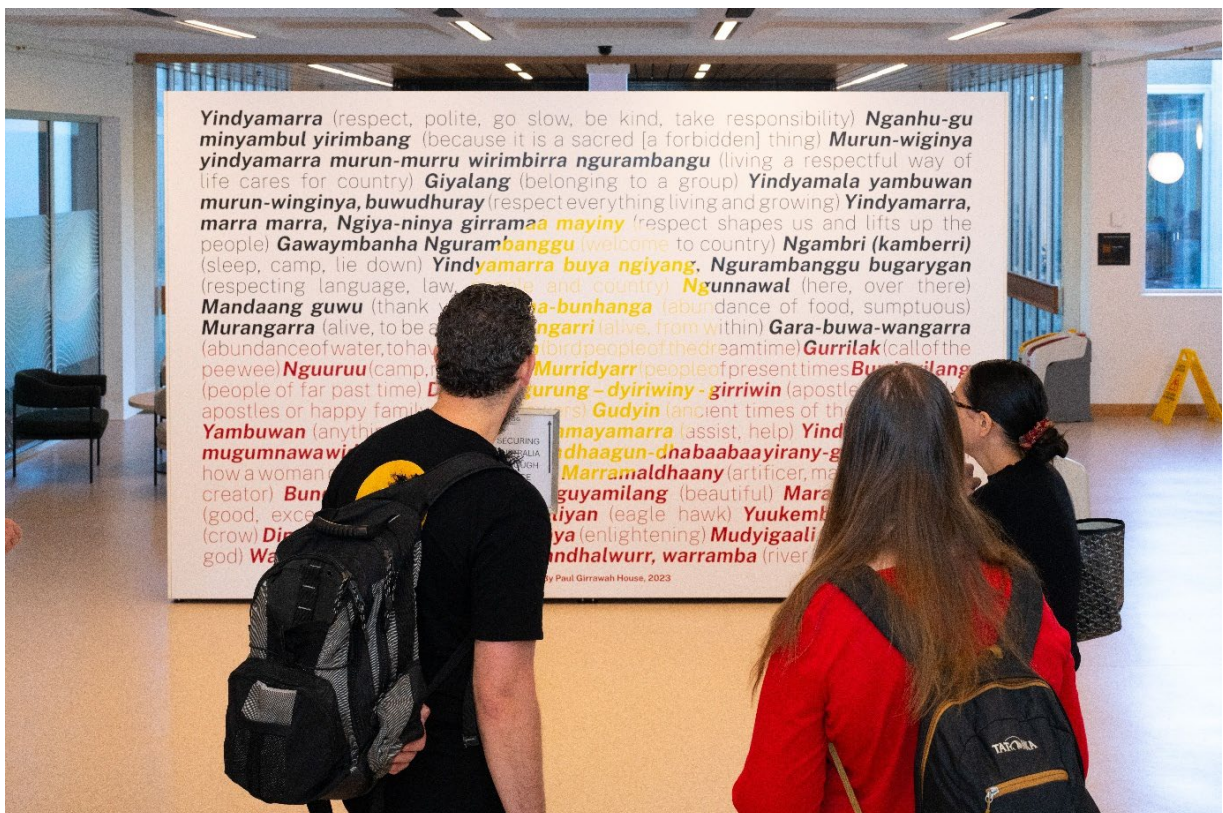




# Transition to Employment Indigenous Internship Program

## Australian National University (ANU)



Artwork by Paul Girrawah House 2023, College of Systems and Society



Australian  
National  
University

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## 1. Welcome

This handbook is designed to guide both participants and supervisors involved in the Transition to Employment Indigenous Internship program at ANU. Its purpose is to ensure that participants receive cultural support, structured professional development, and meaningful mentorship. By fostering environments that recognise the unique challenges faced by Indigenous staff, supervisors can play a pivotal role in setting them up for long-term success in their studies and careers. For support with other Indigenous employment programs please consult with the Senior Consultant – Indigenous Employment and Retention.

Key focus areas:

- Cultural Competency – Embed Indigenous perspectives in supervision.
- Culturally Supportive Experience – Ensure access to Indigenous support networks.
- Equitable Performance & Development – Provide structured learning opportunities.
- Effective Mentorship – Offer strengths-based supervision and career support.
- Evaluation & Accountability – Deliver ongoing feedback for professional success



*Kambri ground map cropped image*



## 2. Program Overview

### What is the Transition to Employment Indigenous internship program?

The prior Indigenous Professional Staff Grant Funding Program at ANU has moved its focus to a new initiative: the Transition to Employment Indigenous Internship Program. This shift reflects a strategic pivot toward a centrally run recruitment model aimed at building a stronger, more sustainable talent pipeline from our ANU Indigenous postgraduate or undergraduate student cohorts into professional roles at ANU. The internship program will be a paid 12 month / 350 hour program whereby the intern is employed one day a week around their studies, where possible, their placement being aligned with their vocational interests. The Intern will be assigned to a local area for their appointment following committee endorsement of the College or Division application, in addition to an interview and recruitment processes being undertaken.

This change is designed to enhance employment pathways and career development for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, while also supporting the University's broader goals and commitment in the ANU Enterprise Agreement 2023-2026 to support growth of ANU career pathways for Indigenous staff.

### Program Structure and timeline

Placements to be undertaken on campus (face-to-face) over 12 months, with a commitment equivalent of 10 weeks full time work or 350hours. The 350hour work schedule to be agreed between supervisor and participant. One annual mid-year round will recruit interns and areas interested in hosting.

Participants will be paid and work to a skill level equivalent (per Enterprise Agreement primary descriptors) to ANU Officer 3.

An Internship job advertisement will be posted using ANU recruit, and expressions of interest from Colleges and Divisions will be called for via email and On Campus Communications, every year between March/April.

Program projects can be research-or operations-based, with participants contributing to various organisational functions, including:

- Developing marketing, communications, and stakeholder engagement plans
- Completing projects (including research projects)
- Conducting policy research on programs and frameworks
- Mapping operational and financial processes, recommending improvements, or developing manuals
- Analysing market research and operational data



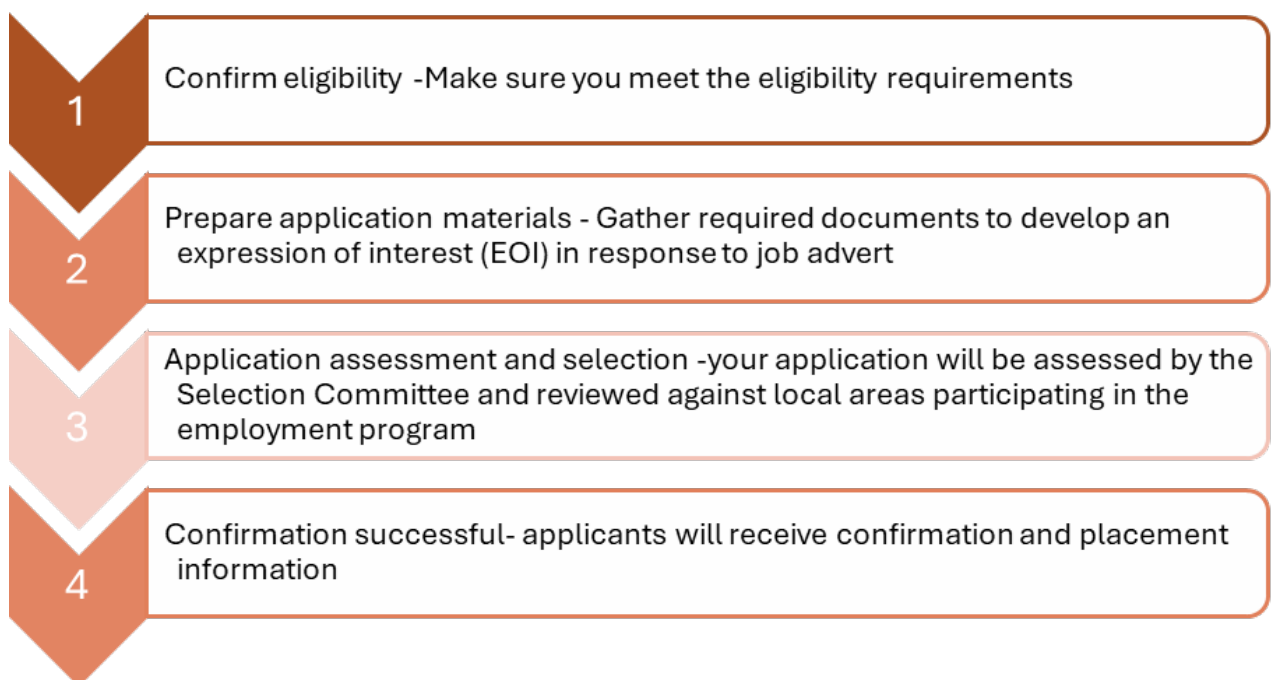
- Financial risk and governance modelling
- Community and cultural engagement
- Other project themes can be offered by various areas across ANU.

## Participant eligibility and process

The Transition to Employment Indigenous Internship Program is offered on a competitive basis, and applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Applicants must identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and be currently enrolled as either an undergraduate (UG) or postgraduate (PG) student at ANU
- Applications are invited from students at all stages of their studies
- Applicants must apply to the job advertisement in the ANU Jobs board with their CV and statement expressing interest in the employment program
- Applicants will participate in a face-to-face interview with a selection committee as determined by the Tjabal Centre Director
- Any successful offer to be placed in the program is conditional on satisfactory results from a background check

## Application processes





## Host Requirements

To ensure a mutually beneficial experience, host areas must:

### *Provide clear Project Requirements*

- Prior to commencement host areas should provide a clear and well-defined project/s to the Senior Consultant - Indigenous Employment and Retention (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team, People & Culture), and the intern. The project/s should:
- Have specific expected outcomes to align with the intern's vocational interest
- Include clearly developed goals to guide participants in their professional growth
- Provide close supervision by a dedicated workplace supervisor with relevant expertise and a professional background suited to the participants role
- Include increasing complexity as the participant progresses through their program

### *Workplace Supervision & Support*

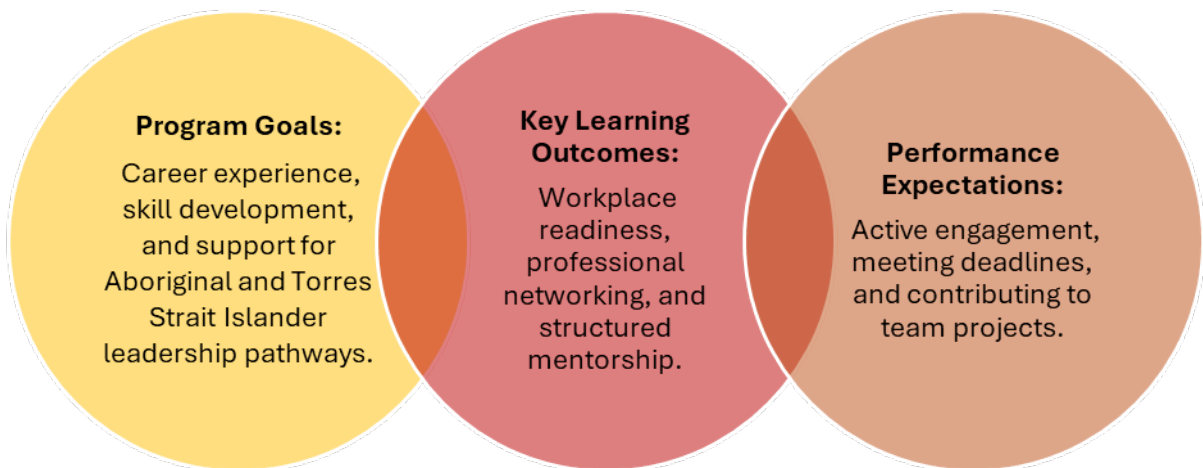
- Hosts must appoint an appropriate workplace supervisor for the intern. The supervisor should be a professional staff member with expertise in the field relevant to the participants project and learning goals.
- Supervisors should be fully aware of their responsibilities and the expectations associated with mentoring the participant.
- Participants should be provided with structured support, ensuring a safe, educational and productive learning environment.

### *Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training*

- Supervisors must complete both online and face-to-face Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training prior to applying to host an intern.
- [Register here](#) for the face-to-face training. The interactive workshop will provide staff at all levels with an introduction to Indigenous history and culture in Australia and an opportunity to share and learn stories from personal and work experiences
- Access the [First Nations online learning course](#).



### 3. Participant Program Responsibilities and Learning Outcomes



Through the Transition to Employment Indigenous Internship Program, participants are expected to:

#### **Develop & share professional knowledge**

- Use what they've learned and apply knowledge from their studies to real-world workplace challenges.
- Solve problems and make decisions by thinking critically to develop useful solutions and offer well-informed recommendations that help the ANU host area make decisions.
- Work professionally with others, including communicating effectively with colleagues, industry professionals and external contacts and contribute as a valued team member.
- Reflect on their growth and consider how the program supports both personal and career development. Embrace continual learning, recognising the value of learning and building new skills.
- Share their experiences, present insights and lessons learned with peers, academics, and professional audiences.



## Cultural Awareness & Advocacy

- Leverage cultural support provided through the [Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre](#) for tailored support, networking and growth opportunities through the ANU Indigenous Staff Network.
- Champion inclusion by advocating for culturally safe practices and contributing to a workplace environment that values Indigenous perspectives.
- Build connections within Indigenous professional networks, nurturing both peer and mentor relationships for long-term career success.
- Foster cultural integrity by sharing knowledge, acknowledging histories, and encouraging respectful and open dialogue in the workplace.

## Professional Conduct & Performance

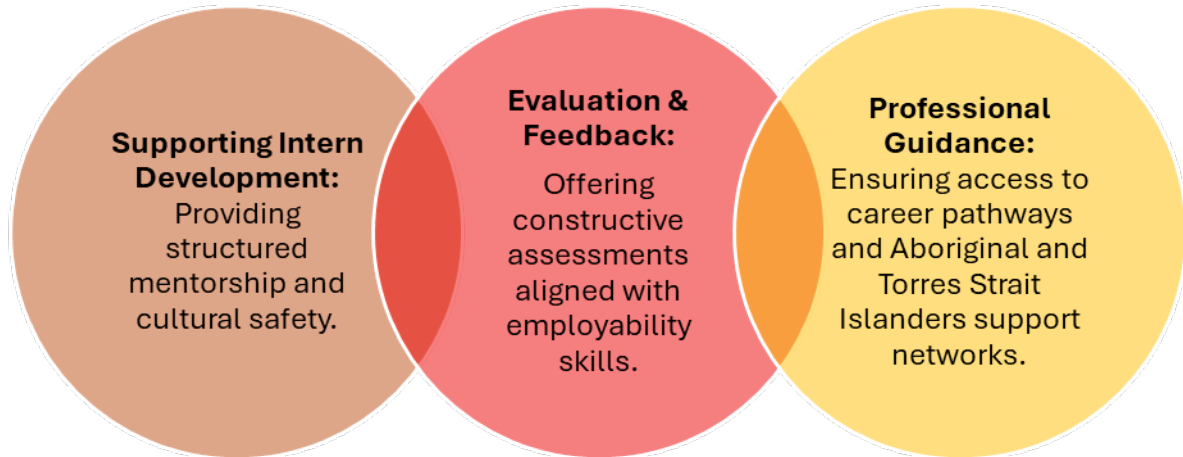
- Exhibit professionalism through consistent, high-quality work output and collaboration with colleagues.
- Maintain a growth-oriented mindset, demonstrating a willingness to learn, adapt and receive constructive feedback.
- Show leadership potential, contributing positively to projects and displaying initiative in problem-solving.

## Accountability & Commitment

- Uphold reliability by maintaining punctual attendance, meeting deadlines, and honouring commitments to workplace tasks.
- Take ownership of responsibility for your role and actively contribute to the program's success.
- Balance priorities effectively, ensuring professional expectations are met while practicing self-care and wellbeing.



## 4. Supervisors Responsibilities



Supervisors play a crucial role in ensuring participants feel culturally safe, supported, and valued while meeting workplace and professional expectations. This requires an approach recognising that fostering trust, respect and meaningful engagement contributes to success.

### Building Trust and Respect

Supervisors should foster open communication with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff by showing respect for their culture and experiences. Trust is built through transparency and consistency in managing work expectations, addressing challenges early and seeking input when culturally sensitive issues arise. This includes:

- Embrace Cultural Identity, recognise the importance of cultural identity. Culture shapes how participants communicate, work and navigate professional relationships. Understanding and respecting identity enhances engagement and confidence.
- Encourage open and respectful dialogue, create a workplace where Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander perspectives are acknowledged and valued. Encourage conversations that allow participants to bring their full selves into the professional space.
- Address workplace challenges with cultural sensitivity, be proactive in identifying barriers that participants may face and work towards equitable solutions that foster inclusivity, fairness and respect.



## **Program Preparation & Role Expectations (Induction Plan)**

- Clearly define participant responsibilities, tasks and deadlines before the placement begins.
- Plan the first day and first-week itinerary, including induction, training schedule (compulsory modules), system, equipment access and any reasonable adjustment requests (refer to the Induction checklist in HORUS). This includes providing the contact details for the first day and where to meet.
- Communicate program details with the team, ensuring all team members understand the participants role, duration and the best practices for maintaining an inclusive workplace.
- Set clear work standards around work hours, attire, communication and overall responsibilities.

## **Supporting Growth & Learning**

- Provide participants with diverse learning opportunities to apply professional and technical skills in real world settings.
- Encourage reflection on career pathways, helping participants integrate their cultural values and strengths into their professional aspirations.

## **Administrative Responsibilities & Policy Compliance**

- Avoid conflicts of interest. Supervisors must not have a conflict of interest (e.g., family members or other ANU students cannot oversee the intern).
- If any program conditions change (e.g., supervisor, location, duration, or project scope), notify the Senior Consultant - Indigenous Employment and Retention immediately.

## **Feedback & Performance Evaluations**

- Maintain regular weekly check-ins, ensuring participants receive timely and constructive feedback that supports their learning and development.
- Conduct Focus agreement conversations, reviewing performance on time, and providing professional feedback.

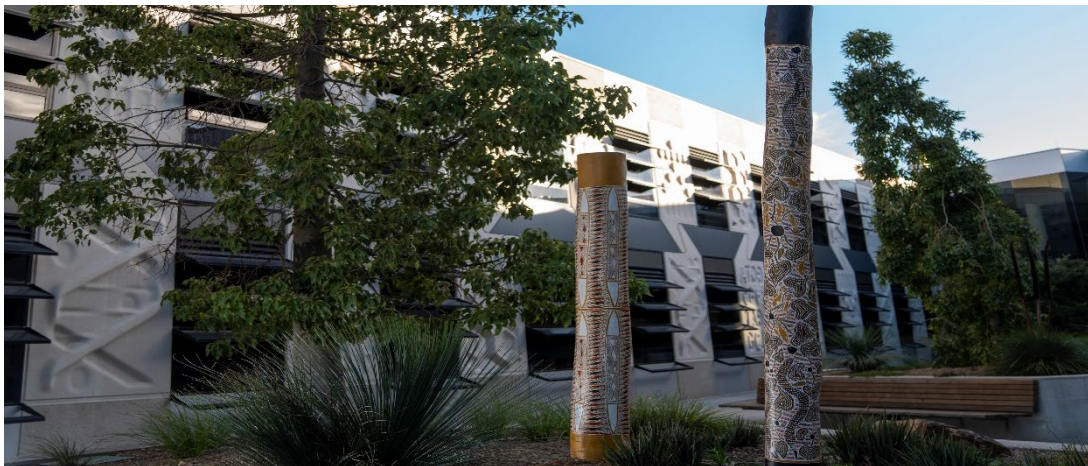


## 5. Professional Development & Mentorship

ANU offers a range of training and development opportunities to enhance professional skills:

### Professional Development Pathways

- [Training and development opportunities](#)
- CBE [Momentum](#) is an opportunity for ANU Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students to learn, grow and network. The CBE Careers and Student Employability team works with industry to facilitate soft skill-development workshops designed to help students become confident, work-ready and competitive graduates and to support their successful transition to the workplace. This program is open to all students connected with the Tjabal Centre.
- [Professional staff mentoring program](#) offers participants the opportunity to receive support from experienced senior staff to increase their skills and confidence, build networks and more effectively navigate their career goals at ANU.
- [LinkedIn Learning \(online\)](#) is available to ANU employees. Employees don't need to have a LinkedIn profile to use the platform, with access to this learning and training platform via an ANU employee login.



*Memorial and burial poles from Galiwin'ku installed at the John Curtin School of Medical Research. Photo by Jamie Kidston/ANU.*



## 6. Support During the Program

During the program, the participant will have access to a large support network. This includes:

- ANU Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre: ANU student pastoral care and a support hub for cultural guidance and engagement.
- Cultural Leave Provisions: Supervisors must respect and understand the significance of cultural obligations, including Sorry Business, ceremonial obligations, and community engagement. The University's Enterprise Agreement provides guidelines for [cultural leave](#).
- Meeting Spaces for Indigenous Staff & Students: meeting spaces at ANU provide supportive, culturally safe environments for Indigenous staff & students. These designated areas allow staff & students to meet, engage in cultural activities, and build community. A few of these spaces include [First Nations Portfolio](#), [Bandalang Studio](#), and the [Tjabal Centre](#). Although these spaces are specifically aimed towards Indigenous staff and students every area within the university should strive to be welcoming and inclusive.
- People and Culture Support: Senior Consultant - Indigenous Employment and Retention oversees the Transition to Employment Indigenous Internship Program. They are committed to ensuring that all parties have the support, guidance, and tools needed.
- [Local HR Support](#): For placement-related issues such as attendance, motivation, performance, or personal conflicts, local HR is available. Early notification of any concerns allows all parties to work together on solutions
- [Staff Networks](#): Indigenous staff are also supported through a dedicated staff network at ANU, which provide additional cultural and professional resources.
- [Employee Assistance program](#): ANU offers a choice of counselling and advisory services for our staff members and their immediate families.
- Responding to Racism and Discrimination: Supervisors must address any reports of racism or discrimination immediately. Concerns should not be dismissed; support should be sought and concerns handled in line with [ANU's anti-discrimination](#) and anti-harassment policies to ensure a safe and respectful workplace. For additional information, please visit the following pages:
  - [Procedure - Prevention of discrimination, harassment and bullying](#)
  - [Harmful behaviours disclosure tool](#)
  - [Sexual harassment & sexual assault response and support](#), [Racism and discrimination response & support](#)