Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Policy

Policy Owner	CEO
Approving Authority	Governing Council
Implementation Responsibility	CEO
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1. Purpose

The Sydney Polytechnic Institute (SPI) is committed to providing an equal opportunity for disadvantaged groups in order to ensure that they thrive as students. This policy adopts the values and guidelines of relevant legislation, including the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 and the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986. Through this policy, SPI aims to appropriately address the disadvantages faced by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the areas of preventing discrimination, student recruitment, admission, participation, retention, completion of studies and support services.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and all students (including current students, prospective students and alumni) for all Courses offered at SPI.

3. Definitions

This section sets out the key terms and definitions used in this policy.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	This refers to any people or persons that are members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and are accepted by that community.
Recruitment	Refers to the process of recruiting prospective and potential students to enrol at SPI.
Participation	Refers to the lived experiences associated with enrolment and involvement with SPI's courses, operations and community.
Completion	Refers to the fulfilment of course requirements and the associated process of transitioning into a workplace environment.
Discrimination	Refers to the unfair, unjust and unequal treatment of others based on gender, sexuality, race, age or ability.
Equal Opportunity	Refers to the right to be free from discrimination and the disadvantages based on such systematic, historic or present discrimination.
Admission	The process of enrolling a student into a recognised course at SPI.

4. Policy Statement

SPI values a diverse and inclusive community in all aspects of its operations. This Policy acknowledges the historic, current and systematic disadvantages faced by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. In response, this Policy has identified particular areas that must be addressed in order to remove unfair disadvantages and barriers to equal opportunity for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Requirements for admissions and recruitment, as outlined in the *SPI Student Admissions and Enrolment Policy, apply* for all students unless stated otherwise.

4.1. Recruitment and Admission

Prospective students who identify as part of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community may be eligible for special considerations during the enrolment and admissions process. If Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students wish to apply for special consideration, they must:

- Be part of and accepted by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community where they live or have lived;
- Be of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent;
- State their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent in all applications to SPI, including enrolment or admission forms;
- Provide Confirmation or Proof of Aboriginality

4.2. Confirmation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identity

SPI acknowledges the difficulties faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in providing documentation of their Aboriginality. As such, SPI will accept the following as confirmation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity:

- A document confirming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity approved by the chairperson of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Council where the student formerly or currently resides;
- A document confirming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity approved by an incorporated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation
- A statutory declaration by the student confirming their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent and acceptance as such by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in which they have lived or currently lives.

4.3. Assessment of Additional Support Requirements

Students who identify themselves as being part of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent and provide sufficient documentation or evidence for such identification will be asked to attend an interview at the SPI campus. This will be conducted by a senior staff member, to identify if any additional support may be needed during the course of study and assess how SPI can best support the student. Following or during the interview, additional support may be offered, including:

- English Language Support;
- Additional Academic Support;
- Computing and Mathematical Support;
- Counselling Services;
- Cultural Support; and;

- Pastoral Support.

4.4. Participation/Retention

SPI recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may require additional assistance during their transition into tertiary education due to historic, present or systemic disadvantages. Additional support will be offered by SPI to students who identify as part of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, following an assessment of their past and present academic achievements or capabilities.

SPI will encourage and provide early intervention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who require additional assistance during their studies. SPI will incorporate the following to aid Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' studies:

- Consideration of issues that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' socio-economic and cultural priorities;
- Incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural activities and celebrations in the institutional yearly calendar.
- Connecting with appropriate groups who offer guidance with teaching and learning programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and;
- Providing support and mentoring for staff to ensure that the learning environments, curricula, resources and assessments that address the potential barriers and disadvantages faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

SPI will use the links below, to access information and guidance on the facilitation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' participation:

- https://www.acer.org/au/research/areas-of-research/indigenous-education
- https://aiAboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.gov.au/
- https://www.dese.gov.au/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-higher-education
- https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/policy-submissions/diversity-equity/indigenous-higher-education/

SPI academic staff will be required to monitor the academic progress and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, to ensure that students are able to meet course requirements and identify when and what additional support is required. Early identification and intervention are crucial to maintain satisfactory academic progress and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with special considerations will have their studies continually monitored by staff for this purpose. Further information regarding early intervention strategies can be found in the *SPI Student Progression, Exclusion and Graduation Policy*.

Regular reports on student retention, progression, attrition and completion rates will be provided to the Academic Board at least twice a year. Those rates will be divided into subcategories and demographics within the student cohort, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with special considerations or additional academic support. This data will be used to ensure the continuous improvement of the academic education and learning environment provided to all SPI students.

4.5. Completion

In line with SPI's focus on industry-relevant education and employment opportunities for all students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will be offered additional support to facilitate the transition into the workforce following graduation. Advice and assistance will be provided in areas relevant to career opportunities and career plans. SPI will also encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and graduates to join a relevant professional association and participate the industry-relevant activities.

4.6. Monitoring and Review

Responsibility for the monitoring and review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' participation, progress and completion, as per the *SPI Monitoring, Review and Improvement Procedure*, will be shared amongst the governance bodies, management and staff at SPI.

Notes

Related documents:

SPI Student Code of Conduct
SPI Non-Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure
SPI Student Support Policy
SPI Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy
SPI Access and Usage of Resources Policy
SPI Student Consultation Policy
SPI Student Learning Support Policy
SPI English, Computing and Mathematics Support
SPI Education Plan
TEQSA Guidance Note: Diversity and Equity

Amendment History:

Version No.	Approved by	Effective date	Amendments
1.0	Governing Council	27/08/2021	New Policy

Appendix: Industry and Professional links

This policy provides the following resources for SPI staff.

Below are important links:

https://www.acs.org.au/insightsandpublications/reports-publications/diversity-and-inclusion.html

Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion Report highlights the importance of diversity and inclusivity in the ICT sector, and how diversity can help achieve organizational targets and growth.

https://allianceict.com.au.

An Alliance of Indigenous Communities of Technology and they deliver innovation for the benefit of underprivileged people.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_peoples

Summary and introduction to Indigenous Peoples.

https://bthechange.com/the-future-of-social-enterprise-needs-indigenous-innovation-3df6c11f6e90

Animkii is a 100% Indigenous owned business and empowers Indigenous individuals to work in the field of custom software, website development and graphic design.

https://ravencapitalpartners.ca

Raven Indigenous Capital Partners is an investment firm that invests from a platform of Indigenous values into social enterprises that can address the biggest social, economic and environmental challenges that Aboriginal people face.

https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/ra-strategic-plan_web.pdf

The reconciliation plan provides support, advice and targets of reconciliation action within Australian businesses.

https://mspgh.unimelb.edu.au/centres-institutes/centre-for-health-equity/research-group/indigenous-data-network

The Indigenous Data Network (IDN) assists Indigenous communities in developing the technical capability and resources to enable them to manage their data for community advancement.

SPI will encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, government, industry, professional associations, employer groups, and other non-government organisations to further their careers and promote the employment of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates. This will be done through groups such as the Aurora Project, which started out to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lawyers but has grown to encompass other projects in the broader area of Indigenous education. Their website is:

https://auroraproject.com.au/opportunities-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-students-and-graduates