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# **Creating an accessible and effective pathway for regional and isolated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to tertiary study using block-release study mode**

## **Final report 2014**

Curtin University

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- Bachelor of Education: Regional and Remote
- Indigenous Community Management and Development Program
- Indigenous Community Health Program.

The project has also benefited from collaboration with the School of Education at Curtin University.

## List of acronyms used

ITAS Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme

VET Vocational education and training

## Notes on terminology used in this report

In this report, the term 'Indigenous' is used to include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

A variety of terms is used by various Australian universities to refer to programs of academic study, including 'course', 'program', 'pathway' and so on. For the purposes of this report, the term 'course' is used throughout except when quoting directly from universities' websites.

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## Executive summary

This project was developed with a view to addressing the current low retention rates among Indigenous Australian students from regional and isolated areas undertaking degree courses offered through block-release study mode by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University, Western Australia, relative to those of students undertaking other degree courses offered by the University. The current drop-out rate for these students is up to 60 per cent, compared with 20 per cent for the overall student population of Curtin University.

The project endeavoured to establish the feasibility of developing a 'bridging course'–style program for these students, in the form of a block-release study mode pre-tertiary academic pathway program. This pathway program would be designed to attract and retain regional and isolated Indigenous Australians wishing to undertake degree courses offered through block-release study mode by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University, by ensuring that these students are equipped with the skills required for the successful completion of their degree course.

The pathway program would also be intended to prepare students to undertake degree courses offered by other Australian universities.

In accordance with the aims of this project, two reviews were conducted. The first aimed to ascertain whether any existing pathway programs offered by Australian universities effectively met the needs of regional and isolated Indigenous Australians (see Appendices A and B). The second investigated whether Australian universities currently offer block-release study mode programs and if not, what other initiatives are offered to regional and isolated Indigenous Australian students (see Appendix C).

The project found that existing pathway programs do not effectively meet the needs of regional and isolated Indigenous Australian students undertaking block-release study mode courses offered by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University.

It is therefore suggested that regional and isolated Indigenous Australians should be offered a pathway program the curriculum of which focuses on academic writing and culture (including, in particular, in-depth research and referencing skills), written and oral communication skills, mathematics, and online learning methodologies, through 'hands on' experience during block release at the Bentley Campus.

The pathway program curriculum would take into account Curtin University's current best practice approaches to learning and teaching. It would also reflect the importance of the nexus between the pathway program and the students' communities, and the benefits to be achieved from leveraging this connection.

It is anticipated that such a pathway program would stem the current drop-out rate from degree courses offered through block-release study mode by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University.

The support and interest of students and staff in this project has been positive and encouraging.

# Recommendations

The specific recommendations of this report are:

- 1 That a block-release study mode pre-tertiary academic pathway program be developed in accordance with the stated aim of this project: to address the low retention rates among Indigenous Australian students from regional and isolated areas undertaking degree courses offered through block-release study mode by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University, Western Australia, relative to those of students undertaking other degree courses offered by the University;
- 2 that the pathway program be designed to ensure that regional and isolated Indigenous Australians are academically prepared to achieve success at degree-level study in accordance with Australian teaching and learning best practice and Curtin University's desired graduate attribute;
- 3 that the pathway program include the following content: academic writing and culture (including, in particular, in-depth research and referencing skills), written and oral communication skills, mathematics, and online learning methodologies, through 'hands on' experience via block release at the Bentley Campus;
- 4 that a trial of the pathway program be conducted by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University over a two-year period, beginning in Semester One, 2015;
- 5 that a longitudinal study of two years' duration be conducted into the performance of students undertaking degree courses having completed the pathway program;
- 6 that the pathway program be acknowledged by the Department Education as supporting Recommendation 2, Part Three of the *Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander People* (Behrendt et al., 2012, page xvii):
  - that universities use the population parity target identified by the Australian Government to set their own targets and timeframes for the retention and completion rates by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, matching the rates for those of non-Indigenous students across the disciplines, and at each of the levels of study;
- 7 that the Department of Education approve access to the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) for students enrolled in the pathway program at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University.

## Introduction

The current drop-out rate for Indigenous Australian students from regional and isolated areas undertaking degree courses offered through block-release study mode by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University, Western Australia, is up to 60 per cent, compared with 20 per cent for the overall student population of Curtin University.

This project was developed with a view to understanding the reasons for, and addressing, this low retention rate among these students.

To this end, the project endeavoured to establish the feasibility of developing a 'bridging course'-style program for these students, in the form of a block-release study mode pre-tertiary academic pathway program. This pathway program would be designed to attract and retain regional and isolated Indigenous Australians wishing to undertake degree courses offered through block-release study mode by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University, by ensuring that these students are equipped with the skills required for the successful completion of their degree course.

Such a program would also be intended to prepare students to undertake degree courses offered by other Australian universities.

## Context

In their Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Behrendt et al. (2012, page ix) note:

The Bradley Review (2008) concluded that 'Australia faces a critical moment in the history of higher education', where 'the reach, quality and performance of a nation's higher education system will be key determinants of its economic and social progress'.

They go on to examine (page ix):

how improving higher education outcomes among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will contribute to nation building and reduce Indigenous disadvantage.

They recommend that targets be set for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments and staff employment in the higher education sector, in accordance with the national parity rate of 2.2 per cent (as at July 2012). They further suggest that universities use the national population parity rate to set their own targets and timeframes.

Of particular relevance to this project is their recommendation that (page xv11):

the retention and completion rates by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students [should match] the rates for those of non-Indigenous students across the disciplines, and at each of the levels of study.

Although addressing these recommendations is beyond the scope of the current project, these objectives did inform our research, and would be taken into account in developing an appropriate pathway program as recommended as an outcome of this research.



## Indigenous terms of reference

This research project has applied Indigenous terms of reference in an education and research environment to acknowledge the value of the knowledge, experience and values of students and staff from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds.

Indigenous terms of reference were pioneered by Lilla Watson in 1985 and refined by Darlene Oxenham in the 1990s and 2000s. They are a set of protocols that ensure that Indigenous knowledge, experience and values are respected and taken into account during any Indigenous project or decision-making process. They clearly define the roles and protocols expected of Indigenous practitioners, non-Indigenous practitioners and Indigenous stakeholders.

These protocols are important because they:

- reflect Indigenous values and assist students to assert their right to self-representation, self-definition and self-identification
- privilege and affirm Indigenous cultural ways of working
- highlight diversity among various Indigenous communities
- provide a framework for successful engagement in Indigenous community and health projects
- recognise the importance of pastoral care
- recognise the importance of cross-cultural engagement and competency.

Some of the recommendations extrapolated from a discussion paper published by Sonn, Bishop and Humphries (1997) also have application for this research project. They include the following.

- The success of the current role of the Centre for Aboriginal Studies cannot be over-emphasised, but it is recommended that programs (courses) focusing on the development of academic skills and organisational skills required for tertiary study be strengthened to give students the best possible preparation for mainstream study.
- To continue to encourage the involvement and input of Indigenous people in the development of curricula and mainstream courses, these courses also need to adopt appropriate teaching styles and learning environments.
- Mechanisms should be developed that involve significant others in support during the university experience, because conflicts between the student, their family and their social networks can negatively affect educational processes and outcomes.

These recommendations have been embedded in the recommendations made in this report.

## Project terms of reference

Bearing in mind the Indigenous terms of reference as noted above, the project terms of reference were identified as follows.

- 1 To conduct a literature review into pre-tertiary pathway programs for Indigenous students offered at all Australian universities, with a particular focus on the needs and aspirations of students from regional and isolated communities (see Appendix C);
- 2 to approach universities directly to clarify and access further information beyond that contained in the literature review (see Appendix C)
- 3 to evaluate the effectiveness of existing courses/programs for regional and isolated Indigenous students;
- 4 to develop an appropriate block-release study mode pre-tertiary pathway program to be offered by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University;
- 5 to submit the proposal to the project's reference group for their input and/or approval;
- 6 subject to approval by the teaching and research community of the Centre for Aboriginal Studies, to initiate discussion with the Department Education with a view to securing funding for the development and trial of the pathway program.

# Methodology

## Scope and approach

In order to address the aims of the project, questionnaires were developed for both students and staff which were presented at the end of Semester One, 2013. The analysis of their responses can be found at Appendices A and B.

An initial literature review was then conducted to identify any existing pre-tertiary pathway programs offered in Australia for Indigenous students – particularly those from regional and isolated areas. First, university websites were searched to identify any alternative pathways to tertiary study offered. This research was then enhanced by systematic telephone contact to each university, which confirmed and augmented the existing data. Other sources of information included university annual reports, the National Tertiary Education Union's *Australian Universities' Review*, and state and federal government reports. The results of this review can be found at Appendix C.

In order not to 'reinvent the wheel', much statistical data and findings were also drawn from the Behrendt et al.'s *Review of Higher Education and Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island People* (2012).

The evaluation of data regarding the success or otherwise of existing programs will form the basis of the research outcomes.

## Questionnaires

In order to elicit the opinions and recommendations of current students, former students and staff regarding the reasons students drop out of block-release courses, three questionnaires were developed.

### Student questionnaires

Two separate questionnaires were distributed to current students and to former students (see Appendix A).

Of the 118 current students enrolled as at 1 August 2013, responses were received from 54 students, representing 46 per cent of current students.

Ten former students who had officially withdrawn or withdrawn without notice were also invited to participate. Unfortunately, no responses were received from these students.

### Staff questionnaire

Of the eight staff invited to participate, responses were received from six, representing 75 per cent of staff (see Appendix B).

## Findings

This report acknowledges that higher education and training have a critical role to play in improving the socio-economic position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and their communities as well as to play in driving the nation's social and economic development.

The above are consistent with the current federal Government's commitment to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage as the central goal of the Closing the Gap agenda.

To this end the higher education sector has a vital role to play in raising the health, education and economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by making sure they have the skills and capacity they need to drive change from within their communities.

At the 'local' level and in support of current political commitment, this project found that existing pathway programs do not effectively meet the needs of regional and isolated Indigenous Australian students undertaking block-release study mode courses offered by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University (see Appendix C); hence this report and its recommendations (p.18).

Some of the specific features that should be included in any proposed pathway program were identified as follows.

## Pastoral care

Pastoral care is an important component of any educational undertaking. The Western Australian Department of Education (2013) defines pastoral care as 'the commitment of staff to the wellbeing of each student'. Tenets of pastoral care include advocacy, development of networks, teaching of strategies to achieve deadlines, reflection on aims of academic lectures and tutorials, physical support and support for the social, intellectual and emotional development of each student.

Since the central objective of this project is to develop strategies to attract and retain students from regional and isolated Indigenous communities across Australia in tertiary-level study at Curtin University, a significant level of pastoral care would be central to the proposed pathway program. This would ensure that high-quality education would be provided in a culturally safe, inclusive and caring learning environment.

Staff and students involved in Curtin University's existing bridging courses report that, without the ability of students to freely access their teaching staff, success can be somewhat hampered. It has also been acknowledged that assigning a community support person to each student is crucial to achieving positive outcomes. Further, it is acknowledged that such a person can be instrumental in identifying local high school students who have the capacity and character to undertake tertiary study and who would benefit from a pathway program of the type proposed. To this end, an approach has been made to Schools of Isolated and Distance Education to assist in identifying and recruiting community support people. Indications to date are that there would be support for this initiative.

## **Cross-cultural engagement**

According to Deakin University's Koorie Institute website, members recently participated in a residential research workshop and reported that the experience of Indigenous members of the university community learning about research alongside their non-Indigenous colleagues provided an opportunity for both groups to exchange views and understandings of how research can affect Indigenous Australians.

It was noted that 'The need for non-Indigenous researchers to learn from their Indigenous colleagues is great. The tradition of research being conducted into Indigenous Australians' circumstances by non-Indigenous Australians, usually without any real change in the disadvantages being experienced, is changing through information sharing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians; and that the process of Reconciliation has assisted many non-Indigenous Australians to realise the potential for working cross-culturally, and has provided opportunities for Indigenous Australians to guide the research crucial to meet their communities' goals, needs and aspirations'.

It was further noted that there are now many Indigenous researchers who are working towards not only achieving success in their own studies but also effecting change in the lives of others in their communities. Their research is driven by personal and cultural considerations as much as career aspirations.

The efforts of Curtin University to 'Indigenise' its curriculum have been acknowledged by the academic community as an important step in the Reconciliation process, as well as 'the right thing to do'. However, as observed by the Deakin University staff, it can be of great benefit to Indigenous students to gain some experience of the 'mainstream' curriculum as early as possible in their studies.

In both of the Indigenous bridging courses currently offered by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University, students undertaking the Communications units attend several mainstream lectures. Their feedback has been very positive, and it is therefore recommended that a similar undertaking be offered as part of the proposed pathway program.

## **Whole-of-university approach**

Perhaps outside the remit of this report, but nevertheless an important consideration if funding is secured for the next phase of the project, is the issue of the isolation of Indigenous centres.

There are differing opinions on this issue. On the one hand, Sonn et al. (in Walker, 2000) caution that an over-reliance on Indigenous centres can in fact hamper the development of networks within the wider university. On the other, Whatman (in Walker, 2000) suggests that Indigenous centres have a role to play that extends beyond simply functioning to support Indigenous students within mainstream institutions.

In response to the latter view, the 'outreach' activities of Curtin's Centre for Aboriginal Studies are already well established, as evidenced by the membership of various groups of Indigenous students from across all faculties of the University, and by the social and guidance seminars held regularly at the centre.

Further, in 2013 the University developed an ‘intercultural academic leadership program’ for Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff teaching Indigenous content to students and staff, titled ‘Working Together’. *Inter alia*, the program aims to develop skills in assisting students to challenge stereotypes and preconceptions.

## **On-campus accommodation**

One of the findings of Behrendt et al.’s *Review of Higher Education and Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island People* (2012, page x111) was that on-campus accommodation is extremely important to student progress. The lack of such accommodation is a serious issue, and one that is detrimental to student progress.

It would be a priority for any students enrolling in the proposed pathway program to be accommodated at Curtin University’s Bentley Campus; to this end, the timing of the course will be dependent on the availability of such accommodation.

## **Communication between block attendances**

The importance of establishing a reliable means of communication during the periods between block attendances cannot be overstated. It was suggested that the current arrangements must be enhanced to ensure the best possible outcomes for students (see Appendix B).

## **Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme**

The Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) provides funding to higher education institutions for supplementary tuition for Indigenous students studying university award-level courses (and some VET courses). Tuition is available only for subjects in the student’s formal education program, and is not usually available for basic literacy, numeracy, enabling or bridging courses. However, it is not usually available to assist students enrolled in enabling courses.

It is therefore recommended that the Department be approached with a view to making ITAS available to pathway program students on the basis of equality of access (see Recommendation 7).

## **Benefits to other universities**

Six Australian universities currently offer block-release study mode degree courses (see Appendix C). If funding is secured to develop a pathway program as recommended in this report, it can also have application for these institutions.

## Recommendations

It is suggested that regional and isolated Indigenous Australians should be offered a pathway program, the curriculum of which focuses on academic writing and culture (including, in particular, in-depth research and referencing skills), written and oral communication skills, mathematics, and online learning methodologies, through 'hands on' experience during block release at the Bentley Campus. Pastoral care was acknowledged as fundamental to academic success by many of the participants in this research.

The pathway program curriculum would take into account Curtin University's current best practice approaches to learning and teaching. It would also reflect the importance of the nexus between the pathway program and the students' communities, and the benefits to be achieved from leveraging this connection.

It is anticipated that such a pathway program would stem the current drop-out rate from degree courses offered through block-release study mode by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University.

The support and interest of students and staff in this project has been positive and encouraging.

The specific recommendations of this report are as follows.

- 1 That a block-release study mode pre-tertiary academic pathway program be developed in accordance with the stated aim of this project: to address the low retention rates among Indigenous Australian students from regional and isolated areas undertaking degree courses offered through block-release study mode by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University, Western Australia, relative to those of students undertaking other degree courses offered by the University;
- 2 That the pathway program be designed to ensure that regional and isolated Indigenous Australians are academically prepared to achieve success at degree-level study in accordance with Australian teaching and learning best practice and Curtin University's desired graduate attributes;
- 3 That the pathway program include the following content: academic writing and culture (including, in particular, in-depth research and referencing skills), written and oral communication skills, mathematics, and online learning methodologies, through 'hands on' experience during block release at the Bentley Campus;
- 4 That a trial of the pathway program be conducted by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University over a two-year period, beginning in Semester One, 2015;
- 5 That a longitudinal study of two years' duration be conducted into the performance of students undertaking degree courses having completed the pathway program;

- 6 That the pathway program be acknowledged by the Department of Tertiary Education, Skills, Climate Change, Science and Research (now Department of Education) as supporting Recommendation 2, Part Three of the *Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander People* (Behrendt et al., 2012, page xvii):

that universities use the population parity target identified by the Australian Government to set their own targets and timeframes for the retention and completion rates by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, matching the rates for those of non-Indigenous students across the disciplines, and at each of the levels of study;

- 7 That the Department of Education approve access to the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) for students enrolled in the pathway program at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University.



## **Additional research**

As part of this project, all Regional Education Offices in Western Australia were approached with a view to ascertaining whether, in their opinion, the proposal to develop a block-release study mode pre-tertiary academic pathway program would have a 'market' in their region. To date the responses received have been positive.

Ideally, the development of such a program would also benefit from the input of active partners such as graduate employers, including government and industry, as well as professional bodies, research agencies and the vocational education and training (VET) and school sectors, as well as with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Funding for the development of the course and the two year trial is currently being sought from the Department of Education.

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## Appendix A: Student questionnaires

Two separate questionnaires were developed and administered to current and former (respectively) Indigenous Australian students from regional and isolated areas enrolled in the Bachelor of Indigenous Community Health, the Bachelor of Indigenous Community Management and the Bachelor of Education: Regional and Remote through the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University.

### Current student questionnaire

The questions asked of current students were as follows.

- 1 In which course are you enrolled?
- 2 How long have you been studying in the course?
- 3 Are you coping with the course to date?
- 4 Have you ever thought you might like to withdraw?
- 5 What sorts of issues would make you think you might like to withdraw?
- 6 If you felt like withdrawing, did you discuss this with your lecturers or other students?
- 7 Are you aware of any of your peers' intention to withdraw?
- 8 If so, have they discussed their issues with you, and if so can you outline them?
- 9 If you have felt like you might withdraw, what do you think would make a difference, e.g. would a bridging or transition-from-high-school course have helped you?
- 10 What kind of learning do you think might be appropriate for inclusion in a pre-tertiary block-release study mode bridging course?

## Current student questionnaire responses

Of the 118 enrolled students administered with a survey as at 1 August 2013, responses were received from 54 students, representing a response rate of 46 per cent.

Their responses are summarised in the table below, and discussed on the following pages.

<b>Coping?</b>	<b>Contemplated withdrawal?</b>	<b>Discussed with lecturer?</b>	<b>Peer withdrawal intention?</b>	<b>If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?</b>
Struggling	No	N/A	One student – just not coping	Referencing, plagiarism, Aboriginal history
Struggling	No	N/A	No	Tutor, understanding university environment and 'academic' stuff
Yes	No	N/A	Yes, two students	Understanding better what is involved in university study: a bridging course would help, I think

<b>Coping?</b>	<b>Contemplated withdrawal?</b>	<b>Discussed with lecturer?</b>	<b>Peer withdrawal intention?</b>	<b>If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?</b>
Struggling	Yes	Yes	Several	Being able to address domestic issues – but how could this be in a bridging course?
A bit behind	Yes because I didn't have enough skills to start	Yes	Several	Referencing, academic writing skills, online skills, academic language
Struggling with academic writing	Yes, due to stress, feeling like a failure, academic writing	Yes, with both, and they were really helpful, but time is always an issue	No	Structure of essays, academic writing, referencing
Just coping	Yes: stress really, and financial issues	No	No	Structure of essays, referencing
Coping, but need to be more motivated	Yes, because my marks were lower than expected	No	Yes – more tutors' assumptions made that we knew more than we did	Computing (online learning), academic writing, referencing

<b>Coping?</b>	<b>Contemplated withdrawal?</b>	<b>Discussed with lecturer?</b>	<b>Peer withdrawal intention?</b>	<b>If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?</b>
Coping, but tutorial assistance is very important	No	But if I had, I would suggest more tutoring would be sooo helpful	Unready for academic study, workload, minimal face-to-face contact	Study skills, presentation skills, referencing and locating resources, physical layout of campus – daunting  Bring back reverse block, and online teaching knowledge or how to 'do it'
Yes	No		Lack of support, and previous knowledge of academic world and pressure of workload	An endeavour to balance work with domestic situation and better preparation for tertiary study
Yes	Yes	Yes, based on domestic situation	No	Academic writing, referencing

<b>Coping?</b>	<b>Contemplated withdrawal?</b>	<b>Discussed with lecturer?</b>	<b>Peer withdrawal intention?</b>	<b>If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?</b>
Yes. but several issues are affecting my efforts	Yes, often, based on no job security and family trauma, but sometimes do not relate to staff/tutors	Yes, but not as helpful as the other students	Mostly family issues, but other 'learning' issues too	Study skills, academic writing, time management, online learning skills
Yes, but not easy	No	N/A	Personal problems, usually with children	Curriculum overview, academic writing, referencing and finding information, not just from the library but electronically too  Sometimes I wasn't sure of the words and language
Yes	Not yet	Yes, I would	No	Uni life, course fee responsibilities, HECS fees, campus information, academic writing, referencing, administrative issues

<b>Coping?</b>	<b>Contemplated withdrawal?</b>	<b>Discussed with lecturer?</b>	<b>Peer withdrawal intention?</b>	<b>If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?</b>
Yes, but not totally	No	N/A	N/A	Referencing, academic writing, study tips
Not well	Yes	Yes, to discuss being overwhelmed by workload	N/A	Essay writing, report writing, time management, university expectations, referencing
Yes	Yes, several times, usually about time management	No	No	Time management, study skills, referencing – we didn't, really know that this meant, so it would be good to know about, finding things electronically and [in the] library



<b>Coping?</b>	<b>Contemplated withdrawal?</b>	<b>Discussed with lecturer?</b>	<b>Peer withdrawal intention?</b>	<b>If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?</b>
Yes	Not yet	It would not be a problem for me to discuss issues with my lecturer or my peers	N/A	Exposure to teaching styles and expectations of learning at a university  There was a lot of terminology that I just didn't know about before I came.
Yes	No	N/A	Yes	Literacy, numeracy skills, refresher courses and computer skills, and academic writing
Yes, but some issues	No	N/A	No	Just overall readiness for academic study
Yes	Yes, but after discussion with staff and students I am OK	Yes (see left)	No	Course has suited me really well and I'm now in third year

<b>Coping?</b>	<b>Contemplated withdrawal?</b>	<b>Discussed with lecturer?</b>	<b>Peer withdrawal intention?</b>	<b>If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?</b>
Yes	Yes	Yes, about self-doubt and health issues	No	Academic writing skills, and referencing skills
Yes	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
More or less	Yes	Briefly, but not at length	No	Time management
Yes	No	N/A	No	Mathematics, essay writing, research/referencing, computer skills, business skills
Yes	Yes	Not at first, but later, and also with my students	Yes, a few withdrew after one semester	Usual stuff – refresher
Yes	No	N/A	Yes, a few	N/A
Yes	Not yet	N/A	No	Essay writing, referencing, intro to Aboriginal politics, time management, Aboriginal community organisations

Coping?	Contemplated withdrawal?	Discussed with lecturer?	Peer withdrawal intention?	If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?
Yes	Yes	No	N/A	N/A
Yes	No	I would	Yes	Computer, literacy, referencing, personal life, study skills, mentoring
Yes, but could be better	Yes	No	Yes	Big picture of expectations regarding essay writing, including reference skills, commitment  But bridging course must be related to the course of study

Coping?	Contemplated withdrawal?	Discussed with lecturer?	Peer withdrawal intention?	If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?
Yes	No	N/A	Yes – some study issues and some personal	<p>Familiarity with university's physical environment, essay writing/referencing, letters, reports, and computer skills, i.e. Blackboard, PowerPoint, Excel, before starting university</p> <p>Maybe mentoring would be a help too, or just to be able to be familiar with some of the language used at university</p> <p>It takes a while to get used to it and sometimes you feel embarrassed if you use the wrong words</p>

<b>Coping?</b>	<b>Contemplated withdrawal?</b>	<b>Discussed with lecturer?</b>	<b>Peer withdrawal intention?</b>	<b>If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?</b>
Yes, but needed some help regarding time off from work, etc.	Yes, due to over-commitment and difficulty with meeting deadlines	Not with staff but with work colleagues	Don't think so	Establishing a link to university via a bridging course would be great, a healing place for students, on campus familiarisation which would give students confidence to commence their academic study
Yes	No	N/A	No	Study management, social club membership, but should be on campus
Yes	Yes	No	Yes, several	Usual stuff – essay writing, referencing, computer skills

Coping?	Contemplated withdrawal?	Discussed with lecturer?	Peer withdrawal intention?	If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?
Yes	No	No, but I would	Yes – due to lack of confidence, especially about academic writing skills	<p>Vocabulary building, presentation skills, academic reading, computers, referencing and finding information</p> <p>A block-release bridging course would ensure Indigenous persons would be able to successfully engage in tertiary education</p>

Coping?	Contemplated withdrawal?	Discussed with lecturer?	Peer withdrawal intention?	If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?
Yes, but some difficulty	No	N/A	No	<p>The usual stuff: essay writing, academic language, computer skills, finding information</p> <p>I am really enjoying the course</p> <p>The content and unit outline is informative</p> <p>The lecturers are supportive</p> <p>I hope many more Aboriginal people will take the journey, because they will be inspired</p>

<b>Coping?</b>	<b>Contemplated withdrawal?</b>	<b>Discussed with lecturer?</b>	<b>Peer withdrawal intention?</b>	<b>If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?</b>
Yes, but with difficulty regarding referencing and annotated bibliography	Yes, mostly about money and being away from home so much	I didn't, because I stayed on the course, but I would have	Yes, and it was about self-esteem, and previous learning would have helped them	Mentoring would be really important, and a bridging course (on campus) should contain lots of practice in essay writing, referencing, and computer skills like PowerPoint
Yes, but need a lot of tutor help	No	N/A	Not at this time	Not sure what is meant by a bridging course
Yes	Yes	Not yet, but I would	No	Not sure what a bridging course is



<b>Coping?</b>	<b>Contemplated withdrawal?</b>	<b>Discussed with lecturer?</b>	<b>Peer withdrawal intention?</b>	<b>If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?</b>
Yes	Yes	Briefly	No	Mentoring, campus orientation, course overview and expectations, information on sponsorships, should be on campus, university culture
Yes	No	N/A	Yes – study load and domestic issues	Academic writing, time management, referencing
Yes	No	N/A	Yes, but no reason given	Culturally appropriate learning, academic writing, time management, computer skills
Yes	No	N/A	No	Time management, essay writing, referencing

<b>Coping?</b>	<b>Contemplated withdrawal?</b>	<b>Discussed with lecturer?</b>	<b>Peer withdrawal intention?</b>	<b>If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?</b>
Struggled initially	No, I learned how to cope, but a tutor would have helped	I would have, after discussing with my family	Several: main issue was workload for those who had work commitments	Structure of essays, tips on how to build an idea for the content, in-depth reference and search skills, time management skills
	Yes, because of time pressures due to working full time and studying full time	No	Yes, and she did leave, I believe	Refresher stuff: essay writing, time management, introduction to academic expectations
OK, but finding the readings a bit complex	Yes, but I know I will finish	N/A	No	Computer skills, presentation skills, proof reading, essay writing
Yes, but struggling a bit	No	N/A	No	Mentoring, time management skills, guest speakers

Coping?	Contemplated withdrawal?	Discussed with lecturer?	Peer withdrawal intention?	If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?
Yes	No	N/A	Yes, due to family commitments mostly	<p>I did the Centre's bridging course, which has helped me very much</p> <p>But a bridging course for remote students would be great, and it should include what I learned: essay writing, referencing, mathematics, presentation skills, Aboriginal history</p>
Yes: well	Yes, due to family and work issues	N/A	No	Uni environment, academic language, referencing
Yes	No	N/A	Yes – family issues mostly, but work too	Not sure

<b>Coping?</b>	<b>Contemplated withdrawal?</b>	<b>Discussed with lecturer?</b>	<b>Peer withdrawal intention?</b>	<b>If a bridging course was available, what should it contain?</b>
Yes, but a bit of a struggle	Not at the moment	N/A now, but perhaps in the future	No	<p>Not sure, but writing skills are an issue for me and the referencing thing is a bit difficult</p> <p>Also computer skills and time management skills</p>

## Discussion of responses from current students

Of the 54 students who completed the questionnaire:

- 31 indicated a need for referencing skills (specifically, reference list and search skills)
- 31 indicated a need for academic writing/essay writing skills
- 14 indicated a need for computing skills (for online mode teaching)
- 9 indicated a need for improved time management skills.

Other issues that students indicated would be of assistance included:

- mentoring (5)
- familiarisation with the physical university environment (4)
- understanding what is involved in university study (2)
- being able to address domestic issues (2)
- presentation skills (2)
- administrative issues (fees, university life, HECS arrangements, scholarships)
- expectations of university study
- numeracy skills
- awareness of Aboriginal organisations
- social engagement opportunities
- culturally appropriate teaching
- Aboriginal history.

These responses confirm that a block-release study mode pre-tertiary academic pathway course would be a positive strategy to ensure that the retention rate among Indigenous students from regional and isolated parts of Australia enrolled in Curtin University's block-release degree courses could be dramatically improved. Such a program would take account of these findings and incorporate as far as possible these student-declared needs.

## Former student questionnaire

The questions asked of former students were as follows.

1. In which course were you enrolled?
2. How long did you study in the course and when?
3. Did you find it difficult to cope during any particular time in the course?
4. Can you recall a particular topic/subject/experience after which you withdrew?
5. What sorts of general issues caused you to withdraw?
6. When you thought you might withdraw, did you discuss this with your lecturers?
7. To your knowledge, were you aware of any of your peers' intention to withdraw?
8. If so, what were their issues?
9. When you withdrew, what inducements do you think would have made a difference, ie would a bridging or transition from high school to University study have helped you?
10. What kind of learning do you think might be appropriate for inclusion in a Pre-Tertiary Block Release Bridging Course?

## **Former student questionnaire responses**

The questionnaire above was sent to ten former students who had officially withdrawn or withdrawn without notice.

Unfortunately, no responses were received from these students.

## Appendix B: Staff questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed and administered to staff at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University teaching Indigenous Australian students from regional and isolated areas in the Bachelor of Indigenous Community Health, the Bachelor of Indigenous Community Management and the Bachelor of Education: Regional and Remote.

The questions asked were as follows.

- 1 Which course do you teach?
- 2 How long have you taught this course?
- 3 Does your student cohort have a high withdrawal rate?
- 4 What do you consider are the main reasons for student withdrawal?
- 5 What strategies should be used in order to address the issues you deem important regarding student retention?
- 6 Were you ever aware of the possibility of withdrawal by any of your students?
- 7 Have you ever been approached by students prior to their withdrawal?
- 8 If yes, did they discuss their issues with you?
- 9 If yes, and if appropriate, what advice did you offer?
- 10 To achieve the desired outcomes of this project, what do you think might be appropriate for inclusion in a pre-tertiary block-release study mode pre-tertiary academic pathway program?



## Staff questionnaire responses

Of the eight staff administered with a survey, responses were received from six staff, representing a response rate of 75 per cent.

Their responses are summarised in the table below, and discussed on the following pages.

Teaching period	Withdrawal rate	Reasons for withdrawal	Were you consulted?	Would a bridging course to your course address the student drop-out rate and what should it contain?
Seven years	High	Lack of literacy and academic skills, family issues, essay writing, referencing, locating information	Yes, and indications were that the students could have been better prepared for university study	Yes and should address academic literacy, referencing and research skills, and should be in block-release mode in order to familiarise students with the physical environment of Curtin
Three years	High – around 60%	Lack of academic readiness, family issues	Yes, and indications were that the students could have been better prepared for university study  Perhaps the campus was 'too big' at the time	Academic writing, time management skills, referencing, academic reading, presentation skills, but course should be on campus

Eight years	High – first-year students in particular	Lack of confidence in skill levels, family issues	Yes, sometimes managed to help and, if not, referred to counselling  But academic issues were primary concern to staff	Literacy skills are paramount when entering tertiary study  An on-campus (Curtin) block-release bridging course would ensure these skills, as well as referencing
One-and-a-half years	High	Lack of confidence, which could have been alleviated by tutorial support but pre-preparation would have been of great benefit	Yes, see left	Literacy skills, in particular referencing and search facilities, i.e. computer search skills, as well as presentation skills  I support an on campus block-release mode bridging course
More than 10 years	High	Academic failure, inability to respond to the expectations of university standards  Mainly essay writing and associated skills	Yes, and gave them my best advice given their skill levels and endeavours  Tutoring assistance is vital	Students should be offered a hands-on, pre-entry bridging course – summer school? – where intensive interactive tutoring can be given  Literacy skills, in particular referencing and search facilities, i.e. computer search skills, as well as presentation skills, would be of great benefit  It is my experience that online teaching is inappropriate for R/I students who learn better/well from face-to-face teaching mode

				at this stage due to accessibility
Three-and-a-half years	High – around 50%	Academic readings, workload, time management	Yes, and used tutoring services, checking of work and advice – normal teaching strategies	Students should be offered a pre-entry bridging course – but on-campus mode  Intensive concentration could be made regarding literacy skills, in particular referencing and research facilities, i.e. computer search skills, as well as presentation skills

## **Discussion of responses from staff**

Responses from staff regarding the potential benefits of a block-release study mode pre-tertiary academic pathway program for regional and isolated Indigenous students coalesce with those of students, in particular with regard to the issues of:

- academic language skills
- essay writing
- computer skills
- presentation skills
- referencing skills
- search facilitation.

# Appendix C: Survey of academic programs offered to Indigenous students (including those from regional and isolated communities) by Australian universities

Note that the terms 'foundation', 'access', 'special entry', 'alternative entry', and 'preparatory' are included below in the references to 'Indigenous enabling/bridging course' only if they are offered in a formal timeframe; that is, the duration of the course does not simply constitute an orientation program.

Thirty-nine Australian universities were surveyed in an effort to identify all existing academic programs offered to Indigenous students. (These included two private universities: Australian Catholic University and the University of Notre Dame.)

The results of the survey are summarised below, and the findings are discussed on the following pages.

Note: 'Block-release teaching course' can include Indigenous student enrolment.

## Survey results

**Note:** The text from each source below has been quoted directly rather than paraphrased.

### Australian Catholic University

Block-release teaching course (Bachelor of Education only)

Indigenous enabling bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

### Yalbalinga (Place of Learning) Indigenous Higher Education Unit

Yalbalinga Indigenous Higher Education Unit on Australian Catholic University's Strathfield campus (Mount Saint Mary) provides social, cultural, personal and academic support. It also provides a place to meet and work on assignments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For those needing tutorial support, the staff of Yalbalinga can arrange for the employment of tutors.

Uni Access courses consist of both certificate programs and diploma programs. Full-time certificate courses run for six months and consist of four units and diploma courses run for 12 months and consist of eight units. Your grades in the certificate or diploma program can be used to calculate your entry score, which will be considered in your application to transfer to your chosen Bachelor course. General support

Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and staff are encouraged to visit Yalbalinga to gain knowledge of the historic and contemporary issues for Australia's Indigenous people, and to understand and appreciate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

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In addition, Yalbalinga provides Indigenous students with:

- academic and administrative support
- social, cultural and personal support
- access to computer, study and relaxation facilities
- a great place to meet other Indigenous students
- ITAS tutorial assistance, and
- information about scholarships.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Special Entry Scheme**

If you are an Indigenous Australian and apply for entry to an undergraduate program at ACU, you may be given special entry based on your potential to succeed in the relevant course.

Applications to all undergraduate courses (other than those listed below) are made through the relevant state Tertiary Admissions Centre (TAC) i.e:

- [NSW and ACT Universities Admissions Centre \(UAC\)](#)
- [Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre \(QTAC\)](#)
- [Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre \(VTAC\)](#)

No separate application is required provided you identify as an Indigenous Australian through the online TAC application process. ACU will contact you to invite you to attend an interview with Faculty and Indigenous Higher Education Unit staff. Support is available from the [Indigenous Higher Education Units](#) before and after such an interview.

The Weemala Indigenous Higher Education Unit at Australian Catholic University's (ACU) Brisbane campus (McAuley at Banyo) provides social, cultural, personal and academic support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people undertaking a range of courses.

Specific courses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students include the Associate Degrees in Indigenous Education, and Business Administration. Details of these courses are available at Weemala.

### ***Recognition***

The Good Universities Guide has recognised achievements of the Brisbane campus awarding a five star performance rating for Indigenous participation. Weemala staff are committed to working with all University staff to provide Indigenous perspectives into courses at ACU through teaching, guest lectures, advice and research.

### ***Weemala and campus life***

Weemala staff and students contribute to campus life through their participation in social activities, campus liturgies, multicultural festivals, Indigenous Week celebrations and cross-cultural awareness workshops.

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Students and staff are encouraged to visit Weemala to gain knowledge of the historic and contemporary issues for Australia's Indigenous people, and to understand and appreciate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Weemala has an Indigenous Reflection Space which reaffirms the strong spiritual links with the land at Banyo and provides a special place to reflect, pray and gather for cultural activities.

### ***Away-from-base students***

At this time the only Away-from-Base course is the Bachelor of Education

### **Weemala – Update from Dean Duncan Roberts**

I recently had the opportunity to promote our 'Away-from-Base' education programs at an international conference for Indigenous people of Pacific Nations. The conference host, First Nations University of Canada, gave me the opportunity to discuss the importance of our away-from-base courses and to highlight our success, through offering a flexible education program specifically designed to assist our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Utilising the promotional material we have recently designed and disseminated through each of our units, I was able to gain interest from other Universities Indigenous peoples' from countries such as Canada, Mexico, Tibet, Taiwan and the United States. This was most pleasing, as each member recognised that the mode in which we offer the 'Away-from-Base' programs would greatly benefit the Indigenous people of their own regions.

### **Australian National University**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre provides a meeting place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying at the Australian National University in Canberra. Here you will find Indigenous students and staff strongly committed to improving education outcomes that benefit Australian Indigenous communities. We focus on:

- the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
- retention by having a dedicated Academic and Studies Coordinator to assist each student on campus;
- graduation, providing a uniquely ANU Indigenous graduation stole and by joining in your success by attending your graduation;
- supporting the teaching and learning of Indigenous students;
- undertaking advocacy on issues of concern to the Indigenous students and community; and
- providing advice and expertise in Indigenous areas as a contribution to the ANU community, the ACT Indigenous community and the Australian Community.

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No Bridging Course is offered by the ANU but students can enrol in the ANU Secondary College Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 11 students (from 2011). During their course, students have access to the library and computer systems. On completion, students will be given early offer of entry to the ANU and will gain credit towards studies at the ANU. Not all high school subjects are taught and normally only one subject per annum. Therefore this approach cannot be compared with a Bridging Course.

## **Bond University**

No Block-release teaching release course

No Indigenous bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

## **Central Queensland University**

No Block-release teaching course

Indigenous enabling/bridging course offered to regional and isolated Indigenous students

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

## **Central Queensland University's Indigenous Learning, Spirituality and Research Centre: Nulloo Yumbah**

### ***Enabling Course (TEP) – offered on residential basis externally***

The Tertiary Entry Program (TEP) is an enabling program which is delivered by the Office of Indigenous Engagement to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to assist them to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to undertake university study.

Mature age people who have not completed their high school education and recent school leavers who wish to have a second chance at entering tertiary education are encouraged to apply. TEP is offered externally by correspondence

### ***STEPS***

Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS) is suitable for those of you who want to undertake tertiary study and may be:

- returning to work after some time away
- keen to meet prerequisite subjects for your desired degree
- need some additional support to gain the confidence and skills to successfully enter and undertake university study.

Upon successful completion of STEPS, you will gain entry to CQ University Australia's diploma or degree programs through the CQ University direct entry process for those programs where direct entry is available. Entry to CQ University programs will be in

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accordance with specific undergraduate program entry requirements and successful completion of courses applicable to the program of choice. You will be advised of the appropriate study plan to facilitate the career pathway to which they aspire. You can choose to study in a full-time or part-time capacity in term 1, 2 or 3 of the academic year, dependent on course availability.

## **Charles Darwin University**

No Block-release teaching course

Enabling/Indigenous bridging course

Formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

### **Indigenous alternative Entry Program at Darwin Campus (Casuarina)**

This is a two day program which provides an opportunity to participate in an assessment program that will offer a study pathway to achieve success in mainstream tertiary study.

### **Indigenous Preparation for Tertiary Success Program (PTS)**

Our FREE PTS program of one semester has especially been designed for Indigenous students. If you have not studied in a while or completed year 12 and are unsure about whether you can succeed, our PTS program helps you to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence you need to be successful at university. Successful completion will give you the minimum entry requirements for most Diploma and Bachelor programs at the Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education (ACIKE), Charles Darwin University (CDU) and universities in South Australia.

#### ***Get started with PTS***

PTS has especially been designed for Indigenous students develop the skills, knowledge and confidence you need to succeed at university.

Ideal if you have not studied in a while or completed year 12.

Successful completion will give you the entry requirements for most Diploma and Bachelor programs at ACIKE, CDU and universities in South Australia.

Multi-mode delivery: face to face workshops followed by online work, completed at home no need to move.

Funding is available to cover travel and accommodation costs for eligible students.

PTS is FREE – you pay NO fees

#### ***How to apply***

- 1 Applications are made by clicking on the 'Get started with PTS' button above and filling in the application form.

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- 2 After we have received your application, the Coordinator of PTS will contact you about the free diagnostic task.
- 3 The diagnostic task consists of multiple-choice and short answer questions covering literacy and numeracy skills.
- 4 The diagnostic task is not a test, but helps us to determine whether PTS1 or PTS2 is the suited course for you.

### ***PTS is delivered in workshop mode***

The course is offered in workshop mode which consists of face-to-face workshops, followed by online work, completed at home. Participants will receive assistance from a coach/tutor who will support them with tasks and assignments throughout the semester.

The course is available in Casuarina or Alice Springs Desert Peoples Centre.

### ***Funding of travel and accommodation costs for eligible students***

Funding is available to cover travel and accommodation costs for eligible students, if they are required to travel from their permanent home to undertake their studies (eg if you live outside of the NT or outside of the Alice Springs or Darwin areas).

### ***PTS is your Pathway to a University Degree***

As PTS gives you the minimum entry requirements to most ACIKE (Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education) degrees, upon successful completion you will be ready to apply for admission to a wide range of ACIKE diploma and degree courses.

What's more, as many ACIKE courses are also available online, in areas like Indigenous Knowledges and languages, public policy, creative industries and education and health, you will be able to study from anywhere in Australia.

### ***Eligibility***

You are at least 18 years old and are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. You will need Year 10 or Year 11 standard. If you are a mature person without Year 10 or 11, you can apply on the basis of your skills and experience.

### ***Diagnostic task and applying to study PTS***

There is no fee to apply for PTS and applications are made by clicking on the 'Get started with PTS' button above and filling in the application form.

After we have received your application, the Coordinator of PTS will contact you about the free diagnostic task.

The diagnostic task consists of multiple-choice and short answer questions covering literacy and numeracy skills and can be completed in less than an hour.

The diagnostic task is not a test, but helps us to determine whether PTS 1 or PTS 2 is the suited course for you. Once we have evaluated your diagnostic task, we will send you a 'Letter of Offer'.

In case the diagnostic task shows us that you need further qualifications before you can do the PTS course, we will contact you and talk to you about options of how to obtain those qualifications.

Providing your personal details does not oblige you to anything. You can cancel the PTS application process at any time.

***NB Indigenous students can also access the Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP)***

### **Diagnostic task: Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP)**

To gain a place in the Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP) and Tertiary Enabling Program South Australia (TEPSA), applicants must first complete a diagnostic task.

The TEP diagnostic task consists of multiple-choice tasks covering literacy and numeracy skills. It is completed online and you are given 60 minutes to complete it.

Students who speak English as a second language, or who identify as having a disability, have the option of taking an extra 30 minutes.

### ***TEP (Tertiary Enabling Program) structure***

#### ***TEP units***

TEP1 – Orientation to Tertiary Study is a four unit program, which takes one semester if undertaken full time.

Successful completion of this stage prepares students for the second stage, TEP 2.

TEP2 – Preparation for Tertiary Study is a four unit program, which takes one semester if undertaken full-time.

It consists of three core units and one elective.

Successful completion of TEP 2 prepares students to undertake tertiary study at CDU.

## **Charles Sturt University**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging courses (Darrambal is an innovative skills assessment program of three days' duration – see below)

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

## **Wiradjuri Country**

CSU's main campuses are located on the traditional country of the Wiradjuri peoples. These lands have always been a place of learning. Wiradjuri peoples are instructed in their cultural traditions by those with the knowledge, wisdom and learning. CSU, ISS and Wiradjuri peoples are now working together in education. We proudly acknowledge this in CSU's philosophy of 'Sharing Learning in Wiradjuri Country'. Today, the tradition of learning continues as students from diverse communities and backgrounds come to CSU. We invite you to join the increasing number of Indigenous students at CSU.

## **What is Darrambal?**

Out of respect for the Wiradjuri peoples, in whose country CSU's main campuses are located, a Wiradjuri word has been adopted as the name of this programme. 'Darrambal' means 'footmarks' or 'roadway' and is used here to represent the life-long journey of learning we all travel.

Darrambal is an innovative skills assessment program. During it, the skills and abilities you already possess and your potential to succeed in your preferred course of study will be assessed. It may be an alternative pathway for you to continue your journey along your personal 'roadway of learning' beginning with CSU.

Darrambal is designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and is administered by CSU's Indigenous Students Services group (ISS)

Students who successfully complete Darrambal may be offered a place at CSU to study their preferred (or an optional) course. Alternatively, they may be encouraged to first undertake some other course of study either with CSU or another suitable provider.

## **When and where is Darrambal held?**

Darrambal is run for a maximum of three days and is held in various places and at different times of the year. Exactly where and when each program will be held depends largely on demand and University semester or term dates.

If you are interested or would like to learn more about Darrambal you can contact an Indigenous Student Support Officer at any of our offices. They can help you to determine which program will best meet your needs, tell you when and where it will be held, and register your interest.

## **Curtin University**

Block-release teaching courses

Enabling and bridging courses

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

**Note:** Although Curtin's Uni-Ready Course is offered free to Australian and New Zealand students, and includes content that address Curtin's desired graduate attributes, this project suggests that the Uni-Ready course is not appropriate for the Indigenous students for whom this project is being developed – those from a regional and isolated backgrounds.

This contention is based on the findings of Behrendt et al.'s (2012) *Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People*. Of particular relevance is the required level of pastoral care.

The research conducted for this project indicates that current and former students have encountered difficulty specifically relative to the issues of research, referencing and academic language. However, it must be acknowledged that cultural, family and financial problems also have a major impact on retention levels in these courses.

## **Deakin University**

Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

## **Institute of Koorie Education**

The Institute of Koorie Education continues to deliver the Faculties' degrees through community based mode in a culturally inclusive way, with a strong community responsive pedagogy. Courses are administered through Academic Course Teams (based at the Institute) in consultation with Unit Chairs, Course Coordinators, and Schools and Faculties. Community based learning integrates teaching and student support strategies through the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus within the curriculum. It is a mode of delivery that has proved successful for students across many Nations for which the Institute of Koorie Education has been recognised. In 2000, Deakin won the Australian Universities Teaching Award in the institutional category for innovative and practical approaches to the provision of educational services to the local and regional community.

***Institute of Koorie Education CBD Courses supported by IESIP 'Away-From-Base'***

### **Faculty of Arts and Education**

A300 Bachelor of Arts

A359 Bachelor of Creative Arts (Visual Arts)

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A400 Bachelor of Arts (Honours)  
D312 Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws  
D347 Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary)/Bachelor of Arts  
E700 Master of Education  
E760 Master of Teaching  
E592 Graduate Certificate of Professional Education & Training  
E359 Bachelor of Education (Primary)  
E330 Bachelor of Early Childhood Education  
E421 Bachelor of Early Childhood Education(Honours)  
E744SP Master of Education (Special Educational Needs)

### **Faculty of Health**

H326 Bachelor of Nursing  
H330 Bachelor of Social Work  
H747 Master of Public Health  
H520 Graduate Certificate of Diabetes Education  
H703 Master of Social Work  
H451 Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) (Honours)

### **Faculty of Business and Law**

M312 Bachelor of Laws  
M300 Bachelor of Commerce

### **Faculty of Science, Engineering and Built Environment**

S662 Graduate Diploma of Natural and Cultural Resource Management

Deakin also offers accommodation at its Kitjarra Residences for student accommodation during study intensives. The residences provide for a comfortable learning and social environment. The rooms are spacious, comfortable and are fully equipped to provide a healthy study environment. The lounges, kitchens and computer areas mean that life and study on-campus are enjoyable and study-friendly.

## **Edith Cowan University**

No Block-release teaching course

Indigenous enabling/bridging course (one-year Indigenous university orientation course, but not targeted at regional and isolated students)

Creating an accessible and effective pathway for regional and isolated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to tertiary study using block-release study mode

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

## **Kurongkurl Katitjin**

Welcome to Kurongkurl Katitjin, Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research at Edith Cowan University.

Kurongkurl Katitjin, pronounced koor-ong-kurl cut-it-chin, is a Nyoongar phrase meaning 'coming together to learn'.

Our mission is to 'provide excellence in teaching, learning and research in a culturally inclusive environment that values the diversity of Indigenous Australian history and cultural heritage'.

## **Indigenous Student Intake Test (ISIT)**

The test is a culturally appropriate assessment of skills and knowledge which facilitates the fast tracking of Indigenous students into a bridging or undergraduate course.

ISIT is comprised of a supervised test and an interview; and was designed to create a non-confronting experience.

- A passing grade of 60% fulfills minimum admission requirements into undergraduate ECU courses.
- A score of less than 60% may enable you to enter via the Indigenous University Orientation Course or alternative.
- In this case, you will be counselled about entry pathway options.

## **Indigenous University Orientation Course (IUOC)**

Tailored to enhance the learning skills of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders within the framework of their cultural and social aspirations.

It prepares Indigenous Australian students with the academic skills and understanding required to engage with the knowledge and processes of university degree studies. The course covers preparation of university writing skills; university reading skills and basic computer skills.

The course provides a pathway for Indigenous Australian students to enter into most ECU undergraduate courses. Students develop the academic skills and the cultural understandings of university necessary to succeed in higher education. Entry into some undergraduate programs may require additional extension studies and processes of negotiation.

You can find out more about these entry pathways by first selecting your student type:

- Year 12s
- school leavers
- non-school leavers.

Creating an accessible and effective pathway for regional and isolated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to tertiary study using block-release study mode

## **Indigenous-specific courses**

Kurungkurl Katitjin offers a range of courses designed to not only create new ways of learning and working in an inclusive Australia, but also provide students with the skills and abilities they need to work in the community and actively promote a positive sense of Indigenous identity, culture and heritage.

Courses cover topics such as Indigenous health; community management and leadership; and culture. Further information on the full range of courses on offer can be found on the [Future Students](#) web page.

## **Flinders University**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated students

## **Yunggoendi**

Yunggoendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education and Research provides a focal point for Indigenous students, encouraging and supporting students' participation and success in higher education. Staff of the Centre are also involved in Indigenous research and education at Flinders University as well as being actively involved in communities of practice.

## **Indigenous Admissions Scheme (IAS)**

Flinders University recognises that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have not had the opportunity to gain entry to university by traditional means. The Indigenous Admissions Scheme was developed to address this situation.

The Scheme provides the opportunity for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for entry into Flinders University undergraduate courses. Year 12 students who are concerned that they may not receive the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score needed for the course of their choice may also apply for admission to Flinders University through the Scheme.

To be eligible an applicant must be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in accordance with the Commonwealth definition which requires that the applicant:

- be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, and
- identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and
- be accepted as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the community in which he/she lives or has lived.

## **Foundation Studies Program – your pathway to University**

At the completion of the program, you can apply for entry to a range of Flinders

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undergraduate courses and begin your university study. In the final part of the program details will be provided on how to begin your university studies.

To apply for an undergraduate degree course at Flinders University you will need to have completed all four topics of the program. You will also need to have attended 75% of the classes in which you enrolled.

## **Griffith University**

No block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

Griffith University offers an Alternate Entry Program to Indigenous people seeking university admission. The program is designed for Indigenous school leavers and mature aged people who have not obtained or completed university entry level courses or TAFE bridging programs. Through the AEP GUMURRII Support Staff can assist you in determining the appropriate course of action for university study. As a mature age person, individual life skills and transferable work experiences may have provided individuals with adequate skills and experience to undertake academic study.

Proof of Indigeneity is mandatory prior to students being offered admission through the Alternate Entry Program.

The staff at the GUMURRII Unit are highly qualified to provide you with any advice in relation to studying at Griffith University.

## **James Cook University**

### **School of Indigenous Australian Studies**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

### **Tertiary Access Course (TAC)**

The Humanities Tertiary Course (HUTAC) provides an alternative pathway into undergraduate studies for potential university students. The course aims to equip students with the skills and capabilities to enter mainstream tertiary study. The course is offered through the School of Indigenous Australian Studies and is open to all students who meet the residency/citizenship requirements as per DEST Guidelines for Enabling Courses.

### ***Entry Requirements***

Candidates must successfully complete an Internal Selection Process (ISP) to gain admission to the course. This process assesses the student's status in relation to their level of literacy

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and numeracy.

### **Completion Requirements**

The normal completion time for the course is one year full-time or two years part time with students completing eight subjects with a total value of 24 credit points. It is possible however for students to apply for entry into a degree course after six months of study. This is dependent on their academic achievement and the entry requirement rules of the specific degree.

### **Humanities Tertiary Access Course (HUTAC), Townsville, Cairns**

James Cook University provides the opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access and participate in studies at tertiary level.

HuTac aims to prepare students with the skills and capabilities to enter tertiary study. The course is of six months duration if studied full time or one year part time. It provides an alternate pathway into undergraduate courses for potential university students. The course is open to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

To gain entry into the Tertiary Access Course, potential students must sit a two-part examination testing (1) Literacy and (2) Numeracy, as well as undergo an interview.

Acceptance into a degree course depends on academic achievement and the entry requirements of the specific degree.

Subjects will be offered by internal and external mode in Townsville and Cairns in Teaching Period 1 and Teaching Period 2.

### **La Trobe University**

- No Block-release teaching course

- No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

- No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

### **Indigenous education at La Trobe**

La Trobe University has a long standing commitment to teaching, learning and research within the area of Indigenous Australian studies. The area is multi-disciplinary and incorporates activities across all faculties. The Indigenous Education Group acts as a focus for teaching and research activities and brings academics, researchers, students and Indigenous communities together with the primary goal of increasing interest and scholarly exploration of the historical and contemporary cultures, issues and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **Acknowledgement**

La Trobe University has campuses and undertakes teaching, learning and research activities in the traditional lands of the following people:

Creating an accessible and effective pathway for regional and isolated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to tertiary study using block-release study mode

- Wurundjeri
- Boonerwung
- Jaara Jaara
- Latji Latji
- Barkindji
- Muthi Muthi
- Wiradjuri
- Dhudhuroa
- WayWurru
- Yorta Yorta
- Bangerang
- Taunerong

The University acknowledges Aboriginal people's ongoing connection to the land upon which its campuses are located and values the contributions Indigenous Australians make to its activities.

### **Office of the Director, Indigenous Education**

The Office of the Director, Indigenous Education, provides direction for action and aims to overcome challenges involved with access, participation, retention and success in the context of tertiary education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at La Trobe.

The strategy is underpinned by both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Western, cultural and organisational philosophies and ways of being. These include; Dreaming, Cultural Integrity, Indigenous Knowledge, Flexibility, Sustainability and Survival, Determination and Empowerment, Achievable Goals with Measurable outcomes, Sharing, Collegiality, Evidence based practice and Growth.

La Trobe University is committed to developing and growing educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This commitment is evident in statements made in the University's strategic plan.

### **Indigenous Education Group**

The Indigenous Education group incorporates:

- Indigenous Student Services
- Indigenous Australian Teaching and Research
- Indigenous Employment

The group has members at all campuses and includes both academic and general staff. The group is led by a Director, Indigenous Education, reporting to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Student Services).

Creating an accessible and effective pathway for regional and isolated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to tertiary study using block-release study mode

### ***Statement of Purpose***

The goal of the Indigenous Education group is to exemplify and promote best practice in relation to Indigenous Australian Student Services, Indigenous Australian Studies Teaching and Research and Indigenous Australian Employment in the tertiary education sector.

### **Macquarie University**

Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

### **Block-release teaching options**

Bachelor of Teaching

Bachelor of Community Management

Alternative entry program/bridging courses, but not formalised; running alongside student study packages

### **Bridging courses**

Sometimes you may need extra help before starting a particular unit or course. This may be to meet a pre-requisite for a particular unit or simply to improve or refresh your skills.

We offer:

- bridging courses for specific degrees (contacting the department to discover whether bridging courses or other study is required )
- maths skills workshops
- academic writing courses
- literacy courses.

### **Monash University**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

Offers a Special Admissions Scheme which would include Indigenous students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds or regional or isolated areas; although developed for regional and isolated students, it is not specifically addressed to Indigenous students from regional and isolated areas.

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## **Murdoch University**

No Block-release teaching course

K Track Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

### **Indigenous programs**

#### ***K-Track: Indigenous Pathway to University***

Whether you're just starting out on your educational journey or you're looking for a change in direction, K-Track may be for you. This innovative pathway into university gives you the chance to:

- commence your studies in either February or July of each year
- participate in a dynamic, thought-provoking and innovative course\*
- develop a range of skills that will help you succeed at university while getting a taste for university life
- gain entry, upon successful completion of this course, to a range of undergraduate degree programs.

\* Centrelink approved and fee-free

As Murdoch University's Indigenous enabling course, this program gives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students the opportunity to develop their capacity to learn at the undergraduate level, by engaging with thought-provoking topics within a vibrant and supportive learning environment. Designed specifically to prepare students for university, successful K-Track students will, upon completion of the program, be eligible to enrol into an undergraduate course of their choice at Murdoch University.

#### ***What will I be studying in K-Track?***

K-Track is the first half of a two-part bridging program. It consists of three modules, taught over three days per week. These modules will help you brush up on and extend your computer skills, improve your writing ability and develop your capacity to think critically and scientifically. In your second semester, you will complete Murdoch's OnTrack program, which is available at the South Street, Rockingham and Peel campuses of Murdoch University.

#### ***OnTrack – a pre-university program***

If major disruptions and problems have affected your life, you may be able to apply for this free pre-uni program. You could be eligible for OnTrack if one of these applies to you:

- You're currently receiving a government pension or a low income.
- You have a disability or medical condition.

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- You're Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander.
- You have arrived in Australia as a refugee or hold a Humanitarian visa.
- You live in an isolated or regional location.
- You are a female who wishes to study Engineering.

Once you've completed the 14-week program, you could be offered a place in one of our university courses.

## **Queensland University of Technology**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

### **Oodgeroo Unit**

As an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student, you'll have plenty of cultural and academic support from our Oodgeroo Unit throughout your university life.

As an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student, you'll have plenty of cultural and academic support from our Oodgeroo Unit throughout your university life.

If you are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, and want to study an undergraduate course you may be eligible for admission through the Centralised Assessment Selection Program (CASP).

Offered by our [Oodgeroo Unit](#), CASP is an alternate entry pathway to university. We take into account prior learning and other personal achievements to give you a better chance of getting into the course you want, as well as a bursary to help you with study or living costs.

### ***What are the benefits?***

#### ***Get into the course you want***

If you haven't completed Year 12 or your OP doesn't meet the cut-off for your chosen course, you can still get into university.

We'll take into account your commitment to tertiary study, any previous study, and your work or community experiences.

#### ***Financial support***

You will receive a guaranteed bursary of \$1,000 to help you with study or living costs.

You can also apply for Equity scholarships, including Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarships.

### ***Am I eligible for the Oodgeroo alternative entry program?***

You are eligible if you:

- are applying for an undergraduate course through QTAC
- are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- are accepted as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the community in which you live or have lived, and can provide Confirmation of Aboriginality from a community organisation.

You will be introduced to life at QUT and the support services available to you while you are studying; we will answer any questions or concerns you have about studying at university and help you complete scholarship application form.

If you have applied to the QUT Equity Scholarships Scheme before your interview, you may also receive an early indication of your scholarship application outcome.

Bring to the interview:

- your completed Applicant Portfolio (if you have not already submitted it before the interview)
- your Confirmation of Aboriginality
- any relevant certificates, references, and/or awards
- school report cards (this is important for school leavers)
- current resume (for non year 12 applicants).

### ***What happens next?***

If you are successful in your interview, and you have selected an eligible QUT course as your highest preference, QTAC will send you an official letter in the next available offer round.

If you accept your offer, we will contact you and let you know what you need to do to get started at university.

### **Once you have become a QUT student**

As an Indigenous student studying at QUT, you'll also have access to:

- ongoing support from our staff, including help with your studies, applying for scholarships and cultural concerns
- up to date information regarding scholarships, cadetships, internships and graduate programs
- computer facilities at the Oodgeroo Unit on your campus
- spaces where you can study and socialise with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

### **Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology**

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No Block-release teaching course (some certificate courses have variations on the theme)

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

The Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples can support and encourage you throughout your studies.

Ngarara Willim means 'gathering place' in the language of the Wurundjeri, the traditional custodians of the land where RMIT stands.

Our staff can assist you to engage and re-engage with education. We offer ongoing guidance with study, living and cultural needs.

Join the RMIT Ngarara Willim Centre community, where we challenge you to reach your potential.

## **Southern Cross University**

No Block-release teaching course

Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

### **Indigenous Australian student support**

Indigenous Australian Student Services (IASS) provides a wide range of information, advice and support to Indigenous Australian students in a culturally safe and friendly environment.

An IASS Officer is located on campus at Lismore, Gold Coast and Coffs Harbour to ensure that services are provided to all Indigenous Australian students within the SCU footprint. External Indigenous Australian students are encouraged to contact IASS via email and telephone as many services are provided on an outreach basis.

The services provided by IASS are available to all Indigenous Australian students studying any degree at Southern Cross University.

The support roles of IASS are multi-functional and include:

- Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS)
- Testing and Assessment Program (T&A).

If you are an Indigenous Australian who has applied to study at SCU but have not yet been made an offer based solely on your application, there is an alternative entry scheme available. The Testing and Assessment Program allows you to sit an assessment task which will be assessed by an academic who will then discuss your options for University admission. This may include you receiving an offer into the course you have applied for or considering an alternative pathway into your preferred course. Alternative pathways may include the completion of the Preparing for Success Program or articulation via another course.

Preparing for Success is offered either as a 13-week program or available as part time study. Creating an accessible and effective pathway for regional and isolated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to tertiary study using block-release study mode



(up to 1 year). The aim of the program is to equip students with study skills appropriate for success at University. This program can be undertaken at Lismore, Gold Coast and Coffs Harbour campuses and also by distance education. Students who complete PSP can usually go straight into a SCU degree with confidence that they are well prepared to embark on study.

## **Swinburne University of Technology**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

### **Courses**

Swinburne TAFE offers the following programs to Indigenous communities:

- CHC30108 Certificate III in Community Services Work
- CHC40708 Certificate IV in Community Services Work
- CHC50608 Diploma of Community Services Work
- CHC41708 Certificate IV in Education Support

## **University of Adelaide**

No Block-release teaching course

Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

## **Wilto Yerlo University Preparatory Program**

The Wilto Yerlo University Preparatory Program (WY-UPP) is a new program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students offered at both Adelaide and Port Augusta by the University of Adelaide.

### ***Aim***

To prepare Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to study successfully at the University of Adelaide.

### ***Entry Requirements***

Applicants must be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, 17 years and over.

### ***What This Program is about***

- An alternative study path for students entering tertiary education

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- A flexible program of study
- Arrangements with degree programs to support the individual student's study direction
- Maximum academic extension and support
- A commitment to honouring the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge

### ***How to Apply***

Application forms for the Wilto Yerlo University Preparatory Program are available from Wilto Yerlo.

### ***The Application Process***

All applicants sit an assessment to evaluate their learning requirements for entry to the University. The selection process is held in early December and late January every year, and in late June for mid-year applicants. Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of the selection process.

Successful applicants enrol in the program during February or July (mid-year intake). Wilto Yerlo runs an orientation program before the University year begins for all new students.

### ***Program Structure***

The program is one year of full-time study with an exit point after 6 months depending on the individual student needs.

Students must undertake 2 core courses and a choice of 1 or 2 electives each semester. Each course is worth 3 units and 9 units = a full-time study load.

<b>Semester One</b>		<b>Semester Two</b>	
<b>Core courses</b>	<b>Electives</b>	<b>Core courses</b>	<b>Electives</b>
Indigenous Studies A	Studies in Humanities A	Indigenous Studies B	Studies in Humanities B
Tertiary Studies A	Studies in Social Sciences A	Tertiary Studies B	Studies in Social Sciences B
	Maths for University A		Maths for University B
	Science for University A		Science for University B

	Health Sciences for University A (TBA)		Health Sciences for University B (TBA)
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### ***The University year***

The University year consists of two semesters, with each semester of 12 weeks duration. The first semester starts in late February and the second starts in late July. Further advice can be obtained from Wilto Yerlo or the University website.

### ***Costs***

There are no HECS–HELP Higher Education Loan Program fees associated with this program.

### ***Abstudy***

Abstudy is an income tested financial assistance scheme to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students undertaking studies at universities and TAFE institutes. Details about the Abstudy allowance can be obtained from any office of Centrelink.

### ***Scholarships***

There are a number of scholarships available to assist Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students with the costs of their studies at University. Centrelink also provides Start-Up Scholarships for successful applicant to the University.

### ***Student Support***

Wilto Yerlo provides students with a variety of facilities and services including: ITAS tutoring, assistance and advice with academic and personal concerns, a student common room, computer suites and study areas, photocopier and printer and a kitchen area.

### ***ITAS Tutoring***

The Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) provides Aboriginal students with tutors to assist with their studies, free of charge to the student. Wilto Yerlo administers this scheme at the University with experienced tutors able to assist in all of the Preparatory Program courses.

### **University of Ballarat**

No Block-release teaching course (except for certificate-level courses)

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

The Aboriginal Education Centre at the University of Ballarat (UB) provides support to prospective and current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Centre has a range of support for both Higher Education and TAFE students at Mt Helen, SMB and Horsham which any student is welcome to use.

Students are able to receive a broad range of educational and community support at all campuses of UB. Our staff are available to provide personalised support.

Services provided include:

- Scholarship information
- Computer lounge
- Access to tutorial support
- Resource library
- Career advice
- Facilitation of involvement with local Aboriginal community
- Referrals to childcare, accommodation, financial and transport services.

The **Aboriginal Education Centre** is also available to provide advice about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues to the broader UB student and staff population.

## **University of Canberra**

No Block-release teaching course

Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

## **Ngunnawal Indigenous Higher Education Centre**

The Ngunnawal Indigenous Higher Education Centre has been functioning as the focal point for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders studying at the University of Canberra since 1985. It is located in Building 7 at the University campus at Bruce. The University offers a wide range of courses with a professional orientation.

The Ngunnawal Indigenous Higher Education Centre will serve its students and clients through the provision of excellent education and development programs on a national basis. Our transition to research and development function will further develop its focus on initiating culturally relevant learning strategies and providing sources of innovation for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The Centre will also provide educational programs that focus on industries, which provide an economic base within those communities and provide community members with management expertise to develop enterprise partnerships, reflecting local and national growth areas. The Ngunnawal Indigenous Higher Education Centre will be a Learning Branch that is nationally active but locally responsive.

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The Foundation Program operates for those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who have not passed Year 12 (or equivalent). It also provides entry to University for those students who have been away from study for many years and would like to develop the communication and study skills needed for success at University.

### ***Admission Requirements***

The Foundation Program provides for those who do not meet the normal admission requirements but have a reasonable chance of success. In addition to previous education, any relevant work experience will be taken into consideration.

To participate in the Foundation Program you must complete the Students Needs Assessment, which involves three parts:

Part 1: Written Essay

Part 2: Mathematics

Part 3: Interview with Academic Advisor

### ***Aims of the program***

To give students and awareness of the demands of tertiary study

To develop the skills and knowledge to equip students for success in tertiary study

To assist students' learning in regular university units.

The program can be undertaken on a full or part-time basis. As a full time student you study in one semester:

- One or two regular university units of your choice (which count toward your degree) and
- Two Foundation Units: Foundation Study Skills and Foundation Communication Skills.

## **University of Melbourne**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course (except as noted below)

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

In 2009, the University first introduced the BA (Extended), an embedded bridging program for Indigenous students which includes residence at Trinity and other residential Colleges of the University of Melbourne. The program is a four-year degree designed to build skills and confidence through integrating bridging subjects into the first two years of a Bachelor of Arts course. The Faculty of Arts, Trinity College and Murrup Barak jointly coordinate the program.

## Murrup Barak

Murrup Barak provides support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students currently undertaking undergraduate and postgraduate courses at the University of Melbourne and its affiliated institutions.

These services include:

- Active outreach and recruitment, developing partnerships with schools and other organisations to encourage Indigenous Australians to see study at the University of Melbourne as a desirable and achievable goal.
- Facilitating leadership programs for Indigenous students at the University, encouraging their development as future leaders.
- Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) and other academic skills support which aims to optimise success and retention.
- Indigenous Scholarships
- Student Welfare Support, ensuring students are able to focus on study, unencumbered by concerns about housing, finance or other concerns which may impede study
- Programs, which increase the understanding and respect of all students for Indigenous knowledge, culture and values (for example the First Australians series of seminars, which aimed to provide insight and understanding of Indigenous Issues relevant to the University and broader community).

The Murrup Barak building is located in the centre of campus and provides Indigenous students with meeting rooms, study areas, computer equipment and a resource library. The Centre also provides an opportunity for liaison between the Indigenous community and the University and is an important meeting place for those interested in Indigenous history and culture.

The University is strongly committed to increasing the number and ensuring the success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enrolled in all undergraduate and graduate programs. To this end, in 2011 every Faculty and Graduate School developed an Indigenous Student Recruitment and Retention Plan outlining the actions it will take.

As a University we have an important contribution to make through the growth of the cadre of Indigenous Australian graduates from the higher education system. Indigenous Graduates can contribute significantly to a transformed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander future through their service and by pressing for Indigenous advancement and reform within their professions; through their leadership; and through their role in Indigenous economic and cultural development.

The University of Melbourne Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a university-wide commitment that integrates our approach to Indigenous student recruitment and support to a broader institutional development agenda. The RAP has six key action areas, including: Partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, Cultural Recognition,

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Recruitment and Retention, Teaching and Learning, Research, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Employment.

Within the RAP, a number of actions and strategies have been identified to enhance the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to build upon, extend and sustain current efforts. The strategies aim to foster innovation, build an evidence-based approach and develop a framework that will embed responsibility for delivery across University programs. There are seven action items listed in the RAP which relate directly to the area of Student Recruitment and Retention, these are:

- Review university-wide roles and accountabilities for Indigenous student recruitment and retention to ensure direct alignment with future strategy
- Identify recruitment and retention strategies for Indigenous students in the graduate professional degrees
- Establish targets for undergraduate degrees and graduate professional degrees
- Extend scholarship opportunities for Indigenous students, including a mentoring component with suitable role models
- Extend University initiatives in the Goulburn Valley in collaboration with Indigenous community partners to improve secondary school retention and build on outcomes of the Academy of Sport Health and Education (ASHE)
- Review and extend the 'Extended Bachelor of Arts Program' model
- Implement proposals to revitalise the University's provision of opportunities for training and professional practice in Indigenous arts and culture

Each year the University provides a report on our Indigenous Student Programs to the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE).

The University of Melbourne welcomes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to all of our courses and programs. The University currently has around 180 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Just over 100 Indigenous students are enrolled in an undergraduate program and some 90 are enrolled in a graduate degree. We provide a range of specific support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and our completion rates are very high. The Murrup Barak, Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development provides support to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled, as well as those wishing to apply for a place at the University of Melbourne. With a dedicated team of student support professionals, we offer information, advice and support on a wide range of academic, cultural and personal matters to help make your transition to University studies easier.

## **University of New England**

No Block-release teaching course

Indigenous bridging course (TRACKS)

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

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## **Ooralala Aboriginal Centre**

A study support and advisory centre for internal and external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

### **Alternative Entry**

ISP – The Internal Selection Program is an alternative method of entry to UNE for Indigenous students wishing to undertake university studies. Students need to apply for entry to ISP through the Ooralala Centre and also apply for a course of study at UNE.

TRACKS is a tertiary preparation program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who would like to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake undergraduate studies at UNE. The TRACKS Tertiary Preparation Program offers flexible learning and first-hand experience in university study. The TRACKS program has been developed to provide students with an opportunity to access and explore tertiary education and to make informed choices about the future direction of their education. Students can draw upon their own experiences and values while developing skills needed in a successful tertiary career.

The course is of a full year duration: 6 units and is offered only online. It can be studied full or part-time.

The Internal Selection Program is an alternative method of entry to UNE for Indigenous students wishing to undertake university studies. This entry is based on a selection process which is minimal and undertaken 'on the day'. The assessment is based on an essay.

Although eligible domestic students are exempt from the student contribution amount for HECS, they are still liable for the Student Services and Amenities Fee. Eligible students may apply for SA-HELP with regard to the Student Services and Amenities Fee.

## **University of New South Wales**

No Block-release teaching course

Indigenous enabling/bridging courses

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

Build academic skills through UNSW's enabling programs.

Enabling programs are designed for Indigenous people who have the potential, but are not yet prepared for first year undergraduate study. Enabling programs generally run for one year and are offered at UNSW's Kensington campus in Sydney. At the end of the program, students who have demonstrated an ability to perform at a tertiary level can apply to transfer into a degree program at UNSW.

Enabling programs are currently available in Arts and Social Sciences and Law. Indigenous students can also enter the Uniprep which is a general enabling course and has, on successful completion entry to most courses at the University.

Applicants must also show evidence of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Creating an accessible and effective pathway for regional and isolated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to tertiary study using block-release study mode



## University of Newcastle

No Block-release teaching course

Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

The Wollotuka Institute acknowledges the traditional Aboriginal owners of the lands on which our offices are located:

- The Pambalong Clan of the Awabakal Nation – Callaghan Campus
- Darkinjung People – Ourimbah Campus
- Birpai People – Port Macquarie Campus

The all-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching and professional staff who manage our academic programs are passionate and committed to the advancement of Aboriginal education. Wollotuka offers a range of programs from enabling – Yapug Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enabling Program through to Research Higher Degree Programs with Umuliko Indigenous Higher Education Research Centre.

Wollotuka also provides the perfect opportunity for students seeking Honours, in particular the Bachelor of Aboriginal Studies (Hons) program, as well as post-graduate programs in Masters and Doctoral studies to follow their undergraduate degree.

### Yapug

If you're an Indigenous Australian and aged 18 years or over, Yapug is your key to university! Offered at the Newcastle campus at Callaghan, Yapug is a program designed to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people gain skills for entry into undergraduate degrees at the University of Newcastle.

Yapug will allow you to:

- discover your own interest in and capacity for on-going tertiary studies
- prepare for study at university level; and
- obtain, on successful completion of the program, a ranking which allows you to apply for a place in an undergraduate degree program at university.

In Yapug, you will either enrol in the full-time program (80 units) which is taken over one year (two semesters), or the part-time program which is taken over three or four semesters. Students should take no more than 40 units in any one semester.

## University of Notre Dame

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

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## **Alternative Entry Pathways 2013**

The University of Notre Dame Australia places great value on applicants coming to the University through a variety of entry pathways.

Students who have applied through the Notre Dame admission process, but have not been offered a place in their nominated course, are encouraged to consider an alternative entry pathway.

Successful completion of one of the following programs/methods will allow prospective students to apply for entry to their course of choice. Prospective students should note that completion of an alternative entry pathway does not guarantee entry into a course at Notre Dame. There are a variety of pathways as noted hereunder.

- Notre Dame Tertiary Enabling Program – a full-time, thirteen week (one semester) alternative entry program. Runs each semester.
- Foundation Year – a one year bridging course.
- Mature-age University Entrance Examinations.
- Special Tertiary Admissions Test (for applicants over 20 years of age): Overall score of 145 required.
- TAFE or other RTO Certificate IV in a relevant area.

## **University of Queensland**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit was established at the University of Queensland in 1984. Its objective is to become a centre of excellence and expert opinion on teaching, research and consultation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to maintain a committed system of personal and academic support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying at the University of Queensland.

## **Alternative Entry Scheme**

The Alternative Entry Scheme is designed to assist Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants who are interested in pursuing tertiary education.

In addition to gaining entry on the basis of your Overall Position (OP), or other entrance score, there is the opportunity to apply for admission through UQ's Alternative Entry Scheme. The Alternative Entry application process considers a range of factors in addition to formal education and will consider factors such as your employment history, academic abilities, personal interests and references.

Creating an accessible and effective pathway for regional and isolated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to tertiary study using block-release study mode

To apply for the Alternative Entry Scheme, applicants must:

- 1 Have identified on their QTAC application as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 2 Have listed UQ as a preference in their QTAC application. QTAC sends us (UQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit) a record of all UQ applicants that have identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. We will then send you an Alternative Entry Scheme application package.
- 3 Complete and send the Alternative Entry Scheme Application Form to UQ's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit.

A member of the Student Relations Team of the UQ ATSSIS Unit will contact you to confirm receipt of your application.

UQ College, located at Ipswich Campus provides pathway programs for students to enable entry to higher education as well as direct entry into tertiary studies and degrees. Whilst encouraging enrolment from Indigenous students, this course is open to all – not specifically Indigenous students.

UQ College's customised programs provide direct pathways into award programs at UQ College, UQ and further afield. The Tertiary Preparation Program has been designed to develop students to a year 12 equivalent level and is targeted to students who may need additional academic development, a new start or an opportunity to improve their career and/or personal position. Its aim is to equip students with the skills and attributes needed to go onto further university study. Students have a choice of studying the whole program (5 courses from a list of 9) or choosing one or more courses only to meet their prerequisite study needs. Student who successful complete the whole program are eligible to apply for a QTAC ranking.

By creating innovative pathways into higher education, UQ College places a primary focus on making high level educational achievements accessible to all.

## **University of South Australia**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

## **David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research**

### ***University preparation for Indigenous students***

Uni Preparation sessions for new Indigenous students are conducted prior to the start of the academic year. These sessions provide academic and study skills to prepare students for their new courses. They also provide an opportunity for new students to develop support networks, and to familiarise themselves with academic procedures and resources. The sessions are organised to give students a non-threatening but realistic introduction to student life and expectations at university. Each Study Centre tailors its own sessions to suit

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the specific needs and match the resources available to the local students. Sessions may include:

- assignment work with submission of tasks,
- familiarisation with the UniSA online environment including skill development involving access to email, library catalogues, course Home Pages and so on,
- study skills workshops covering time and resource management, assignment analysis, planning and research strategies, and
- a variety of sessions to introduce students to key people, resources and procedures

The University Preparation for Indigenous Students sessions have been very successful in providing students with a sound foundation to make a comfortable start at university. Key indicators of success are the confidence and independence of students at the commencement of their program, often by being able to provide guidance or assistance to other new students. Feedback from participants has been very positive with students highlighting the value of the academic and study skill sessions and generally appreciating the opportunity of meeting support and resource people.

## **University of Southern Queensland**

No Block-release teaching course

Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

The Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK), located across three campuses, Toowoomba, Fraser Coast and Springfield, offers support to Indigenous students prior to, and throughout, their university studies. The main purpose of the centre is to encourage and assist the further education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges has a continuing commitment to, and involvement in, the Indigenous community of the region.

### ***Why choose the Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program?***

If you do not have the right school qualifications or it has been some time since you studied, USQ's Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program (IHEPP) is the perfect way to start studying at uni. This pathway program has been developed to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the academic skills needed for university study.

You will study 4 courses (subjects), all with an Indigenous focus, to develop your computing, writing, maths and general study skills. There is also an option to gain knowledge and research cultural issues impacting on Indigenous peoples and their history through a cultural studies course.

Queensland has the second largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Australia with several thousand Indigenous people living in Toowoomba and the surrounding districts. The Indigenous community is comprised of traditional owners, Indigenous people from throughout Queensland, the Torres Strait and Australia.

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## **University of Sydney**

Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

Formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

## **Yooroang Garang – Health Science/Education**

Students attend three week-long sessions each semester (six blocks per year) on campus at the Koori Centre and the remainder of the course is completed independently at home.

Diploma of Education (Aboriginal)

Bachelor Education (Secondary: Aboriginal Studies)

Graduate Certificate/Diploma/Master of Indigenous Languages Education

## **Cadigal Alternative Entry Program**

This program is an admission and support scheme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who wish to study at the University of Sydney. The scheme provides entry for both HSC and non HSC applicants into all undergraduate courses at the University of Sydney. Most of the students entering the Faculty through the Cadigal Alternative Entry Program are recent school leavers. A minority are mature aged students who have partially completed an undergraduate degree or have demonstrated a capacity to succeed at University study. Interview process and relativities in certain courses – 83% success rates.

At the Faculty of Health Sciences, students who enter the University through the Cadigal Alternative Entry Program are offered academic and cultural support through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Science Support Program.

## **Regional Entry Schemes**

The University offers special entry schemes for applicants from regional backgrounds, linked to the faculties of Pharmacy and Veterinary Science. These schemes are designed to improve access into the University's courses for Year 12 students from country areas.

Applicants who are approved under these schemes may qualify for admission with an ATAR that is close to, but below, the normal entry standard for their course of choice. The maximum concession under these schemes is five points.

These regional entry schemes have different application processes, and requirements for approval also vary.

## **University of Tasmania**

No Block-release teaching course

Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

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## **Murina Preparation Pathway**

### ***What is the Murina Preparation Pathway?***

Murina is a preparation program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are thinking of doing university studies and who feel they might need some extra learning and support before they begin their degree studies.

Murina is designed to help beginning students in two ways. First, Murina offers 'taster' units to familiarise students with the types of teaching and learning they will encounter in degree subjects. Second, Murina helps to build learning, communication, writing and computer skills and gets you ready for university study.

Murina students study the units they need in their own tailored pathway. They can take one or more Murina units, as well as University Preparation Units (UPP) to build skills and confidence. They may also be eligible to undertake first year Associate Degree units if their enrolment is accepted.

### ***How will Murina help me?***

Murina is a bridging program for Indigenous people – this means it will help you:

- learn how to learn;
- improve your communication skills in both writing and speaking;
- extend your problem solving skills;
- fill in gaps in your background, especially in basic maths, essay writing and using computers;
- develop personal confidence in your ability to succeed at tertiary study;
- gain an overall understanding of university life, and
- respect your community and culture.

### ***Who can be a Murina student?***

Murina students are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from anywhere in Australia. They may be mature aged people who have been away from study for a long time, young people aged 18 or over who've recently finished school or people who have tried a number of courses over the years and now want to know more about university study. Murina assists all of these students to build their skills and confidence and get them ready to move into the first year of a degree.

## **University of the Sunshine Coast**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

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## **Indigenous Alternative Entry Program**

The University is committed to offering our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the opportunity to achieve tertiary qualifications.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply for admission to the University through both standard and alternative admission procedures.

### ***How to apply***

School leavers and mature-aged undergraduate applicants must apply online through the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC). Ensure you identify yourself as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander when completing your application form.

### ***When to apply***

- QTAC Applications for study in Semester One must be lodged by the end of September each year.
- QTAC Applications for study in Semester Two must be lodged by mid to late May each year.

### ***The admission process***

If you indicate a preference to study a degree at the University of the Sunshine Coast on your application, QTAC will notify our Student Administration office. In turn, if you indicate that you are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander on your application form, the Student Administration office will notify Indigenous Services and we will follow up with an informal email outlining our services. If you are not made an offer in the first, second and major rounds, then Indigenous Services will contact you directly. An Indigenous Alternative Entry Program application package(PDF 639KB) will be sent to you, which is to be returned to Indigenous Services with supporting documentation, eg confirmation of Aboriginality form, school report/s and references.

Once all documents are received by Indigenous Services, all applications will be assessed by an Indigenous Services Officer, a faculty representative, and an Academic Skills Advisor. This process is to ensure that we can provide you with the necessary support needed while studying here at the University of the Sunshine Coast. When all applications are approved, Student Administration will be notified and a letter of offer will be sent to you. An email will be sent to invite you to take part in the Indigenous Orientation Program Day, scheduled the week prior to the University O-Week.

If, however, you are not successful in gaining entry to the University of the Sunshine Coast, you will be contacted to discuss ways to increase your chances of future success, or you may be advised to enrol in the preparatory pathways (Enabling Program or Tertiary Preparation Pathway).

USC offers three different courses alternative general pathways:

- Tertiary Preparation Pathway (TPP)

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- Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP)
- University Skills in Community Course

## **University of Technology, Sydney**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

## **Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning**

### ***Direct Entry Program***

There are many pathways to university. As a prospective student, whether you are a current school leaver (with or without an ATAR), a recent school leaver or mature aged, you can apply for undergraduate degrees at UTS through our Direct Entry Program and UAC.

We provide specialised assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people wanting to study undergraduate degrees at UTS. We also provide advice and guidance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people looking to apply to postgraduate programs at UTS.

Our Direct Entry Program offers prospective undergraduate students an opportunity to illustrate their capability for higher education via a testing, assessment and interview process. Selection is also based on factors including previous life, education and work experience.

### ***Learning Development Program***

Our Learning Development Program is primarily designed for our first year students. The program assists in the development of your academic communication skills, and, where needed, your mathematics aptitude.

It is delivered via individual tuition or in small groups and is regularly reviewed to ensure it addresses the changing demands of higher education.

Our students frequently comment on how important the program has been in ensuring their academic success. Performance tracking data shows that students who attend the program weekly have greatly increased rates of success.

## **University of Western Australia**

No Block-release teaching course

Indigenous enabling (orientation)/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students



## **Aboriginal Orientation Course**

The Aboriginal Orientation Course (00020) is a year-long course which prepares students for entry to most degree courses at the University of Western Australia.

All students enrol in a minimum of four units each semester. The choice of units depends upon the student's intended undergraduate course. Students are required to achieve 65% in ALL subjects/units in the Aboriginal Orientation Course in order to gain entry to one of the undergraduate courses (Arts, Design, Science, Business) at UWA.

### ***Core subjects/units***

All students enrol in two compulsory subjects each semester:

- Aboriginal Voices 1 (AUST0011) and Aboriginal Voices 2 (AUST0014)
- Foundations of University Study 1 (AUST0061) and Foundations of University Study 2 (AUST0014)

and a minimum of two electives each semester, depending on the student's planned course.

## **University of Western Sydney**

No Block-release teaching course

Block-release enabling/bridging course (Aboriginal Regional Education Program)

Formal outreach to regional and remote Indigenous students

## **Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education**

The establishment of the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education in 2006 demonstrates the University's commitment to enhancing educational opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Centre is here to provide support and encouragement for every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian student of the University.

Students can drop into Badanami at any time to study or relax.

Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education provides a range of services for staff, students and community members in accessing higher education. The Centre has offices located on each campus across UWS, so you'll never feel alone! Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education offers student spaces and support services on each campus and offers a range of services and support to guide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through their study and to help make their time at the University of Western Sydney enjoyable and enriching.

Badanami can put you in touch with a range of services available on campus, from study skills courses, careers advice, counselling and medical assistance all the way through to opportunities to study abroad.

## **Alternative Entry to University**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who do not have a HSC or other qualifications, or who have an ATAR score lower than required for their chosen course, can apply to study at UWS through the Badanami Alternative Entry Program.

Badanami Alternative Entry Program is a UWS initiative aimed at increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in undergraduate programs across all areas of study at the university.

The program includes a two-day assessment workshop. At the workshop all students complete a literacy assessment and have an informal interview to show that they meet the criteria for the course they have chosen to study. Applicants for courses requiring mathematic skills and understandings will be required to complete a mathematics assessment. A mathematics revision workshop is available prior to the assessment as part of the program.

In addition to the assessments and interview, information about the support services available at UWS will be provided and there is an opportunity for prospective students to meet other students and academic staff from their chosen program.

## **Aboriginal Regional Education Program (AREP)**

***Note:** This program is based on a similar model to the one outlined in the recommendations of this report.*

This block-release mode model is designed to afford Indigenous students the capacity of remaining in their community to fulfill their family, community, career, cultural and social responsibilities. To study a block-release mode program requires students to attend four to six residential schools per year, each lasting approximately one to two weeks. Travel, accommodation and meal costs to attend workshops are funded for Abstudy approved students.

The following courses are only available via the [Badanami Alternative Entry Program](#).

### ***Bachelor of Education (Primary) – AREP***

The Bachelor of Education (Primary) – AREP is a five-year program and is only open to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. This program gives you the skills and understanding to operate effectively across the full Kindergarten to Year 6 curriculum range. In addition to foundation and curriculum school based subjects, students will extend their literacy, mathematical and cultural perspectives which form a firm foundation for the curriculum studies subjects, in which they will examine the curriculum content of the primary school.

### ***Bachelor of Community and Social Development***

The Bachelor of Community and Social Development is a three-year undergraduate degree offered in block-release mode for Indigenous students.

The degree provides the skills and knowledge for work in welfare and advocacy; community

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leadership, development and community sustainability. The degree recognises the critical importance of these skills in building communities of strength for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

The course is offered at the Penrith campus in block-release mode supported by online learning. Students will have the opportunity to undertake relevant placements in the field. Students with previous study and/or relevant work experience are eligible to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) which can reduce the number of units required to complete the course.

### ***Diploma of Community and Social Development***

Diploma of Community and Social Development is a one-year undergraduate qualification available for Indigenous students at the Penrith campus as a weekly attendance program.

The Diploma provides students with initial skills and knowledge for working in community and welfare organisations as well as providing an introduction to Indigenous Australian studies. The Diploma is designed to support Indigenous students entering university study and open up pathways to further study in UWS undergraduate courses.

Indigenous students are generally eligible for ITAS tutorial assistance.

Note that students enrolled in the block-release mode Bachelor of Community and Social Development at Penrith campus can exit early from the degree with the Diploma of Community and Social Development.

## **University of Wollongong**

No Block-release teaching course

No Indigenous enabling/bridging course

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

### **Woolyungah Indigenous Centre**

- Responsible for Indigenous student recruitment, access and support
- Hold events throughout the year: Indigenous dates of importance

### ***Alternative Admissions Program***

The Woolyungah Indigenous Centre's Alternative Admissions Program (AAP) offers an alternative pathway for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seeking entry into the University of Wollongong's undergraduate programs. This is a two day workshop where students are assessed on Communications and Mathematics and an interview. If successful, the students gain direct entry to university study. If not, they are encouraged to apply to do a GENERAL Bridging Course which can be covered in six months or one year and has a curriculum of eight units.

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### ***Who can apply?***

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 17 are encouraged to apply.

The Alternative Admissions Program welcomes applicants who:

- haven't completed secondary school
- are not receiving an ATAR
- have not obtained the required ATAR for their preferred course.

### **Victoria University**

No Block-release teaching course

Enabling/bridging course for Indigenous students

No formal outreach to regional and isolated Indigenous students

### **Moondani Balluk Academic Unit**

The university offers a Foundation course in the TAFE sector (Certificate I–III) which is an Indigenous course and has a pathway to the Bachelor of Arts (Kynandoo) course.

The Foundation General Course is as follows.

This one year course leads to study in other College of Engineering and Science courses. It is ideal if you have never studied science before. However, there is an accelerated program for those who have.

You will develop the knowledge and skills to succeed in courses such as:

- health sciences (nursing, midwifery, paramedics, nutritional therapy)
- engineering (architectural, building, civil, electrical and electronic, mechanical)
- science (biomedical, science specialisation, nutrition, food and health sciences)
- psychology
- education
- certain Arts programs
- double degrees programs.

### **Streams**

Foundation Studies disciplines are streamed to reflect and accommodate the educational background of broad study areas. The streams are beginners, standard and advanced. Different streams can be taken for different subjects.

### ***Beginner stream***

If you have never undertaken science subjects before or are anxious of subjects often undertaken at beginner's levels. This subject stream introduces you to the fundamentals of the discipline. Undertaking this stream provides additional tuition and laboratory classes. Many of these subjects are maintained over a summer semester.

### ***Standard stream***

If you have undertaken science subjects at VCE but did not perform well in these areas, you may be eligible to undertake the standard stream. Subjects associated with this stream typically assume some knowledge of the subject and builds upon these.

### ***Advanced stream***

If you have undertaken science subjects at VCE level and obtained significant subject scores but did not achieve an ATAR score that's required for your preferred course, then you can access advanced standing subjects.

After successful completion, access to first year subjects is possible after one semester. Depending on marks obtained and the degree course, you may wish to access a student's foundation studies advanced unit credited towards your degree course.

### **Choice of stream**

The choice of stream that you undertake per subject will be based on a combination of an interview, previous study scores and a grading period undertaken in the first few weeks of the Foundation Studies course. Transition between streams in any particular subject area is also possible and is based on academic performance.

### **Subject choices**

You typically undertake 4 discipline areas and a community based subject per semester. Both Maths and English language and communication skills are compulsory study areas for full time students. In undertaking a degree in science, health science or education: choose chemistry and biology subjects, in engineering, you would typically do chemistry and physics. Subjects from other areas such as psychology are also available.

## Summary of survey findings

### **Block-release (away-from-base) courses to regional and isolated Indigenous students**

Of the 39 universities in Australia, the following six offer Block-release (away-from-base) courses to regional and isolated Indigenous students:

- Australian Catholic University
- Curtin University
- Deakin University
- Macquarie University
- University of Sydney
- University of Western Sydney.

### **Alternative pathways to tertiary study for Indigenous students (not specifically to those from regional and isolated backgrounds)**

Of the 39 universities in Australia, the following 13 offer enabling (orientation)/bridging course to Indigenous students

- Australian Catholic University
- Central Queensland University
- Charles Darwin University
- Curtin University
- Edith Cowan University
- Murdoch University
- Southern Cross University
- University of Adelaide
- University of New England
- University of New South Wales
- University of Newcastle
- University of Western Australia.
- University of Sydney.

## **Universities offering formal outreach to regional and isolated Students**

Of the 39 universities, the following three offer formal outreach to regional and isolated students:

- **Central Queensland University**  
offers Bachelor of Nursing, Bachelor of Social Work and Bachelor of Tourism courses to students in regional areas such as Bundaberg, Mackay, Rockhampton and Noosa
- **Charles Darwin University**  
offers the Indigenous Preparation for Tertiary Success course to students in Casuarina and at the Alice Springs Desert People Centre
- **University of Sydney** - offers special entry schemes for applicants from regional backgrounds, linked to the faculties of Pharmacy and Veterinary Science. These schemes are designed to improve access into the University's courses for Year 12 students from country areas.