathways are accessed by Indigenous students The University's Indigenous support centres and identified sites of cultural significance/safety continue to be appropriately funded and managed Indigenous mentors are identified in each Faculty's Schools and/or Department/Discipline Good practice in Indigenous cultural competency is identified, supported and implemented Successful outcomes for Indigenous students undertaking the NT Medical Program

Key Actions	Responsibilities	Timeline	Indicators of Success
Goal 3: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To integrate Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into the curriculum 			
<p>That Indigenous perspectives and knowledge are embedded where relevant into course content and expected graduate learning outcomes through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising the relevance of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge when reviewing topic and course content Ensuring that graduates have the knowledge and skills to interact in a culturally competent way with Indigenous peoples and communities. 	<p>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) DISE Director, Yunggoendi Chairs, Faculty Learning and Teaching Cttees Topic and Course Coordinators</p>	<p>2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New and revised course and topic proposal forms to be amended to include an Indigenous perspective checklist Consideration given to the recognition of Indigenous cultural competency within a revised statement of Graduate Qualities
Goal 4: Research			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the University undertakes research that is culturally safe, respectful and engages Indigenous peoples and communities 			
<p>That Flinders University actively engages in research with, and for the benefit of, Indigenous peoples and communities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing relationships with Indigenous Nations with the goal of undertaking collaborative research Ensuring that research that involves or impacts on Indigenous peoples is culturally safe, respectful and sensitive Increasing the number of Indigenous research postgraduate students 	<p>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) DISE Dean, Graduate Research Chair, Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee Director, Research Services</p>	<p>2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous-focused research is undertaken collaboratively with Indigenous partners and contributes positively to the objectives of Indigenous nations and the national goals of social justice, reconciliation and equity All research proposals that involve or impact on Indigenous peoples have undergone rigorous ethical assessment by SBREC The number of Indigenous HDR students enrolled at the University reaches the 2016 targets (as set in the 2013 Compact) of 16.

Key Actions	Responsibilities	Timeline	Indicators of Success
Goal 5: Governance			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that Indigenous people are actively engaged in University governance and management 			
<p>That Indigenous staff, students and alumni are actively engaged in University governance, management and key events through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appointment of Indigenous staff to senior leadership and management positions Indigenous participation in University governing bodies, boards, committees and alumni events 	<p>Vice-Chancellor Vice-President (Strategy and Planning) DISE</p>	<p>2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous staff are appointed to senior positions and committees commensurate with their experience