

Evidencing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Identity Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy specifies the University's approach to evidencing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity for the purposes of access to Specific Educational Programs and Services at Macquarie University.

Background

(2) Macquarie University acknowledges and honours the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia as the nation's first people. The University recognises that as the traditional custodians and occupants of the land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a spiritual, social, cultural, and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters and have made, and continue to make, a unique and lasting contribution to the identity of this land. The University also acknowledges the impact of Colonisation and colonial policies, including the Stolen Generations, on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity.

(3) Macquarie University is committed to working collaboratively and in partnership to build meaningful, sustainable, and reciprocal relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff and strengthening relationships with the local Aboriginal Community and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

(4) This Policy ensures that the documentary requirements for all individuals seeking access to the University's Specific Educational Programs and Services are uniform and transparent.

Scope

(5) This Policy applies to all individuals seeking access to Specific Educational Programs and Services within the University.

Section 2 - Policy

(6) Persons seeking to gain access to Specific Educational Programs and Services are required to provide evidence to demonstrate that they meet the definition of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons. Three widely used criteria are often referred to as constituting a 'working definition' of Aboriginality or Torres Strait Islander heritage. This working definition is used by many Federal and State government agencies and other institutions to interpret the meaning of the definitions above.

(7) The three criteria that must be satisfied for persons seeking access to Specific Educational Programs and Services are:

- a. being of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent;
- b. identifying as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person; and
- c. being accepted as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person by the community in which the applicant lives, or formerly lived.

Documentary Evidence

(8) Individuals seeking to access Specific Educational Programs and Services must provide documentary evidence, which addresses the 'working definition' of Aboriginality or Torres Strait Islander heritage, as follows:

- a. self-identification as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person on application and/or enrolment forms as applicable; and
- b. acceptance as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person by the community on a completed Evidence of Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Islander form. The form must be signed by an officer of an incorporated Indigenous organisation from the community in which the applicant lives or has previously lived who is not a family member of the applicant; or by two of the following
 - i. primary documents such as official records, a letter of support from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person (for example, an Aboriginal Education Officer) or other documents viewed by Walanga Muru staff or an Indigenous HR Consultant; and/or
 - ii. a Statutory Declaration which is signed by the individual and witnessed by a Justice of the Peace, making it enforceable by law; and/or
 - iii. an interview with the Director of Walanga Muru or Indigenous HR Consultant, or nominee and community member.

(9) The Director of Walanga Muru or Indigenous HR Consultant may convene a panel to assess applications for Specific Educational Programs and Services. Documentary evidence provided by the applicant may be assessed by the relevant panel.

(10) The panel or the Director of Walanga Muru/Indigenous HR Consultant or nominee, may request further information and/or an interview with an applicant where further verification is required.

(11) In all cases, the onus is on the applicant to provide appropriate documentation of Australian Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Islander identity consistent with this Policy.

Section 3 - Procedures

(12) Nil.

Section 4 - Definitions

(13) The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

- a. Indigenous means all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.
- b. Specific Educational Programs and Services means any staff or student program or service specifically reserved for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Rorden Wilkinson Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
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