

First Nations Education Policy

Document

Document Name	First Nations Education Policy
Brief Description	This policy publicly affirms Sydney Institute of Business and Technology's (SIBT) commitment to providing socio-economic, cultural and academic support to achieve parity in the access, participation, retention and success of First Nations peoples in the SIBT educational environment.
Responsibility	College Director and Principal
Authorised Approver	Academic Board
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Version Control

Date Approved	Version No.	Summary of Changes	Approver
16/4/2024	1	Initial Release	Academic Board

Related Documents

Name	Location
Admissions Policy	SIBT Website
Equity and Diversity Policy	SIBT Website
Student Code of Conduct	SIBT Website
Staff Code of Conduct	SIBT Website
Support for Students Policy	SIBT Website
Support for Students Procedure	SIBT Website
Indigenous Australian Education Policy	WSU Website
NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977	https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/
Higher Education Support Act 2003	https://www.legislation.gov.au/
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021	https://www.legislation.gov.au/
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy 1989	Department of Education
Navitas Reconciliation Action Plan	Navitas Reconciliation Action Plan (exactdn.com)
National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities	universitiesaustralia.edu.au

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1. Purpose

- a) The purpose of this First Nations Education Policy is to publicly affirm the SIBT's commitment to supporting the participation of First Nations peoples in the educational environment of the institution.
- b) The First Nations Education Policy has been prepared in accordance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, the Navitas Reconciliation Action Plan 2022 and having regard for a number of contemporary reports identified in Related Documents. It sets out how SIBT complies with relevant standards and regulations regarding the support for participation of First Nations peoples.

2. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Person	Source: s51 (25) of the High Court of Australia (1983): <i>“An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live.”</i>
Cultural Competency	Student and staff knowledge and understanding of First Nations cultures, histories and contemporary realities and awareness of First Nations protocols, combined with the proficiency to engage and work effectively in First Nation contexts congruent to the expectations of First Nations peoples.
First Nations peoples	This term refers to the First Peoples of Australia. They are not one group but comprise hundreds of groups that have their own distinct set of languages, histories, and cultural traditions.
Indigenous Australian	(as adopted by the Commonwealth of Australia for administrative purposes) any person who: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent; ii. Identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; and iii. Is accepted by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in which they live as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
Elder	The traditional meaning of a First Nations Elder is someone who has gained recognition within their community as a custodian of knowledge and lore, and who has permission to disclose cultural knowledge and beliefs. Recognised Elders are highly respected people within First Nations communities.
Nation	A culturally distinct group of people associated with a particular culturally defined area of land or country. Each nation has boundaries that cannot be changed, and language is tied to that nation.
Traditional Custodians	A First Nations person or group of First Nations peoples directly descended from the original First Nations inhabitants of a culturally defined area of land or country. They have a cultural association with this country that derives from their bloodline back to Country, traditions, observances, customs, beliefs, or history of the original First Nations inhabitants of the area.

3. Application

- a) The First Nations Education Policy applies to:
 - i. All staff (regardless of their employment status – ongoing, casual, honorary, visiting/ guest), and SIBT students. It further intends to capture those individuals who contribute to the academic environment of the institution, such as contractors, volunteers, and members of governing committees;
 - ii. SIBT physical campus, and its digital environments.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Acknowledgement of Country

- a) SIBT acknowledges the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which its campus is located.
- b) SIBT pays respects to Elders past and present and extends that respect to all First Nations peoples. SIBT recognises and respects the continuing living cultures of First Nations peoples.

4.2 Principles

- a) SIBT is committed to creating partnerships with First Nations students, staff and communities that ensure a culturally rich, relevant and engaged learning experience with embedded First Nations peoples heritage and culture.
- b) SIBT affirms its commitment to the following principles which underpins the approach to First Nations learning and teaching:
 - i. Whole-of-Institution approach across the student life cycle, from recruitment, admission, participation and progress, graduation, and transition to further studies;
 - ii. Acknowledging that a greater understanding and appreciation of First Nations peoples' perspectives, knowledge, skills, values and contemporary issues will advance our communities;
 - iii. Accountability of all members of SIBT students and staff (regardless of their employment status – ongoing, casual, honorary, visiting/ guest), and extends to individuals who contribute to the academic environment of the institution, such as contractors, volunteers, and members of governing committees;
 - iv. Learning and teaching within SIBT for staff and students that supports recognition and valuing of traditional and contemporary histories, values, languages, culture and knowledge;
 - v. Respect and civility among and between SIBT students and staff (regardless of their employment status and including honorary and visiting guests). It further intends to capture those individuals who contribute to the academic environment of the institution, such as contractors, volunteers, and members of governing committees;
 - vi. Opportunities for engaging in the governance, decision making, planning, delivery, and evaluation of education;
 - vii. Proactive support of students and staff through co-creation, collaboration, consultation and inclusion in curriculum;

- viii. Opportunities for cultural interactions between staff and students, establishing rapport and stronger relationships;
 - ix. Building cultural competency across SIBT educational environment by promoting understanding and appreciation of First Nations peoples traditional and contemporary perspectives, knowledge, spirituality, skills, values and culture;
 - x. Assisting First Nations students to develop positive identities that are supported by their knowledge of, and pride in, their own cultural heritage and academic, technological and social skills;
 - xi. Ensuring First Nations content is appropriately attributed when developing and delivering to students;
 - xii. Ensuring the SIBT campus is welcoming, respectful, supportive, non-discriminatory and free of harassment for First Nations students and staff and provide First Nations students with study spaces where they feel culturally safe; and
 - xiii. Equipping all SIBT staff with critical skills to recognise and counter prejudice in all its forms.
- c) Reporting on student progression, completion and attrition rates for First Nations students at the end of each session is included in the Board of Examiners Subgroup Progression Report. Analysis of key metrics will include a comparison to SIBT overall metrics and analysis on any differences between the two cohorts will be explored and strategies developed to close the gap; and
 - d) On an annual basis, data will be collated in the Student Success and Satisfaction annual report presented to the Academic Board.
 - e) SIBT is committed to Navitas initiated strategies to engage and support First Nations peoples as outlined in an extract 'SIBT Strategies for Engaging and Supporting First Nations Peoples.' (Please refer to Appendix A).

4.3 Engaging with Western Sydney University

- a) SIBT acknowledges Western Sydney University's policy on Indigenous Australian Education and seeks to support its principles and commitments.
- b) SIBT will provide an admission pathway for First Nations students into Western Sydney University.

5. Responsibilities

Responsibility	CDP	AD	AB	GB
Maintain currency of policy	A	R	I	I
Foster an environment that aligns with policy principles	A	R		
Reports on the implementation of the principles within the college	A	R	R	I
CDP = College Director and Principal, AD = Academic Director, AB = Academic Board, GB = Governing Body				
R = Responsible, A = Accountable, S = Supporting, C = Consulting, I = Informed				

6. Compliance

6.1 General

- a) The College Director and Principal (CDP) will ensure that:
 - i. staff are informed about this Policy through staff meetings and other internal communications;
 - ii. Students are made aware of this Policy through the SIBT website and through the educational experiences with their academic staff;
 - iii. All areas of SIBT accept joint responsibility for implementing this policy, and
 - iv. All contractors, volunteers, and members of governing committees are aware of SIBT's expectations on supporting the principals of this policy;
 - v. All staff will be engaged in scheduled cultural competency training delivered through the Navitas Employee Learning platform as part of onboarding and subsequent scheduled training modules and will also have opportunities to voluntarily participate in cultural activities on campus.

6.2 Breaches

- a) Academic Staff who breach this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with the SIBT Staff Code of Conduct.
- b) Students who breach this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with the SIBT Student Code of Conduct.

7. Review

- a) The First Nations Education Policy is reviewed by the person with delegated responsibility for this policy and the Quality and Compliance Manager every three (3) years and at the time of any changes to the regulatory compliance requirements, legislation, regulation, and guidelines.

Appendix A: Strategies for Engaging and Supporting First Nations Peoples.

SIBT is committed to supporting the participation of First Nations peoples in the educational environment of the institution.

Theme	Strategy	Provider
Recruitment	Networking and building relationships with First Nations communities, attending events organised by First Nations communities, inviting Elders and community leaders to visit campus information sessions to promote SIBT and its programs, hosting First Nations students' engagement sessions.	SIBT
Fees and Scholarships	Each year, one Access Scholarship is available to a First Nations student to undertake a full qualification in any discipline.	SIBT
Admission	The Admissions Policy fundamentally considers applications and ensures the successful entry of First Nations peoples.	SIBT
Orientation	Local Elders are invited to Orientation Week to conduct a Welcome to Country Ceremony for Australian and International students.	SIBT
Participation	After enrolment, First Nations students are contacted by the SIBT Student Counsellor and connected to support services within SIBT.	SIBT
Participation	A range of events are observed/celebrated on campus including NAIDOC Week.	SIBT & Western Sydney University
Graduation	Graduate awards for high performing First Nations students.	SIBT
Governance	<p>SIBT's governing body is supplied with data that demonstrates the performance of First Nations students. Where there is cause for improvement, strategies are enacted to support.</p> <p>First Nations students are considered when nominating students to attend governing committees.</p> <p>The First Nations Education Policy affirms SIBT's commitment to educational policies and practices supporting the participation of First Nations peoples.</p>	SIBT & Board of Directors
Staff	A range of cultural awareness materials and training webinars are delivered to promote reconciliation and ensure that best practice is followed in terms of recruitment.	Navitas HR