

Indigenous Student Success Program 2019 Performance Report

Organisation	AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY		
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1. Enrolments (Access)

1.1 Strategies to improve access to university for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

- Year 11 Early Entry – Student Admissions led development of an early entry process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants (NSW, Qld and ACT) (ACU funded)
- Direct Entry process – Student Admissions led a review of entry process to streamline the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants (ACU funded)
- Bachelor of Business Administration – Led by faculty, a new in Away from Base degree program was developed (ACU funded)
- Collaborated with Marketing teams - Developed targeted promotional materials (ISSP funded)

1.2 Scholarships, bridging/enabling support and outreach activities

- Led by School of Education - Developed Diploma in Educational Studies (Tertiary Preparation). Successful completion will articulate to either B. Early Years (0-5 Years) or B. Education Primary (ACU funded)
- Postgraduate opportunities - Targeted outreach to Aboriginal Health Services to offer (ISSP and ACU funded)
- 2 Postgraduate scholarships – Offered in partnered with Faculty (ISSP and ACU funded)
- Deadly Achiever Award and Community Engagement Award - Celebrated and recognised student success on each campus (ISSP funded)
- Strategic partnerships - Toorong Marnong Consortium (ISSP), Aurora Education Foundation (ISSP) and Queensland Widening Participation Consortium (HEPPP funded)
- Community outreach and engagement - Indigenous Higher Education Units (IHEU) at Brisbane, Canberra, Strathfield, North Sydney, Melbourne and Ballarat campuses (ISSP)
- Internal Partnerships - ACU Alumni and Advancement to promote scholarships (ACU)

1.3 Indigenous Equivalent Full-Time Student Loads (EFTSL)

- EFTSL declined from 2018 (368.375) to 2019 (341.785)
- There was a minimal decline in the average EFTSL per student from 2018 (0.683) to 2019 (0.681).

Table 1 Scholarships - breakdown of 2019 payments^{1 2 3}

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total ^{4 5}	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling ⁶								
Undergraduate ⁷	74,992	31	203,543	16	32,000	16	310,535	63
Post-graduate ⁸	100,000	2			20,890	5	120,890	7
Other								
Total	174,992	33	203,543	16	52,890	21	431,425	70

2. Progression (access and outcomes)

2.1 Strategies to improve unit success rates and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

- ACU Retention Strategy – (ACU)
- Increased engagement with Faculty members - meet and greet morning teas with students at Indigenous Higher Education Units (ISSP)
- Improved advocacy and support for students - regular individual student catch ups with IHEU staff
- Referral to ACU services: Approx. proportion of Indigenous students over total students - Academic Skills (1.8%), Counselling (1.4%), Disability support (1.8%) and Student Advocacy (1.8%)
- Participation in ACU workshops/events - Approx. proportion of Indigenous students over total students - Academic Skills Unit (2.8%)
- Promoted ACU student enrichment activities
- Shared celebrations – community, students and graduates. This included NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week events, Weemala 30th Anniversary, Jim-baa-yer Treaty Dinner and Dhara Daramoolen Reconciliation Dinner (ISSP)
- Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games – Sponsored student participation (ISSP)
- Individual support and advice offered to students sitting the LANTITE tests (ACU/ISSP)
- ACU Start Up – Supporting students with uniform and equipment for placement (ISSP)
- Study Assistance – Reviewed Guidelines and Roles and Responsibilities of ACU staff, ACU students and Study Assistants (ACU)
- Peer Support Program - Supported by Head of School and Faculty staff and aims to increase retention and participation whilst enhancing students’ university experience and ongoing course engagement (ACU/ISSP)
- National Indigenous Student Data Base (NISD) – Enhanced and maintained the database to monitor student success, facilitate regular contact with students and follow up at critical times. The system also monitors student take-up of Study Assistance contracts.
- Scholarship Improvements Initiative - Contributed to this ACU project

2.2 Success/progression rates

- The success rates continue to improve over the last 5 years including 2018/19
- The success rate for 2018 was 82.2% and this increased for 2019 to 82.7%

2.3 Number and level (UG/PG) of study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that received tutorial assistance in 2019;

- See Table 2A

2.4 Indigenous Support Unit or other Indigenous student support activities

Indigenous Higher Education Units (IHEU)

- Enhanced culturally safe and supportive environments on six campuses (ACU/ISSP)
- IHEU upgrades: Yalbalinga (Strathfield) - Cultural Garden, Weemala (Brisbane) – Improvements to Cultural Garden and student space, Dhara Daramoolen (Canberra) – Courtyard and garden upgrade and Jim-baa-yer (Melbourne) – Planning for extension of student space. (ISSP/ACU)
- Facilitated connections between university with local community members
- Coordinated community engagement programs with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups, including Elders' groups (ISSP)
- Cultural mentors – Provided cultural and pastoral support for students (ISSP)
- Family History Project – Aim: To strengthen student cultural identity through researching their family and cultural connections (ISSP)
- 171 students were supported through the Study Assistance program (ISSP)
- On Country experiences – IHEU coordinated local cultural immersions and experiences for ACU staff and students (ISSP)

2.5 Strategies to improve the cultural competency of staff and/ or to ensure the university offers a culturally safe and enriching environment

- In collaboration with HR and Learning and Teaching Centre, enhanced the knowledge and understanding of ACU staff in engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities including cultural knowledge and protocols, and Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country. (ACU/ISSP)
- In collaboration with Learning and Teaching Centre, Contributed Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing in course development and reviews (ACU/ISSP)
- Leading on-campus cultural celebrations and collaborating with ACU teams in observance of significant events. (ISSP)
- Developed Acknowledgement of Country videos and refreshed Acknowledgement promotional materials (ISSP)
- Cultural training was conducted for Study Assistants (ISSP)
- On Country cultural learnings with IHEU and ACU staff and students (ISSP)

Table 2a Tutorial assistance provided in 2019

Level of study	Number of students assisted	Total hours of assistance ⁹	Expenditure ¹⁰ (\$)
Enabling			
Undergraduate	161	4,814	
Post graduate	9	111	
Other			10,384.36
Total	170	4925	304,205.79

Table 2b Indigenous Support Activities provided in 2019¹¹

Activity ^{12 13}	Number of student participants	Expenditure (\$)
Student leadership activities	>60	154,240
IHEU student activities	>350	205,019
Student Grants	>160	51,447
IHEU upgrades	>500	371,586

3. Completions (outcomes)

3.1 Strategies to improve award course completion

- LANTITE – Initial Teaching students were supported to prepare for LANTITE tests through: Course Review to include LANTITE hurdle assessments, Academic Skills Advisors and Study Assistance (ACU/ISSP/AFB)
- Francis Xavier Conaci Scholarship – Enables an Indigenous student to participate in an international study experience at ACU’s Rome Campus during NAIDOC week
- Promoted student participation in ACU Jobs on Campus and Student Ambassador programs

3.2 The rise or fall of completions

- In 2018 73 students course completed. This increased to 81 students completing in 2019.

3.3 Strategies connecting graduates with employment (both within and outside of the institution)

- ACU Pro Bon Placement Indigenous Law Program – Student placement opportunity at ACU (ACU)
- ACU Career Development Service – Connecting undergraduates with professional development opportunities (ACU)

- Discipline specific forums and conferences including Indigenous Allied Health Assoc., Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM), Student Paramedics Australasia International Conference (SPAIC) and State and National Indigenous Education Forums. Students participated in national forums to develop industry specific knowledge and awareness. (ISSP/ACU)
- Partnerships with education sectors - In collaboration with Faculty, delivered on-campus events to connect final year teaching students with education sectors (ACU)
- Regional or rural clinical placements or teaching practicums - In collaboration with Faculty, supported placement experiences for students. This included 5 Nursing and 1 Paramedicine placements in Nhulunbuy, NT. (ACU/ISSP)
- NSW Health - Good Health Great Jobs Stepping up forum – ACU student and staff participation

3.4 Strategies to assist graduates

- Alumni - Connecting graduates with Alumni and employers (ACU)
- ACU Postgraduate Strategy – Specific scholarship opportunities through the Postgraduate Strategy (ACU/ISSP)
- ACU Graduate Internship Program – HR employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates (ACU)

3.5 Strategies to monitor student outcomes after graduation

- Engagement with Graduates – Opportunities to reconnect with university through Alumni activities and ISSP Study Assistants (ACU/ISSP)

4. Regional and remote students

4.1 Strategies to improve access to university study

- Accommodation and Leadership Scholarships – Offered to 13 students from regional and/or remote communities (ISSP)

4.2 Activities to support students during their studies

- Connected students to ACU student programs and services to enrich their university experience and maintain health and well-being
- Promoted ACU academic support programs including PASS, Academic Skills and IHEU Study Assistance program
- Cultural mentors assisted with cultural; and pastoral care of students

4.3 Scholarship provided (offers and amount paid)

- See Table 4

4.4 Indigenous Equivalent full-time student load

- In 2018 the Indigenous Equivalent full-time student load was 102.52 and in 2019 it was 97.11

Table 4 Scholarship data for remote and regional students^{14 15}

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total ¹⁶	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2018 Payments	14,523	6	23,860	6	26,000	13	64,383	25
B. 2019 Offers ¹⁷	42,268	17	203,543	16	18,000	9	263,811	42
C. Percentage ¹⁸ (C=B/A*100)							409%	168%
2019 Payments	42,268	17	203,543	16	18,000	9	263,811	42

5. Working with Vulnerable People Requirement¹⁹

	Yes/No
Has the provider completed a risk assessment?	Yes
Have staff involved in ISSP activity received training?	Yes
Does the provider have a compliance process in place?	Yes

6. Eligibility requirements

6.1 Indigenous Education Strategy

6.1.1 Explain how the university has met its requirements under section 13 of the ISSP Guidelines;

As a national university ACU has seven campus across four states (Qld, Vic, NSW and SA) and the Australian Capital Territory. ACU has met the requirements of the ISSP Guidelines through the university's key whole of university strategies. The University's [Strategic Plan: Strength to Strength \(2015 - 2020\)](#) provides a high-level summary of the University Performance Indicators (UPI) and Key Result Areas (KRA) that guide the University's performance in teaching and research. Further details including monitoring arrangements can be found at the ACU public website:

<https://www.acu.edu.au/-/media/feature/pagecontent/richtext/about-acu/strategic-plan-2015-2020/strategic-plan-2015-2020.pdf?la=en&hash=FBD2C5C115D7C74A884C076320C94F12>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student performance targets are monitored and reported quarterly within the Portfolio programs, the Enabling Frameworks and the Organisational Unit Plans across the University's operations. Targets include:

- improved student participation number and rate
- improved student retention and success numbers and rates, and
- improved course completions.

Learning and Teaching Centre (LTC) - Building Cultural Capacity project

ACU's Learning and Teaching Centre (LTC) led University reforms through the Building Cultural Capacity project. With three dedicated Indigenous academic staff, the project aimed to embed cultural safety and Indigenous ways of Knowing, Being and Doing into curricula and to increase cultural capability of ACU academic staff. LTC achievements included:

- Revision of Graduate Attributes to more explicitly articulate an appreciation of the perspectives of First Peoples. cultural course reviews and development of new courses (ACU)
- ACU Teaching Development Grant – Aim: To provide culturally safe learning environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students on Allied Health placements and improve culturally responsive practices through the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives (ACU)
- Review of all Indigenous teaching and learning resources using an inhouse evaluation tool (ACU/ISSP)
- Mentoring of academic staff in building cultural capacity (ACU/ISSP)
- Identify and support academic and professional champions in Faculties and Schools to lead Course Development teams (ISSP/ACU)
- Supporting Faculty champions to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander views and Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing into course learning outcomes and individual course units (ISSP/ACU)
- Review of Course approval templates to include an explanation of the ways in which Indigenous views are embedded in curriculum (ISSP/ACU)
- Development culturally responsive good practice videos (ISSP/ACU)
- Convening workshops for Academics to facilitate inclusion Indigenous Knowledges in Curriculum and teaching practices. (ISSP/ACU)

ACU is committed to facilitating and sustaining a strong culture of inclusiveness, to improve capability and competency, strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement and facilitate improved access and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The finalising of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy (Belonging Strategy) was put on hold in 2019, to enable alignment with the University's new Strategic Plan (2020 – 2023) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Strategy.

6.1.2 Include current link to the university's website outlining its strategies for improving access, participation, retention and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Current link to the university's website

<https://www.acu.edu.au/about-acu/faculties-directorates-and-staff/directorates/first-peoples-and-equity-pathways-directorate>

6.1.3 ACU's Reconciliation Action Plan

- The University's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan was launched in March 2019.
- Collaboration commenced with ACU Procurement, to register ACU a member of Supply Nation.

6.1.4 ACU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Strategy 2019 – Final Report Cultural Capability Strategy)

ACU commissioned an internal review to identify the university's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capacities, with the Final Report being released in late 2019. The University's Senior Executive is committed to implementing the Cultural Capability Strategy recommendations.

6.2 Indigenous Workforce Strategy

6.2.1 Explain how the university has met its requirements under section 12 of the ISSP Guidelines

ACU's [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employment Strategy](#) 2018-2020 includes measures of 3% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in both the professional and academic employment streams.

To ensure compliance with Clause 12 of the ISSP Guidelines ACU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employment Strategy's themes are:

- Ensure it is a welcoming and safe workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that is grounded in the University's Catholic Mission and Values,
- to achieve 3% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employment,
- to develop and implement strategies that support workforce and individual development, participation and involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

6.2.2 Include current link to the university's website outlining the strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working at the university and to support the development of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employment Strategy 2018-2020 is available publicly on the ACU website at <https://www.acu.edu.au/289887>

6.2.3 Discuss the practical implementation and evaluation of your Indigenous Workforce Strategy

ACU is supported to undertake the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employment Strategy by the National Manager Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment.

The University continues to implement activities to support retaining its current staff such as

- Both formal and informal staff contacts that evaluates engagement
- quarterly staff network meetings
- use of internal social mediums

6.2.4 Report progress against targets and milestones outlined in the strategy

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employment Strategy comprised of three themes that influences the key result areas. They were are follows:

- Our Culture
- Retain and Build Our Own
- Investing in our people

All themes are progressing to outcomes or levels of achievement.

6.2.5 Discuss plans to support the current or future employment of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in a senior position at the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor or an equivalent level; and

The university provides the employment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person in a senior position: Director, First peoples and Equity Pathways

6.2.6 Discuss plans to progress towards an Indigenous workforce target of 3% or discuss how you have achieved this target in 2019.

Collaborative work has commenced including:

- Faculties and Directorates are acknowledging and incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in teaching and learning, research and core business at ACU.
- Opportunities are identified to support embedding cultural capabilities for all ACU staff including senior staff.
- Human Resources works in partnership with senior leaders and supervisors and managers to provide strategic support in the development and implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples participation activities.

During 2019 the University undertook an internal review of its cultural capacities resulting in the formation of seven working groups led by University Executive. They are as follows:

1. Values and Principles
2. Community Engagement
3. Accountability and Decision Making
4. Resources and Accountability
5. Education
6. Research
7. Cultural Safety

The working groups are strongly aligned to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employment Strategy.

Table 6.2 Indigenous workforce data (2019 breakdown)^{20 21 22 23}

Level/position	Permanent		Casual and contract	
	Academic	Non-academic	Academic	Non-academic
AC003 x 16			Yes	
Academic B x 10	Yes			
Academic B x 4			Yes	
Academic C x1	Yes			
Academic C x 1			Yes	
ACE1 x 1	Yes			
HEW8 x 4		Yes		
HEW7 x 8		Yes		
HEW7 x 2				Yes
HEW6 x 2		Yes		
HEW5 x 8		Yes		Yes
HEW5 x 4				Yes
HEW4 x 4		Yes		
HEW4 x 1				Yes
HEW3 x 2		Yes		
HEW3 x 2				Yes
HEW2 x 3				Yes
I011 x 3				Yes
HEW9 x 1			Yes	
Senior staff x 1				Yes

6.3 Indigenous Governance Mechanism

ACU has met the requirements of section 11 of the ISSP Guidelines through the university's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Committee (ATSIEC).

The purpose of the ATSIEC includes but is not limited to the following:

- To evaluate, report and recommend on the use of the University's Indigenous Student Success Program
- Champion a learning culture that builds cultural capabilities, through the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives in University courses and University policies
- Promote excellence and discourse in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education through innovative and collaborative partnerships within and beyond the University
- Develop, evaluate and report and on the University's Indigenous Education Strategy

- Evaluate, report and recommend on the University's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- Contribute to a University culture that acknowledges and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their knowledge and cultures
- Provide cultural support, cultural representation and enhancing deep cultural understanding of perspectives and protocols of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Provide advice to ACU on engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, that engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and/or staff and the wider University community

ATSIEC is co-chaired by the Director, First Peoples and Equity Pathways. The Director has national senior leadership responsibilities and is a member of the University's senior level planning and decision-making committees including Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Group, Academic Board and Executive Planning Group.

ATSIEC must have a committee that consists of majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons, each of whom has skills and experience relevant to the role. Nominated Members of ATSIEC will serve for a period of two years and may be considered for consecutive terms of office to maintain continuity. The ATSIEC may review its own procedures and amend its Charter.

Membership

ATSIEC membership is as follows:

1. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Innovation (Co-Chair)
2. Director, First Peoples and Equity Pathways Directorate (Co-Chair) *
3. Coordinator/ Yalbalinga Indigenous Higher Education Unit *
4. Coordinator, Weemala Indigenous Higher Education Unit *
5. Coordinator, Jim-baa-yer Indigenous Higher Education Unit, Melbourne and Ballarat campuses *
6. Student Support Officer, Dhara Daramoolen Indigenous Higher Education Unit *
7. National Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment, Human Resources Directorate*
8. Executive Dean of Education & Arts (or nominated representative)
9. Executive Dean of Theology and Philosophy (or nominated representative)
10. Executive Dean of Law and Business (or nominated representative)
11. Executive Dean of Health Sciences (or nominated representative)
12. Director, Office of Student Success (or nominated representative)
13. Director (Learning and Teaching Centre) (or nominated representative)
14. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (or nominated representative)
15. Chief Financial Officer (or nominated representative)
16. Director, Marketing (or nominated representative)
17. External University Representative*
18. Two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Representatives*
19. Two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders/ community representatives*

*Denotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative

Number of ATSIEC meetings and main agenda items

In 2019, two ATSIEC meetings were convened in February and November. The main agenda items included but were not limited to:

- Review of 2018 ISSP Projects and Financial Acquittal
- Review of 2019 ISSP applications and Budget forecast
- Review of ACU's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Report
- Reporting on ISSP Initiatives including Postgraduate Strategy
- Developing ACU's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy

6.3.1 Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

Consistent with subsection 17(2)(b) of the guidelines, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Committee through the Director First Peoples Equity Pathways and Provost as Co-Chairs, endorses the 2019 ISSP Performance Report and the Acquittal report in this section.

Additional information for completing the template

¹ Only payments made during 2019 can be included in this table. For multi-year scholarship agreements, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded in the performance reporting for the relevant future grant year.

² Record the number of students (head count) not EFTSL.

³ Include both preserved and new ISSP scholarships.

⁴ This figures in this column should be the sum of the relevant row.

⁵ The total may not be the sum of the previous columns as some students may receive several scholarships.

⁶ Include payments to all enabling students, including remote and regional students.

⁷ Include payments to all undergraduate students, including remote and regional students.

⁸ Include payments to all postgraduate students, including remote and regional students.

⁹ Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time).

¹⁰ Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.

¹¹ Add more rows if necessary.

¹² Include a brief description of the activity.

¹³ Providers can either provide a breakdown of the major activities or a total for all the activities undertaken. Examples of activities may include mentoring, outreach activities, promotion of scholarships, events, elder-in-residence, career guidance etc.

¹⁴ Only record amounts which would/did require payment during the 2019 calendar year. For multi-year scholarship offers, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded against the reporting for the relevant future grant year.

¹⁵ Note the data in this table is a subsection of the all student scholarship data provided in Table 1.

¹⁶ This figures in this column should be the sum of the relevant row.

¹⁷ Record all verbal and written scholarship offers for the 2019 calendar year, including those offers that were not accepted by the student. Record the 2019 component of new scholarship offers and the planned 2019 value of previously awarded scholarships (including continuing scholarships and preserved scholarships).

¹⁸ This data confirms the provider's compliance with Section 21(3) of the Guidelines.

¹⁹ This section confirms that the provider complies with Section 35A of the Guidelines.

²⁰ While universities report on the number of Indigenous staff members through mainstream reporting requirements, the additional information provided in this section provides enhanced monitoring of the university's efforts in building its Indigenous workforce.

²¹ Record all Indigenous staff employed by the provider, including those not working on ISSP-related activities.

²² The numbers recorded here should be a headcount of staff and not the full-time equivalent.

²³ There is no longer a requirement to break up these by faculty. Please group together results by level.