

2. First Nations Peoples Commitment

Introduction

University of Melbourne Graduate Students Association (GSA) is committed to ensuring that all graduates enjoy equitable access to its programs and services.

Purpose

This policy provides an expression of commitment on behalf of GSA, its employees, board/council members and volunteers to working to achieve cultural proficiency in their work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise that cultural proficiency is a constant on-going process for non-Indigenous organisations and their staff.

Authorisation

Chief Executive Officer to authorise policy;

Managers to implement operational strategies.

Definition

Where relevant, the reference to Indigenous peoples used throughout this document will include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Acknowledgement and Recognition

GSA acknowledges and recognises:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Australia.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent a complex cultural group dispossessed of their land and waters during more than 200 years of European occupation of Australia.
- The loss and grief held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples caused by alienation from traditional lands, loss of lives and freedom, and the forced removal of children.
- That the well-being, safety and resilience of Indigenous children, families and communities must firstly be enhanced through respectful relationships with non-Indigenous people.
- The customs and traditions of Indigenous peoples and their spiritual relationship with the land.

- The right of Indigenous peoples to live according to their own beliefs, values and customs, and the vital importance of Indigenous peoples' contributions to strengthening and enriching the heritage of all Australians.
- The need for a partnership approach with Indigenous individuals, groups and organisations as part of addressing the needs of the whole community (including the UoM Graduates).
- The strength and diversity of Indigenous peoples and the importance of the wider family networks in parenting.

Commitment

GSA commits to:

- Developing and promoting, as appropriate, Indigenous involvement in events and celebrations of significance which respect the dignity and protocols of the local Indigenous community.
- Participating in education and awareness processes which enhance the increased knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Indigenous culture, heritage and the needs of the local Indigenous community.
- Defining new ways to work together in partnership to ensure the principles of equity and access for all members of the local Indigenous community to culturally appropriate and responsive programs and services.

Procedures

GSA staff, board/council members, and volunteers will work together to ensure that the strategic directions and practices of the organisation reflect the principles of this policy.

Responsibility

GSA Board, Council members, CEO, all staff members, volunteers, and contractors are responsible for implementation of this policy.

GSA leadership team will initiate first steps to:

- Provide cultural awareness training to existing staff, board/council members and all new staff, board/council members as part of the induction process.
- Develop guidelines for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Promote GSA guiding principles for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to staff, board/council members, visitors, volunteers and agency stakeholders.

- Participate in regional and local Indigenous advisory and/or reference groups where appropriate.
- Include specific identifying and evaluating methods in all data collection and reporting requirements for internal and external use where appropriate and relevant.

Related Documents

- First Nations Peoples Recognition Policy
- Respectful Workplace Policy
- Access & Equity Policy