

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Support and Inclusion Policy

Version 1.0

Overview

This policy sets out AIM Institute's approach to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students to access, participate in, and succeed in higher education. It is designed in alignment with the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF), particularly:

- Domain 1: Student Participation and Attainment
- Domain 2: Learning Environment
- Domain 6: Governance and Accountability

The policy should be read in conjunction with AIM Institute's Equity and Diversity Policy, which establishes the Institute's broader commitment to inclusive practice and fair access for all students.

AIM Institute recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are a designated equity group in higher education and are entitled to culturally safe, accessible, and supportive learning environments that enable participation and success.

Acknowledgement of Country

AIM Institute acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which its operations are based in Richmond, New South Wales, and pays respect to Elders past and present. The Institute recognises the enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to land, waters, culture, and community, and acknowledges that sovereignty was never ceded.

AIM Institute is committed to fostering respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and contributions within its learning environment and institutional practices.

Principles

AIM Institute's approach to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is guided by the following principles:

- Equity of access and participation in higher education programs
- Cultural safety and respect within all aspects of the student experience

- Inclusivity within a small-provider context, ensuring proportional and scalable support arrangements
- Student-centred support, responsive to individual needs
- Continuous improvement, informed by monitoring of student outcomes and feedback
- External collaboration, recognising the Institute's reliance on external expertise and services due to its scale

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled at AIM Institute
- Academic and professional staff involved in teaching, student support, and governance
- External service providers engaged in student support functions

Given the anticipated small cohort size, support arrangements are designed to be flexible, scalable, and primarily delivered through a hybrid model combining internal oversight and external specialist services.

Access, Participation and Support

Admission and Access

AIM Institute applies open and equitable admissions processes in accordance with its Equity and Diversity Policy. No discriminatory barriers are applied in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants.

Student Support Model (Hybrid Approach)

AIM Institute adopts a hybrid student support model, comprising:

- Internal academic support, provided by teaching staff and the Academic Director, including:
 - academic skills development
 - course progression monitoring
 - early identification of academic risk
- External support services, including:
 - counselling services
 - wellbeing support
 - referral to culturally appropriate external providers where required

Due to the small scale of the Institute, specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support services will be accessed through external referral pathways as required, rather than maintained internally.

Cultural Safety in Learning Environment

AIM Institute is committed to ensuring that its learning environment is respectful and culturally safe. Staff are expected to demonstrate cultural awareness and inclusive practice in all student interactions.

Where culturally specific support needs are identified, the Institute will facilitate referral to appropriate external services.

External Engagement and Future Development

AIM Institute recognises the importance of engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations, particularly within Western Sydney, to strengthen cultural understanding and student support pathways.

While no formal partnerships are currently established, the Institute is committed to exploring opportunities to develop relationships with relevant community organisations and education providers to enhance culturally responsive practice over time.

Monitoring, Reporting and Continuous Improvement

In accordance with HESF Domain 6 (Governance and Accountability) and Domain 1 (Student Participation and Attainment), AIM Institute will systematically monitor and report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes.

The Board will receive biannual reporting (in line with the Institute's Reporting Policy and Framework) on:

- enrolment numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- retention and progression rates
- course completion outcomes
- identified barriers to participation and success (where data is available and appropriate)

Given the anticipated small cohort size, reporting will be interpreted with appropriate caution to avoid statistical distortion, while still ensuring visibility of student experience and outcomes.

Findings from monitoring activities will inform continuous improvement actions relating to teaching, support services, and institutional policies.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Directors

Holds ultimate responsibility for oversight of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes and institutional compliance with HESF obligations.

Chief Executive Officer

Ensures implementation of this policy and allocation of appropriate resources for student support arrangements.

Academic Director

Responsible for monitoring academic progression, identifying at-risk students, and coordinating academic support interventions.

All Staff

Responsible for fostering inclusive and respectful learning environments consistent with this policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if required due to changes in regulatory requirements, institutional operations, or student cohort profile.

Related documents

Legislation	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
Policies and Procedures	Equity Monitoring Framework Enrolment Policy and Procedure Student Support Framework Diversity, Inclusion and Access Policy Reporting Policy and Framework

Document Approval

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Related documents:			
Alignment to HESF	1.1 Admission	2.2 Diversity and Equity	Choose an item.
Responsibilities:			
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Document Change and Review log

Version	Updated by	Approval date and body	Details
0.1	TWEIR	Choose an item.	First edition
0.2	TW		Updated following AB review
1.0	TW	BOD	Approved version