HE-HR19 Indigenous Participation Policy

AHE	Apex Australia Higher Education
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
AB	Academic Board
EMC	Executive Management Committee
HR	Human Resources
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
TO	Traditional Owners
TC	Traditional Custodians

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support and promote the participation, success and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all aspects of the institution's higher education activities.

The institution recognises the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia and is committed to fostering an inclusive educational environment that respects Indigenous cultures, knowledge systems and perspectives.

This policy aims to:

- Increase access to higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Support student success, retention and completion
- Promote cultural safety and respect across the institution
- Embed Indigenous perspectives and knowledge where appropriate within learning, teaching and institutional practices

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Prospective students and applicants
- Academic and professional staff
- Institutional policies, programs and services relating to equity, diversity and inclusion.

3. Principles

The institution is guided by the following principles:

3.1 Respect

Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples as the Traditional Custodians(TC) of the land and valuing their cultures, histories and knowledge systems.

3.2 Equity of Access

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Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equitable opportunities to access higher education.

3.3 Cultural Safety

Providing a culturally safe and inclusive learning environment that respects Indigenous identity and experiences.

3.4 Self-Determination

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in shaping their educational pathways and outcomes.

3.5 Partnership and Engagement

Engaging with Indigenous communities and organisations to support meaningful participation in higher education.

4. Institutional Commitments

The institution commits to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation through the following actions.

4.1 Access and Participation

The institution will:

- Encourage participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education programs
- Provide clear information on admission pathways and support mechanisms
- Consider alternative admission pathways where appropriate
- Promote awareness of higher education opportunities within Indigenous communities.

4.2 Student Support

The institution will provide appropriate support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students including:

- Academic support and learning assistance
- Orientation programs tailored to support transition into higher education
- Access to wellbeing and counselling services
- Culturally appropriate support services where available.

4.3 Inclusive Learning Environment

The institution will promote an inclusive learning environment by:

- Encouraging respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and perspectives
- Promoting cultural awareness among staff and students
- Supporting inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in learning and teaching where relevant.

4.4 Staff Awareness and Capability

The institution will encourage staff capability in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by:

- Promoting cultural awareness and respect across the institution
- Providing guidance to staff on culturally appropriate engagement where required.

4.5 Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

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The institution will:

- Monitor participation, progression and completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students where data is available
- Use this information to inform continuous improvement of policies and support services
- Review institutional strategies to improve Indigenous student outcomes.

5. Responsibilities

Governing Body

The AHE Board of Directors (BoD) are responsible for ensuring that institutional policies support equity, diversity and inclusion, including participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Academic Leadership

Academic leadership via Academic Board (AB) will ensure that learning and teaching practices promote inclusive education and support student success.

Staff

All staff share responsibility for fostering a respectful, inclusive and culturally safe environment.

6. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Diversity, Non-Discrimination and Equity Framework
- Student Support Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Academic Quality Assurance Framework.

This policy is informed by and complies with external regulatory instruments, including the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth), the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards), and the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth).

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains consistent with national regulatory requirements and institutional objectives.

8. Relevant Legislation

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (VIC)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- State and Territory Equal Opportunity Acts
- Higher Education Support Act 2003
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth)

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- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 – Standards 2.3 (2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.3.4, 2.3.5), 2.4 (2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 2.4.5), 6.1 (6.1.4), 6.2 (6.2.1a, e, j, k), 7.2 (7.2.1)
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 – Standard 6 (6.1 – 6.1.1, 6.1.3, 6.1.4, 6.1.5, 6.1.6, 6.1.8), 6.2, 6.5, 6.6, 6.8, 6.9 (6.9.1, 6.9.2, 6.9.3)
- The Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains consistent with national regulatory updates from the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and national closing-the-gap targets in higher education.

Version Control

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