INDIGENISATION OF CURRICULA

Background, Implementation and Next Steps

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Sydney's Camperdown campus sits on the lands of the Gadigal with campuses, teaching and research facilities on the lands of the Gamaraygal, Dharug, Wangal, Darkinyung, Burramattagal, Dharawal, Gandangara, Gamilaraay, Barkindji, Bundjalung, Wiradjuri, Ngunawal, Gureng Gureng, and Gagadju peoples.

We recognise and pay respect to the Elders and communities of these lands, past and present, who, for thousands of years, have shared and exchanged knowledges across innumerable generations, for the benefit of all.

We respect and value the knowledges, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There is no place in Australia – water, land or air – that has not been known, nurtured and loved by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Contents

Image credit: *'Yanhambabirra Burambabirra Yalbailinya' (Come, Share and Learn), 2020 by Luke Penrith for the One Sydney, Many People Strategy.*

Foreword

The acknowledgement and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander[1] cultures, languages and knowledge systems in curricula is a key element of the University's Indigenous strategy *One Sydney, Many People 2021-2024*, and will continue to be in its next iteration *Walanga One Sydney, Many People 2025-2032*. It is also a University commitment under Universities Australia's [Indigenous Strategy (2022-2025)](#). Often referred to as the "Indigenisation of curricula", this process has long been a challenging topic both at the University of Sydney and across the sector. The Indigenisation of curricula is a global initiative, especially within postcolonial and settler-colonial settings. Here, however, the terms *Indigenous* and *Indigenisation* are used in reference to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. We acknowledge the diverse cultures and languages that exist throughout the continent and recognise that there is no singular approach to the Indigenisation of curricula.

This document is intended as a [resource for colleagues](#) within the University. Informed by the University-wide Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and Data Sovereignty (IDSov) Protocols, it draws on reports and consultations undertaken over the last few years and is designed to help frame an institution-wide approach to the Indigenisation of curricula; celebrate existing good practice; and address a series of recurring questions received from colleagues, including:

What is the Indigenisation of curricula?

How do I approach the Indigenisation of curricula appropriately?

What resources are there to assist me?

These questions have been posed by many across the University in their engagement with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous (Academic) situated within the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Strategy and Services (DVC-ISS) Portfolio, and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues more generally. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are underrepresented within the higher education sector, whether it be in academic or professional employment or student enrolments and outcomes[2]. Efforts to ["close educational gaps"](#) have long been a priority for both governments and the University. In an effort to close gaps in higher education, the University of Sydney is engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics over how best to implement Indigenous knowledges in the curricula and better represent Indigenous voices. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, however, should not be expected to carry the burden of this significant task alone and need wider institutional support.

While there is a broad spectrum of engagement with the Indigenisation of curricula across the University, hesitancy on the part of some non-Indigenous staff remains. This is often expressed with the refrain:

I am keen to engage but am worried about making a mistake and causing offence.

We are therefore seeking creative ways to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are included in curricula design and its implementation and urge all members of our University to consider their role and contribution to this commitment. Through the establishment of an Indigenous Curriculum Design Team, DVC-ISS is assisting and collaborating with all areas of the University, regardless of where they are currently positioned, in their journey to Indigenise curricula.

It is important to note that the Indigenisation of curricula is more than the isolated or idiosyncratic inclusion of cultural knowledge or experiences; rather, it is a scholarly endeavour framed around Indigenous scholarship. As academics, our currency rests on our command of scholarship germane to our discipline and this is no different for the Indigenisation of curricula. The Indigenisation of curricula therefore is more than a bolt-on activity and involves learning from, and with, rather than solely about, First Nations peoples.

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1   Aligning with the advice of the Diversity Council of Australia (DCA), throughout this paper, we use the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander', 'Indigenous' and 'First Nations' interchangeably. We recognise that this approach is not without contention and acknowledge that First Nations are diverse and heterogenous.

2   Behrendt et al. 2021; Department of Education 2024.

What is the Indigenisation of curricula

In response to Universities Australia and at the request of the University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics, the University of Sydney, alongside the broader higher education sector, committed to 'implement, or have plans to implement, processes to ensure all students would encounter and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural content as integral parts of their course of study.'[3] Shortly thereafter, in line with Universities Australia's advice, the University of Sydney developed a Graduate Quality (GQ) for cultural competence. The GQ states that graduates will have:

...the ability to actively, ethically, respectively, and successfully engage across and between cultures. In the Australian context, this includes and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledge systems, and a mature understanding of contemporary issues.[4]

The GQ speaks to cultural competence, generally, but its articulation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledge systems, and contemporary issues corresponds to a commitment to the Indigenisation of curricula. While *Indigenisation* is a phrase of growing significance in higher education globally, there is still some ambiguity over what it means, and how we understand the process.

At the University of Sydney, we see the Indigenisation of curricula as the culturally appropriate engagement with Indigenous knowledges, cultures, scholars, research, pedagogies, and perspectives within curricula. In this context, Indigenous knowledge systems may be placed alongside other disciplinary epistemologies but should not be consumed by dominant western pedagogies. Indigenous knowledge should be recognised as legitimate and authentic ways of knowing, doing, and being.[5]

At the University of Sydney, Indigenisation of curricula is:

- A scholarly endeavour led and/or informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Implementable into degree curricula.
- Provides students with opportunities to build from introductory to advanced learning.
- Formally assessed prior to the awarding of a degree.

Crucially, the Indigenisation of curricula is not:

- Mandatory insertion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in all units of study.
- The responsibility of teaching staff to implement unsupported.

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3   https://universitiesaustralia.edu.au/policy-submissions/teaching-learning-funding/principles-for-course-accreditation-and-review-of-indigenous-curriculum/
4   https://www.sydney.edu.au/students/graduate-qualities.html
5   Guerzoni 2020; Martin & Booran Mirraboopa 2003; Uink et. al 2021; Fredericks et. al 2023; Behrendt et. al 2012; Synot 2021.

Some common questions DVC-ISS has received over the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait knowledges in curricula have included:

Will the Indigenisation of curricula dictate what can or cannot be taught?

Or,

Will including additional content based on Indigenous knowledge detract from, or push out, other core content?
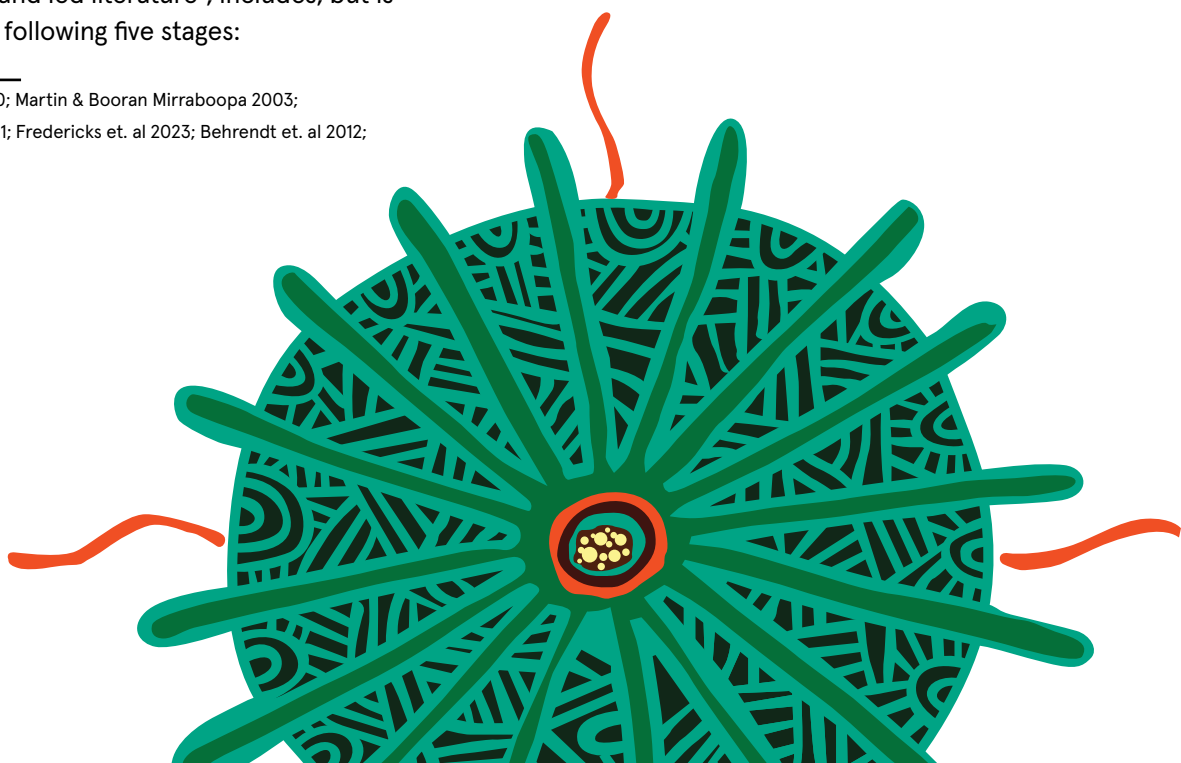
The Indigenisation of curricula is **not** about mandating what should or should not be included in curricula, and it will not restrain or compromise academic freedom. Indigenisation will help build the capability needed to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives are included with integrity and respect. It is about laying the foundation for meaningful and ongoing partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and non-Indigenous peoples.

There is no single approach to the Indigenisation of curricula, and methodologies must always seek, and be responsive to, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander input and needs. The process of the Indigenisation of curricula, as documented in First Nations informed and led literature[6], includes, but is not limited to, the following five stages:

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6   Guerzoni 2020; Martin & Booran Mirraboopa 2003; Uink et. al 2021; Fredericks et. al 2023; Behrendt et. al 2012; Synot 2021.

1. **Consultation and collaboration** with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge holders, scholars, University support staff, Elders, and community members.

2. **Commitment** at a university governance level, accompanied by the appointment of relevant, accountable staff.

3. **Mapping** to create an accurate picture of the level and extent of the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarship, knowledge systems, and cultures in curricula, as well as information on the level and extent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation.

4. **Implementation** over time in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars, communities, and knowledge holders.

5. **Monitoring and evaluation** structures to continually refine and improve practice.

We encourage all members of the University to consider how these five stages might inform their own efforts to Indigenise curricula.

Indigenisation and Decolonisation

The Indigenisation of curricula is associated with what some refer to as the *decolonising of curricula*. Whilst defining decolonising/decolonisation can be challenging – and the question over whether settler-colonial states such as Australia can fully "decolonise" is contested – the motivation to decolonise is nonetheless a necessary part of shifting Eurocentric mindsets, epistemologies, and pedagogies.

Where the Indigenisation of curricula is focused on embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, voices, perspectives and content into curricula, decolonising requires confronting the conditions of the colonial past and the ongoing legacies that continue to shape the lived experiences and inequities faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For non-Indigenous staff, this means reflecting on their understandings, attitudes, and behaviours with the aim of identifying how these may be reflected in and projected onto curricula, whilst simultaneously unpacking how their actions may be complicit in maintaining disparate outcomes and "gaps". This can be both unsettling and liberating.

Some areas of the University are already approaching the Indigenisation of curricula through a decolonising lens. Faculties offer dedicated units exploring what decolonising means in their given field, such as the Faculty of Medicine and Health's (FMH) Disability and Decolonising Practices (OCCP2089) or Arts and Social Sciences' De/colonising Indigenous Education (INDG3006). While units such as these are making important contributions to the Indigenisation/Decolonising of curricula, we encourage decolonising methodologies to be applied across all units, including those not specifically targeted towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander topics. Sydney Law School's Graduate Quality that includes having students acquire an understanding of the 'ongoing effects of colonisation' is one example of how this may be achieved. While Decolonising and Indigenisation are not mutually exclusive terms and should complement one another, for the remainder of this paper we refer to the process simply as the Indigenisation of curricula.

How to approach the Indigenisation of curricula

The need and demand for the Indigenisation of curricula is pressing, and universities are receiving increased encouragement and directives from industry, the higher education sector, and the wider public to do so. We recognise, however, that weaving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, perspectives and pedagogies into curricula will take time, patience, and commitment. The Indigenisation of curricula will be challenging, but through co-design, co-creation, and establishing meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples all members of our community will share the benefits in fair and just ways.

We understand that while some areas of the University have progressed more than others, there is a genuine desire to honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and knowledges. DVC-ISS is continuing to work with all schools, faculties, professional portfolios, and stakeholders to provide the support and resources needed to build confidence and strengthen the Indigenisation of curricula. Remaining mindful of cultural load, however, schools and faculties should be proactive and demonstrate genuine initiative to develop internal governance structures that will aid the implementation of Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies; including efforts to build the Indigenous workforce. We encourage all schools and faculties to implement measures that will ensure greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on governance and decision-making boards, committees, and working groups. DVC-ISS also recognises the need for this at the highest level within University Executive and continues to advocate for this.

The Office of the DVC-ISS continues to work with schools, faculties, and external partners to develop and promote collaborations to progress the Indigenisation of curricula. The Indigenous Curriculum Design Team which commenced in 2024, will play an integral role in forging collaboration and a community of practice. In consultation with Associate Deans Indigenous (ADIs), and Associate Deans Education (ADEs), the Design Team will work with schools and faculties to provide practical advice and tools to strengthen the Indigenisation process.

The University is committed to increasing the number of Indigenous employees as outlined in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Plan 2022–2024*. Whilst there is continuing need to expand the number, capacity, and capability of the University's workforce, it may be necessary to seek expertise from external organisations. DVC-ISS has an ongoing partnership with the *Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)* and continues to collaborate on a range of projects aiming to boost cultural competency and advance the Indigenisation of curricula. In 2023, the University launched its *Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research* e-learning module, based on the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research. The modules align with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. The training, which was designed in dialogue with community groups and academics, researchers, and Traditional Knowledge holders, is available to all University staff on Workday and all students on Canvas.

DVC-ISS has also entered into a Master Services Agreement with Terri Janke and Company (TJC), an Indigenous owned and run law firm specialising in commercial law and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. Our collaboration with TJC has provided a single point of contact through which expert advice on culturally appropriate measures to mitigate risk and advance cultural capability has been sought. TJC has worked with different areas of the University, including

helping the Business School to produce an [Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol for Curriculum](#); helping the Chemistry School to apply Aboriginal knowledge and ICIP to the Periodic Table, running Indigenising curricula workshops with the Business School and more recently, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences; and by collaborating with DVC-ISS to establish a University-wide *Indigenous Cultural*

and Intellectual Property and Indigenous Data Sovereignty Protocol for distribution from 2025.

The University's commitment to the Indigenisation of curricula

In December 2022, in response to consultations with University stakeholders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge holders and communities more broadly, the DVC-ISS Portfolio drafted and presented five recommendations to University Executive that would drive the Indigenisation of curricula. **All recommendations were accepted** by the Academic Board, University Executive Education Committee, and University Executive. These are outlined below:

1) Revise the Graduate Quality to include cultural competency.

In 2023, DVC-ISS worked with the Academic Quality Committee of the Academic Board to revise the [Course Review Template](#), encouraging academic reflection on whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content is included in the Graduate Quality.

We also acknowledge the work of the Sydney Law School, who have adopted a new Course Learning Outcome (CLO) Ngara for the Bachelor of Laws and Juris Doctor degrees to include an 'understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' knowledge and perspectives including ongoing effects of colonisation'. Cultural competence learning experiences and outcomes are also included in the revised [Master of Business Administration](#) program at the Business School.

2) Include Indigenisation of curricula in the Learning and Teaching Policy.

DVC-ISS is continuing to work with DVC-E and the Sydney Curriculum Project to revisit and revise the Graduate Quality, rubrics, governance approaches, and enrichment opportunities, in anticipation of solidifying the Indigenisation of curricula in the [*Learning and Teaching Policy*](#).

3) Build Indigenous content into degrees.

In addition to the revised Graduate Quality, mandated curriculum components, and enrichment opportunities, the Indigenisation of curricula should progressively lead students from an introductory to an advanced understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems. Students' understandings should be assessed with equal weight to other content. Whilst the University understands the necessity of weaving Indigenous content into curricula, it acknowledges that it is not mandatory across all units, and that staff should be adequately supported and resourced. The Portfolio's Indigenous Curriculum Design Team are working with faculties and schools through their respective (ADIs) and (ADEs) to support targeted projects.

4) Engage in Curricula Mapping.

To help gauge the extent to which Indigenous content, pedagogies, and knowledge systems are included in curricula, the DVC-ISS portfolio recommended that curricula mapping exercises be conducted by all faculties and schools in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives. Many schools and faculties have already commenced mapping projects, with the support of DVC-ISS.

To promote better understandings of the gaps and strengths of the University's engagement with Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP), DVC-ISS portfolio also commissioned TJC to produce a Gaps Analysis Report in 2023. This report informed the development of a University-wide ICIP Protocol, set to come into effect in 2025 which intersects with much of the University's First Nations focused policies, including the Indigenisation of curricula.

5) Build Capacity and Staff Support.

The Office of the DVC-ISS recognises the need to develop, revise, and leverage resources and tools across the University to build capacity and support staff in their efforts to Indigenise curricula. Since 2014, the National Centre for Cultural Competence (NCCC) has collaborated with DVC-ISS and University stakeholders to inform, inspire, and provide resources to embed cultural competence. Resources include the Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), the Cultural Competence Leadership Program (CCLP) and learning modules on cultural competency. Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research, which were designed in partnership with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), and the University of Queensland, are also freely available to staff and students. DVC-ISS continues to work with Associate Deans Indigenous across all faculties and schools, as well as with Associate Deans Education; the Office of General Counsel; the Office of the Provost; and portfolios to establish a community of practice with a shared vision, strategy, and goal.

Mapping the Indigenisation of curricula

Curricula mapping helps schools and faculties attain deeper understandings of their progression in the Indigenisation of curricula. It provides a means to identify gaps; share good practice examples; define targets and measures of accountability; and promote understanding of professional development needs. Curriculum mapping exercises have already occurred in the Law School; Business School; Conservatorium of Music; Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning; and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Some staff, however, have expressed:

I don't have the time or capacity to review how Indigenous knowledge is woven across units of study.

We understand that some colleagues may be apprehensive towards teaching new and unfamiliar epistemological and pedagogical approaches and that some may feel that Indigenous content is beyond their disciplinary field or realm of expertise.

The Indigenisation of curricula, however, is a reflexive, collaborative, and iterative progress. Staff will not be expected to Indigenise curricula overnight or do so unsupported. In many cases, mapping the Indigenisation of curricula is less about weaving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content into curricula, but unpacking your discipline's engagement and relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples.

Identifying what content can, or should, be included in curricula, and the best way to approach this, is something that will surface through increased dialogue with peers and consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The office of the DVC-ISS has developed a *First Nations curricula mapping plan* to help staff and course co-ordinators gain an in-depth understanding of some of the key aspects of an Indigenised curricula. Please contact PVC-I for further information on how this can be implemented in your Unit of Study.

Co-design and co-creation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through establishing Indigenous advisory and working groups are essential to mapping the Indigenisation process. While we recognise that efforts to Indigenise curriculum has occurred at a high-level within faculties and schools, greater focus must be placed on assuring that this is replicated at the local unit level. The Faculty of Medicine and Health, which offers diverse and varied courses, for example, has formed First Nations working groups to enable the development of school-based approaches that accommodate differing standards and accreditation requirements.

Indigenisation of curricula across the University

A common observation shared by some schools and faculties is that initiatives for the Indigenisation of curricula are often ad hoc and dependent on the interests and commitment of select individuals.

Whilst we welcome the individual effort of allies – and celebrate their contributions and leadership in motivating others to act – more needs to be done to weave Indigenous knowledges, content, and pedagogies throughout entire programs, reaching all stages of student pathways.

Although the Indigenisation of curricula does not involve the mandatory inclusion of First Nations content across all units of study, we strongly implore staff to collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and open dialogues about how First Nations content might contribute, advance, and broaden the scope and impact of the curricula taught. Here we have provided some, but by no means all, examples of how the Indigenisation of curricula is being implemented across the University.

Indigenisation through Graduate Qualities

In 2022, the Sydney Conservatorium of Music created the *Ngara – listen here – hear, learn* resources on Indigenous Research Methods for HDR students. In response to the University's Graduate Quality, the Faculty of Science has worked to ensure that 35 units of study embed cultural competence in its curricula; 10 of which has specifically integrated Indigenous knowledge systems.

Indigenisation through community partnerships

The Faculty of Engineering has collaborated with the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Lands Council to provide project-based learning experiences within the units they offer. Workshops, site visits, and project experiences, led by Aboriginal peoples, are also extended to staff as part of their professional development.

Similarly, the *Indigenising the School of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydney Scoping Report (2022),* conducted by the Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning outlined that staff felt they needed greater engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This motivated the School to facilitate workshops, guest presentations, and yarning sessions to enrich staffs' understandings of First Nations content and its relationship to Country. Community engagement and partnerships has been further strengthened through the *Indigenising the Built Environment in Australia* project and the *Service Learning in Indigenous Communities* program.

Indigenisation through governance

The Faculty of Medicine and Health (FMH) conducted a comprehensive review that mapped the inclusion of First Nations content in curricula. The review recommended that FMH embed First Nations governance frameworks to establish a community of practice that would build the capacity and professional development needed for the Indigenisation of curricula. In response, FMH implemented a four-tiered strategic approach consisting of:

1. Developing a First Nations Curriculum Team to oversee a structured and coordinated pathway to embedding First Nations ways of knowing and doing.

2. Frameworks to guide the Faculty's engagement with First Nations communities, curriculum development, and content integration.

3. Establishing a FMH First Nations Curriculum Subcommittee, whose focus is on leading FMH's approach to Indigenising

and Decolonising curriculum within FMH, including accreditation requirements.

4. Forming First Nations Curriculum Working Groups within each of the seven schools to oversee the development and implementation of school-based approaches to the development of First Nations health content throughout FMH curricula.

The FMH's approach to the Indigenisation of curricula demonstrates the importance of having First Nations leadership in governance frameworks. Having a First Nations Curriculum Team work alongside Heads of Schools, subcommittees, and working groups ensures authenticity, transparency, and develops a community of practice where First Nations voices and input are included at all stages of Indigenous curricula's development and implementation.

Indigenisation through student support services

The Gadigal Centre provides academic and cultural support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It is a culturally safe space, a community, and a direct link to Country whilst on campus. The Centre is particularly important to those who have re-located from their home community to study at the University of Sydney. The Gadigal Centre offers support at all stages of a student's educational pathway, including entry programs; scholarships and financial support; accommodation services; study and social support; and career pathways. Indigenous support centres can have a significantly positive impact that often translates to improved outcomes in student retention and success (Fredericks et. al 2023a, 2023b). The Gadigal Centre is no different. As the staff and students have a direct link to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – both within the University and more broadly – the

Gadigal Centre is an invaluable resource for the Indigenisation of curricula. Whilst the Gadigal Centre does not have the capacity to do all the heavy lifting, there are opportunities for schools and faculties to partner with them to share resources that are mutually beneficial.

Indigenisation through cultural competence

The National Centre for Cultural Competence (NCCC) recognises that cultural competence is an ongoing lifelong commitment that requires reflexive analysis of staff and students' worldviews, and how these inform practices and interactions within the University. The NCCC provides a range of workshops and courses that build awareness of the University's culturally diverse community, including recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. By promoting competency and anti-racism, the NCCC encourages the University to confront racism and structural inequalities whilst enacting measures that contribute to 'transformative, just, and culturally responsive people and institutions'.

Monitoring and evaluating the Indigenisation of curricula

While our current focus is on building awareness and boosting capacity and capability across the entire University, we envisage that the Indigenisation of curricula will become regular practice. Moving forward, we encourage stakeholders to:

1. Place greater focus on setting transparent, realistic, and **measurable targets** for the Indigenisation of curricula.

2. Consider how strategies for reaching these targets may be successfully **implemented**.

3. Develop **monitoring and evaluation** frameworks that align with the University's policies and Graduate Qualities.

In their efforts to [Indigenise the MBA](#) program, the Business School undertook a series of collaborative workshops to measure the School's engagement with Indigenous Cultural Competence (ICC) across its units of study. The School defines ICC as the ability to 'actively, ethically, respectfully, and successfully engage across and between cultures' including the celebration of 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledge systems, and a mature understanding of contemporary issues.'[7] Through an iterative process involving staff, course co-ordinators, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, the School developed a curricula map template that scaffolded its engagement with ICC. The template was used to:

1. **Introduce** ICC via **learning content**.

2. **Develop** understandings of ICC via **learning activities**.

3. **Assure** implementation of ICC via **assessments**.

The template provides a tool to both develop and evaluate curricula already embedded within its program. The inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content should not be treated differently to the other content taught within a unit of study, meaning that content should be held to the same academic standards, rigour, and reporting requirements. As demonstrated in the MBA model, ICC can be assured through assignments and assessments that align with the Graduate Qualities outlined within a program of study. DVC-ISS, however, is aware that many staff have asked:

How do I measure the *impact* of the Indigenisation of curricula?

and

How do I measure *success*?

In some cases, the Indigenisation of curricula will not require the radical transformation in how units are taught or assessed. When Indigenising its Bachelor of Laws and Juris Doctor degrees, for example, the Sydney Law School included an 'understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' knowledge and perspectives including ongoing effects of colonisation' as a new CLO Ngara. The School is meeting this CLO through embedding content and assessment across several compulsory units to ensure students engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples scholarship, policy commentary, and lived experiences. This involves making deliberate choices about the materials, case studies, readings, and case law that is incorporated into teaching and then developing appropriate assessment to assure the CLO is being achieved. This curriculum development takes place within a highly regulated degree structure. In this example, embedding Indigenous content is included within existing structures. This approach may also be applicable to other schools and faculties.

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7   Murphy et al. 2022 p.6

In other cases, incorporating First Nations content will require greater cultural competence, sensitivity, and understanding amongst staff.

Please note, however, that staff should never teach First Nations knowledges that they are not authorised to teach, or speak for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. When detailed Indigenous content, especially Traditional Knowledge, is included, it is essential that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander committees and working groups – like those established by FMH – are set up to inform decision-making.

Where possible, the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge should be done through first-hand collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. First Nations peoples should not be reduced to having advisory or consultative roles alone. Increasing the number of First Nations academic staff in accordance with the _Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Plan 2022-2024_ will help co-design curricula. Other ways of collaborating with Indigenous communities includes, but is not limited to, having guest lectures; facilitating events and speaking engagements; incorporating excursions on Country; and developing partnerships with Indigenous-led service providers and community-controlled organisations.

Measuring success and impact is predicated on having meaningful and authentic engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, supported by the governance structures. Co-design will maintain academic rigour, help share the work load, and ensure that curricula is designed and taught with respect and in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Involving Indigenous people in decision-making also safeguards content in ways that maintains quality, relevance, cultural appropriateness, and ensures that the benefits are appropriately attributed and shared.

Next steps

The University of Sydney and the DVC-ISS Portfolio are committed to helping academic staff build the capacity and resources needed to begin and advance the Indigenisation of curricula. We understand that this is an ongoing journey, and that some may be more progressed than others. Regardless of where you are currently positioned, or your level of understanding and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content, we strive to be united not only by our goodwill but a shared commitment to implement actions that will ensure that our University is welcoming and representative of all cultures and knowledges. It is a journey we hope all members of our community – Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and non-Indigenous peoples – will make together.

The Indigenisation of curricula begins with opening constructive dialogue with your peers and building collaborative relationships and networks with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. In addition to the Indigenous Curriculum Design Team, ADIs embedded in schools and faculties, provide localised and discipline-specific advice on how and where to begin, and/or continue, the Indigenisation process. Collectively, they form a community of practice that liaises between the academy and DVC-ISS inclusive of the Indigenous Curriculum Design Team. We encourage all staff to reach out to the ADIs in their faculty or schools when further guidance is needed.

PVC-Indigenous and the Indigenous Curriculum Design Team are overseeing the development of University-wide resources to help embed the Indigenisation of curricula. The Portfolio will continue to collaborate with all schools and faculties to develop localised bespoke strategies and implementation plans. The University's *Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property and Data Sovereignty Protocol (Protocol)*, and comparative documents found on the DVC-ISS webpage, will guide colleagues on respectful and ethical engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Protocol,

alongside other resources such as the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and its accompanying e-learning module, Core, will help staff acquire the foundational knowledge needed to begin or advance consultations and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge holders.

Where possible, the Portfolio will continue to provide support for bespoke projects that align with the focus areas outlined in the University's current Indigenous Strategy and its future iterations. DVC-ISS will continue to leverage our time, staff, and resources to help the Indigenisation of curricula, but creating an equitable curriculum and university cannot be based on inequitable divisions of labour and responsibility. We therefore encourage staff across all schools and faculties to:

1. Work with the Portfolio and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge holders as partners, collaborators and co-designers.

2. Establish governance bodies with Indigenous representation to assure quality and ethical practice.

3. Recognise Indigenisation of curricula as an iterative and ongoing process that requires monitoring and evaluation.

4. Take meaningful actions that would see the Indigenisation of curricula as core everyday practice.

References and Resources

Reports

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INDIGENISATION OF CURRICULA

Background, Implementation and Next Steps