# Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander - Establishing Status within the University Procedure

## Section 1 - Introduction

(1) This procedure reflects the University's commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Reconciliation as outlined in the University's Strategic Plan and Reconciliation Action Plan.

(2) However, to access specific programs, services or opportunities available to Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons within the University they will need to establish Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Islander Status.

(3) This procedure outlines the process individuals need to follow to establish Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Islander persons within the University.

## Section 2 - Audience

(4) All individuals seeking to establish Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Islander Status within the University.

(5) University staff administering specific programs, services or opportunities available to Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons within the University.

## Section 3 - Procedure

(6) Persons seeking to establish Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Islander Status within the University will be required to provide evidence to demonstrate that they meet all of the following criteria (a, b, and c):

a. that they are of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. This may be proven by originals or certified copies of:
    i. a letter signed by an executive leader of an incorporated Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation, who has the authority to administer confirmation of Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Islander status, on the organisation's letterhead (please also see Clause 8) (N.B. While not limited as the only documentation accepted, a confirmation of Aboriginality document from a Local Aboriginal Land Council or Aboriginal Medical Service is considered a community standard);
    ii. evidence of an immediate family member's confirmation of Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Islander Status and the applicant's birth records to demonstrate relationship link. Immediate family members include biological parents or grandparents; or
b. that they identify as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. This may be proven by:
    i. self-identification as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. The applicant should identify themselves as such on application and/or enrolment forms as applicable.
c. that they are accepted as such by the community in which they live or have lived. This may be proven by:
    i. a letter signed by a prominent member of an incorporated Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

organisation, on the organisation's letterhead.

(7) Current student applicants will apply to establish Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status through the Student Portal of the University's Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Future student applicants will apply to establish Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status through this establishing status application form, which should be submitted via email to PVCIndigenous@newcastle.edu.au with supporting documentation.

(8) Any support letter signed by an executive leader of an incorporated Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation cannot be signed by an immediate family member of the applicant, or a current staff member of the University of Newcastle.

(9) Abstudy documentation or a supporting letter from organisations, including government organisations, without the authority to provide confirmation of Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Islander will not be accepted as confirmation.

(10) Statutory declarations will not be accepted as evidence.

(11) Documentary evidence provided by the applicant will be assessed by a panel and responsible officer. The panel will be convened by the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership and members will consist, at a minimum, of:

a. a representative from the Wollotuka Institute; and
b. a representative from the Board of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research (BATSIER).

(12) The panel may request further information from the applicant if required.

(13) The panel will make a recommendation to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership who will make the final decision.

(14) The panel will meet once weekly. It is the applicant's responsibility to submit all required documentation to meet the requirements of the policy and procedure and allow for assessment in a timely manner and to meet other application deadlines.

(15) The panel or responsible officer may conduct a full audit to verify any evidence provided to ensure contact details and letters of support are correct and legitimate.

(16) Confirmation documents and associated records provided by the applicant will be held on file in accordance with the Records Governance Policy.

(17) In the situation where an application is left idle by the applicant for 30 working days it will automatically be cancelled and the student will need to re-apply through the Student Portal of the Customer Relationship Management(CRM), or via the establishing status application form.

# Section 4 - Supporting Information

(18) Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) – Proof of Aboriginality.

(19) The Wollotuka Institute has established Family Tracing Workshops to assist with researching and tracing Aboriginal family genealogy, history and connections. These workshops are facilitated by an external facilitator and are run adhoc throughout the year.

## Status and Details

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| **Status** | Current |
| **Effective Date** | 30th July 2024 |
| **Review Date** | 30th July 2027 |
| **Approval Authority** | Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership |
| **Approval Date** | 29th July 2024 |
| **Expiry Date** | Not Applicable |
| **Responsible Executive** | Nathan Towney<br>Deputy Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Equity<br>+61 2 4055 3001 |
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## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"University"** - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

**"Working day"** - Any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a public holiday in Newcastle, on which business may be conducted.

**"Applicant"** - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s.  For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Student"** - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

**"Staff"** - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.