

# THE INDIGENOUS DEPARTMENT

<b>Responsible Person:</b>	Coordinator, Student Representation
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## The Indigenous Department

The role of the Indigenous Department is to give voice to the Indigenous students to ensure they have the best university experience possible. We are committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by ensuring we promote an inclusive and safe campus. We find it especially important to highlight Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of knowing to protect our environment for future generations.

To learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge, feel free to contact the [Murrup Barak Institute](#) at the University.

You will find this Department running events, workshops, campaigns, publications and more, all to promote the best possible campus experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Composition of the Indigenous Department

The Indigenous Department is composed of the following voluntary positions:

- One or two elected Officer Bearers;
- Up to seven elected Committee Members;
- One elected voting representative on the Student's Council;
- At least one Collective, open to any students, as facilitated by the Committee.

## The Aims and Objectives of the Indigenous Department

It is the responsibility of the Indigenous Officer/s and Committee to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Indigenous Department are upheld, through the means of events, projects, and/or campaigns implemented throughout their term. The aims and objectives of the Indigenous Department include:

- a) to ensure the interests of Indigenous Students at the University are determined by Indigenous Students; and
- b) to ensure the interests of Indigenous Students are effectively represented, advocated, and promoted in all aspects, operations, and activities of UMSU and the University.
- c) To create safe, welcoming environments that facilitate a sense of community among the Indigenous students.

# The Indigenous Officer

## Roles and Accountability of the Indigenous Officer

The Indigenous Officer must use their best endeavours to implement or carry out the Constitutional purposes of UMSU, the aims and objectives of the Indigenous Department and the decisions of the Indigenous Committee. The Indigenous Officer is accountable to, and subject to the direction of, the Indigenous Committee and Students' Council. The Officer must provide support and resources for their Committee and the Students' Council over the course of their term. All Officers must act in accordance with the requirements of UMSU's Constitution (together with all UMSU Policies and Regulations), the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (AIR Act) and the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC), including the ACNC Governance Standards. The Indigenous Officer must exercise reasonable care and diligence in carrying out their duties as a member of Council as well as all additional duties arising from their Office.

## Duties of Officer

The Indigenous Officer of UMSU has an obligation to:

- Attend and participate in an induction program at the beginning of their term, as well as any ongoing trainings throughout their term.
- In conjunction with the Indigenous Committee, prepare and implement the departmental budget for their year in office.
- Engage in a courteous and respectful manner with members of Council, their Committee, and UMSU staff.
- Ensure they are accessible to students for a reasonable proportion of hours each week, with availability indicated on their office door and the UMSU website.
  - A reasonable proportion of hours per Office being approximately 25 per week, where held solely by one Officer, or 15 hours per week for each officer, when the office is managed jointly.
- Have familiarity with and provide information and assistance to students with regards to UMSU Regulations and Policy.
- Ensure any Indigenous Department publications are compliant with the standards set out in the *Publishing Regulations, Student Media Policy, and Social Media Publishing Policy and Procedure*.
- Liaise with other UMSU Departments and student organisations to further the interests of students and the betterment of UMSU activities.

- Maintain the Indigenous Department web page with the actions and decisions made by the Indigenous Committee
- Liaise with grant applicants and recipients at the direction of the Committee.
- Attend and prepare appropriately for all Students' Council and Committee meetings, including taking the time to read and consider all papers in advance.
  - Students' Council and the Indigenous Committee both meet fortnightly within Semester and monthly during summer and winter breaks
- Attend and prepare appropriately for all Office Bearer meetings scheduled by the General Secretary.
- Attend and prepare appropriately for meetings of any Student Advisory Groups (SAG) in which the Officer is a member, including reporting back to the Indigenous Committee on any actions made.
  - See *Advisory Groups Policy* for list of SAGs, membership, and Terms of Reference.
- Attend, prepare appropriately, and facilitate where necessary, all Working Groups in which the Officer has either voluntarily committed, been directed by Committee or Students' Council, or is required by Regulation to participate.
  - One or both Indigenous Officers each year will act as the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Representative/s on UMSU's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group as a standing member, whose role is to ensure that the RAP is guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives.
- Facilitate the meetings of the Indigenous Committee, including determination of meeting schedule, preparation and distribution of notice and papers, chairing of meetings, and the recording and publishing of minutes.
- Report in writing to each ordinary Students' Council and Committee meeting an accurate summary of their actions and achievements, a record of monies approved for expenditure, funds expended, and reporting on any conferences attended in their capacity as an Officer, since the previous report.
- Compile an annual report for the Students' Council and the Indigenous Committee at the end of their term, summarising their actions and achievements throughout the year and relevance to the Department, an evaluation of the success or otherwise of events, projects and campaigns undertaken throughout the year, and any recommended Department actions to be considering for implementation by future Officers.
- At the end of their term, complete all handover duties reasonably required by the General Secretary.
- Act in accordance with the Council Charter at all times while in office.

If an Officer is unable to fulfil any or all of the above obligations due to extenuating circumstances or disability, supports with and/or adjustments will be made available.

## Implementation

The Indigenous Officer is the heart of the Indigenous Department, elected to be the executor of all things to do with representing and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Collaborating with their Committee, Students' Council, other Departments, the Murrup Barak Institute, and other organisations, the Indigenous Officer will spend their term implementing the aims and objectives of the Indigenous Department through means of events, projects, publications, and/or campaigns. They will fulfil their fiduciary duties as an elected representative by acting honestly, in good faith, and through acting in the best interests of UMSU to the best of their abilities. The Officer will also uphold their obligations to the UMSU Constitution and good governance practices through facilitating regularly scheduled committee meetings, responsibly managing their department budget, and reporting back on their activities to the Committee and Students' Council meetings. The Indigenous Officer will also assist their Committee in fostering and resourcing any Collectives existing within the Department. Finally, the Indigenous Officer above all will be, to their best capacity, accessible and available to students, and act in good faith as their elected representative.

## Time Commitment & Recognition of Services

The Indigenous Officer is expected to be accessible to students for a reasonable proportion of their weekly hours, as well as making themselves available for their commitments during semester times, including:

- Students' Council Meetings (fortnightly);
- Indigenous Department Committee Meetings (fortnightly);
- Officer Bearer Meetings (fortnightly);
- All scheduled training;
- All scheduled meetings of any Working Groups of which they are a member;
- All scheduled meetings of University committees of which they are a member;
- All events, campaigns, collectives, and/or projects in which they are coordinating;
- and
- General administration work in maintaining the Department.

In recognition of these services and activities, Officers are awarded an honorarium, as set by Students' Council. The honorarium is an *ex-gratia* payment, i.e., an honorary reward for voluntary services. For 2024, the honorarium was set at **\$26 836** for an Office held

individually, with Officers holding an Office **jointly receiving 60%** of the set honorarium per Office Bearer. Students' Council is responsible for reviewing honoraria as part of its annual budget process. Upon completion of their term, all UMSU elected representatives are also eligible for a Melbourne Plus digital credential.

[Melbourne Plus](#) is the University's program for recognising your participation in co-curricular activities and the capabilities you develop through them. Serving as an elected student representative is eligible for recognition through Melbourne Plus as it helps students develop their capability in *People Leadership*. When students have completed their terms, they will have the opportunity to reflect on how their time at UMSU helped develop this capability; and will receive a digital credential that is verified by the University of Melbourne. This credential can be shared across networks and students may use it, along with the reflection piece, to demonstrate and articulate their capabilities in the future.

# Indigenous Committee Members

## Composition of the Indigenous Committee

- a) Seven voting representatives, of whom at least half, rounded up, must be Women. If at least this number of candidates are not Women, those places not filled by Women may be filled by other candidates;
- b) The relevant Officer or Officers as non-voting representative; and
- c) Up to three additional non-voting representatives co-opted by the Committee.

The Indigenous Committee must comprise of Members of UMSU who are Indigenous Students. The Committee is elected by all enrolled Students who are Indigenous Students.

## Roles and Accountabilities of Indigenous Committee Members

The Indigenous Department has a Committee, known by the name of its Department. The Indigenous Committee must consist of the representatives elected, appointed, or co-opted to the Indigenous Department. The Indigenous Committee is responsible in the relevant area of activity to which the Committee relates for, in this case being representing and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The role of the Indigenous Committee includes:

- i. Setting the direction of the Department
- ii. Developing Department Policy
- iii. Developing and administering the Committee's budget and finances
- iv. Overseeing grants to Students
- v. Encouraging Student discussion of, and participation in, activities relating to the Department
- vi. Fostering, resourcing, and consulting a Collective corresponding to the Department which, unless chosen to be restricted to the constituency, is open to all Students
- vii. Direction of the relevant Officer
- viii. Implementing the purposes of UMSU, and
- ix. Implementing the aims and objectives of the Department.

The Indigenous Committee, whilst responsible for determining Policy and making decisions relevant to the Indigenous Department, is subject to Students' Council. The Students' Council has overall responsibility for UMSU and ultimate decision-making power, however, may, to the extent consistent with the Purposes of UMSU, have due regard to the decisions and/or recommendations of the Indigenous Committee regarding

relevant determinations. All Committee Members must act in accordance with the requirements of UMSU's Constitution (together with all UMSU Policies and Regulations), the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and the requirements of the ACNC, including the ACNC Governance Standards. The Indigenous Committee must exercise reasonable care and diligence in carrying out their duties.

## Duties of Committee Members

In addition to upholding the aforementioned responsibilities, each member of the Indigenous Committee has an obligation to:

- Attend and participate in an induction program at the beginning of their term, as well as any ongoing trainings throughout their term.
- In conjunction with the Indigenous Officer, prepare and implement the departmental budget for their year in office, ensuring that the financial affairs of the Department are managed responsibly.
- Engage in a courteous and respectful manner with members of the Committee.
- Have familiarity with and provide information and assistance to students with regards to UMSU Regulations and Policy.
- Provide direction to their Officer towards the fulfilment of the Department's area of activity.
- Hold the Indigenous Officer accountable to their obligations as Office Bearer.
- Attend and prepare appropriately for all Committee meetings, including taking the time to read and consider all papers in advance.
  - The Indigenous Committee meets fortnightly within Semester and monthly during summer and winter breaks. Preparation and attendance of these committee meetings can range from 2-5 hours per fortnight.
- Elect representative(s) from the Committee to attend any Student Advisory Group (SAG) meetings in which the Indigenous Department requires representation, as outlined in the *Advisory Group Policy*.
- Act in accordance with the Council Charter at all times while in office.

If any Committee Member is unable to fulfil any or all of the above obligations due to extenuating circumstances or disability, supports with and/or adjustments of workload will be made available.



## Implementation

The Indigenous Committee is the body of the Indigenous Department, elected by the students, for the students to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Committee members will find themselves meeting regularly throughout the year with the Department Officer to make decisions around what events, projects, and/or campaigns the Department will run. Committee members should be familiar with the UMSU Regulations & Policies when making any decisions or actions, and act in UMSU and the Department’s best interests at all times. The Committee will also foster and resource any Collectives existing within the Department. Finally, it is up to the Committee to ensure that the direction and activities of the Indigenous Department fulfil the Department’s aims and objectives, to ensure that Indigenous students on-campus get the fullest benefit the Department has to offer.

## Versioning

TITLE	PARA. AMENDED	APPROVAL DATE
Statement Enacted		07/12/2022
Language amended	2, 5, 6, 9, 16	11/10/2023

## Declaration

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to the role and responsibilities of my position as outlined in this document, and consent to act in the capacity of an elected representative of UMSU with effect from the date of my appointment or election.

I have read and agree to comply with the UMSU Constitution.

I have read and agree to comply with the UMSU Council Charter.

I have read and agree to comply with the Policies and Regulations of UMSU.

		<b>Name</b>	
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**Elected  
Representative's  
Signature**

**Date**