

# Indigenous Australian Employment Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose and Context

(1) Western Sydney University acknowledges the Eora, Darug, D'harawal and Wiradjuri Peoples who are the traditional owners of the land on which the University's campuses are located, and thanks them for their support and contribution to its work.

(2) The University recognises Indigenous Australians are statistically amongst the most disadvantaged groups in Australia. The University aims to create a diverse range of employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians within the University.

(3) The University will develop agreed targets for employment and education initiatives with the objective of ensuring that the percentage of Indigenous Australian employees (researchers, and academic and professional staff) and students across all levels of the University is no less than the percentage of Indigenous Australians in the general population.

(4) The University will work with Indigenous Australian communities in Greater Western Sydney to improve educational and employment opportunities and outcomes, as outlined in the University's [Sustaining Success Strategic Plan 2021-2026](#). The University aims to be the preferred employer of choice within Greater Western Sydney for Indigenous Australians.

(5) The University will be a responsive partner and welcomes diversity in the work place. It encourages applications from qualified Indigenous Australians for all positions across the University. It will also provide employees with an opportunity to learn about Indigenous Australians culture and history so that they may work effectively in every setting.

(6) This policy describes the principles and procedures for Indigenous Australian employment and engagement (in the context of employment) at the University.

(7) The University seeks to redress, through affirmative action in employment, the past disadvantages experienced by Indigenous Australians.

(8) Indigenous Australians do not need documentary evidence of their heritage to identify as an Indigenous Australian person. However they will be asked to provide confirmation when applying for Indigenous Australian Identified roles and positions.

(9) Underpinning this policy is the University's commitment to reconciliation between Indigenous Australians and all Australians as outlined in the University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Statement and the [Western Sydney University Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025](#). It is committed to providing equal opportunity in employment and promoting inclusion through valuing diversity in the workplace.

(10) This policy should be read in conjunction with the commitments in the [Professional Staff Agreement](#) and [Academic Staff Agreement](#), and reference to the [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#), [Honorary Titles and Awards Procedures](#), [Indigenous Australian Education Policy](#) and the [Respect and Inclusion in Learning and Working Policy](#).

(11) This policy is to be implemented in such a way that ensures compliance with the University's obligations under

relevant legislation, including the [Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#), [Anti-Discrimination Act \(NSW\) 1977](#), the [Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986](#), and the [Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983](#).

## Section 2 - Definitions

(12) For the purpose of this policy, an Indigenous Australian means 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.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

(13) The University acknowledges Indigenous Australian staff are central to the development of teaching and research of Indigenous Australians' knowledge, which is acknowledged as critical to the higher education sector in particular and to Australian society as a whole.

(14) To develop a responsive organisational environment that values and respects Indigenous Australian culture and celebrates cultural differences, the University:

- a. encourages Indigenous Australian employees who have not previously identified and potential employees to identify in their employment records;
- b. promotes the recruitment of Indigenous Australians for employment at the University and their engagement in governance structures;
- c. recognises that an increased presence of Indigenous Australian employees will lead to better engagement with, and to becoming the employer of choice for, Indigenous Australians and their communities;
- d. acknowledges that being an Indigenous Australian is a genuine occupational qualification;
- e. acknowledges the unique scholarship Indigenous Australians bring to the University as employees;
- f. celebrates the knowledge, skills, history and cultural diversity Indigenous Australians bring to the workplace;
- g. recognises the consequential effects of Indigenous Australians' skills, contributions and knowledge in shaping and enhancing national and international socio-economic and cultural outcomes;
- h. recognises that Indigenous Australians' knowledge provides a significant contribution to all other bodies of knowledge and must be appropriately attributed;
- i. recognises a supportive working environment for Indigenous Australians requires the redress of past social injustice, exploitation and employment inequity;
- j. encourages respect and consideration for the cultural, social, spiritual base and religious systems practised by Indigenous Australians;
- k. acknowledges that participation of Indigenous Australians in cultural or ceremonial activities enhances the effectiveness of Indigenous Australians as employees. A list of significant dates is available in the Indigenous Australian Employment and Engagement Action Plan.

### Objectives

(15) The University encourages and promotes employment initiatives to increase the number of Indigenous Australians into positions at all levels including Indigenous Australian non-identified and identified positions.

(16) In accordance with the objectives in the Indigenous Australian Employment and Engagement Action Plan, the

University seeks to:

- a. develop leading strategies and help shape the national agenda in Indigenous Australian employment and engagement;
- b. create a work environment that is culturally inclusive, free from discrimination, promotes an understanding of Indigenous Australian culture and respect for the cultural, social and religious systems practised by Indigenous Australians;
- c. achieve equitable participation rates and employment outcomes, retention and success, and sustainable career and employment prospects for Indigenous Australians at all levels and positions of the University for professional and academic staff, across a wide variety of academic disciplines;
- d. ensure that the perspectives of Indigenous Australian employees and students is represented in decision making by providing places within the governance structure of the University for Indigenous Australians;
- e. ensure the University has the ability to meet the needs of Indigenous Australians as an 'Employer of Choice';
- f. develop and implement employment opportunities to advance socio-economic, educational, health, social and leadership outcomes for Indigenous Australians;
- g. develop strategies and performance indicators for all research funding that include employment and participation of Indigenous Australians;
- h. build and develop a positive working relationship with the community and relevant stakeholders to ensure the improvement of employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

## Section 4 - Procedures

(17) The University takes the following actions to achieve the objectives of this policy.

### **Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy**

(18) The Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy (the Strategy) outlines the University's objectives, areas of focus and implementation plan for Indigenous Australian employment at the University.

(19) The Strategy promotes the benefits of Indigenous Australian Employment and Engagement. The University will promote and implement the Strategy, including by:

- a. incorporating the Strategy into its employment policies;
- b. supporting all employees to respect and work within its guiding principles and be culturally capable in University Indigenous Australian Workplace Relations; and
- c. publishing the Strategy on its website.

### **[Western Sydney University Indigenous Strategy 2020 - 2025](#)**

(20) The [Western Sydney University Indigenous Strategy 2020 - 2025](#) is the University's organisational framework for achieving current and future strategies. The plan sets out detailed actions, timeframes and performance indicators to achieve its objectives.

(21) The University will follow the consultation processes as outlined in the [Academic Staff Agreement](#) and [Professional Staff Agreement](#) to assist with monitoring activity and progress in providing opportunities for employment and for engaging with Indigenous Australians.

### **Improving Employment and Career**

(22) To improve the participation rate and employment outcomes of Indigenous Australians, the University will:

- a. develop innovative employment programs to attract and recruit Indigenous Australians to all levels and types of employment at the University, including for all identified programs. These programs will include trainee or cadetships, graduate-entry, early career, middle and senior level programs in professional and academic positions across the University;
- b. develop programs to provide employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians, including transition from study to employment or entry into the workforce - such as traineeships, cadetships, career coaching, mentoring and skill development workshops;
- c. provide increased opportunities for the appointment of Indigenous Australians as Adjunct or Visiting Professors and Fellows;
- d. provide strategic advice to managers and supervisors in the process of recruiting and selecting Indigenous Australian employees, and managing and supervising Indigenous Australians on traineeships, cadetships or internships, or other employment programs, including support in undertaking career development planning, performance and review processes, and reward and recognition;
- e. provide targeted orientation programs for Indigenous Australian employees;
- f. provide a University-wide Indigenous Australian workplace relations program giving priority to the delivery of the training in units with existing Indigenous Australians;
- g. offer career development programs such as training, education, mentoring, job exchange, and other professional learning initiatives to build individual skills and leadership capacity;
- h. work with external partners to develop scholarships and support for work placements;
- i. work to provide research funding for projects with oversight or participation by Indigenous Australian employees;
- j. provide other development mechanisms and networks for Indigenous Australian employees, including conferences, seminars and forums;
- k. create identified positions and provide guidance on how to conduct a targeted recruitment strategy for positions where applicants must be an Indigenous Australian Person. Being an Indigenous Australian Person is a genuine occupational qualification as authorised under Section 14(D) of the [Anti-Discrimination Act, 1977 NSW](#). See Section 5 of the University's [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) for further information;
- l. adopt government initiatives that promote increased Indigenous Australian employment participation, for example the NSW Aboriginal Participation in Construction Policy;
- m. include provision in contracts (for example with construction or maintenance suppliers) for the participation of Indigenous Australians in the relevant workforce;
- n. undertake an annual review of the numbers of Indigenous Australian employees compared to the target and assess progress and development of further measures to assist in exceeding the target;
- o. provide an environment where Indigenous Australian employees are encouraged to achieve their full potential;
- p. facilitate and encourage direct involvement of Indigenous Australian employees in determining their own career strategies, goals and objectives, in consultation with their supervisors;
- q. attribute Indigenous Australians' cultural Intellectual Property (IP) in University goods and services.

(23) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, Indigenous Leadership must be consulted before recruitment commences for an Indigenous Australian to fill Identified positions and /or appointments to Adjunct or Visiting Professors and Fellows.

### **Recognising Indigenous Australian Status**

(24) The University provides for the confirmation of Indigenous Australian status for employees under the [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#).

(25) Indigenous Australian employees who have not previously identified as an Indigenous Australian in their employment records, can update their details through Staff Online by completing the Equal Opportunity Survey in the

personal details section. Refer to the [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) for guidelines on providing confirmation of Indigenous Australian status.

### **Engaging Indigenous Australians**

(26) The University will build mutually beneficial partnerships based on respect through the participation and contribution of Indigenous Australian employees in employment-related decision-making processes. This will include membership of certain selection panels, and involvement in staffing strategy development.

(27) The University will actively involve Indigenous Australians in University governance, management, administration, teaching and research.

(28) The University will develop and deliver Indigenous Australian Workplace Relations and Cultural Appreciation training to ensure cultural competency, the participation of which will be a prerequisite in any recruitment, selection and promotion processes for staff.

(29) The University will partner with Indigenous Australian communities to become an employer of choice and help disseminate culturally recognised employment practices to the wider community.

(30) The University encourages Indigenous Australian employees to participate in cultural diversity programs and services such as activities, committees and networks organised by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, Indigenous Leadership.

### **Entering Alliances with External Organisations**

(31) The University will engage with external organisations (community, businesses, industries and government) to:

- a. foster alliances and partnerships, and develop programs that improve Indigenous Australian employment opportunities; and
- b. raise awareness of cultural diversity within employment, including developing and providing training programs in cultural diversity within the workplace.

### **University Policies**

(32) To ensure cultural diversity is embedded within the University, all University-wide employment or staff-related strategies or policies will address the cultural diversity of the community in which the University operates, as appropriate.

(33) The University will incorporate into its policies and procedures the opportunity for Indigenous Australian employees to participate in cultural activities and events, such as national days of observance etc.

## **Section 5 - Guidelines**

(34) A Recruitment and Selection Toolkit is available on the University's Intranet website and is linked to the eRecruit system.

(35) A Quick Guide to Australian discrimination laws.

(36) [Australian Human Rights Commission](#).

(37) Targeted recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people — a guideline for employers.

(38) Guidelines on how to apply for an exemption to the [Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 \(NSW\)](#).



## Status and Details

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