Melbourne Indigenous Professional Employment Program

2023

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Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Melbourne acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which we work, learn and live: the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong peoples (Burnley, Fishermans Bend, Parkville, Southbank, and Werribee campuses), the Yorta Yorta Nation (Dookie and Shepparton campuses), and the Dja Dja Wurrung people (Creswick campus).

The University also acknowledges and is grateful to the Traditional Owners, Elders and Knowledge Holders of all Indigenous nations and clans who have been instrumental in our reconciliation journey.

We recognise the unique place held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of the lands and waterways across the Australian continent, with histories of continuous connection dating back more than 60,000 years. We also acknowledge their enduring cultural practices of caring for Country.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge in the Academy. As a community of researchers, teachers, professional staff, and students we are privileged to work and learn every day with Indigenous colleagues and partners.

Photography by Narida Yeatman-Morgan
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Introduction and success to date

The Melbourne Indigenous Professional Employment Program (MIPEP) is a 2-year Indigenous traineeship initiative for the recruitment of early entry professional staff members at The University of Melbourne.

Previously known as the Indigenous Australian Employment Development Program (IAEDP) commencing in 2013, it was replaced by MIPEP in 2017. Trainees are employed in different full time professional staff positions around the university, supported by a workplace supervisor and mentor. A formal Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification is attained by MIPEP trainees via an external provider, with training attended part time by the participant during work hours.

The program has been a successful entry program for Indigenous staff, many of whom have gone on to secure ongoing positions within the University.

In March 2023, Indigenous staff members accounted for 1.8% of the University’s continuing and fixed term staff, including 96 professional staff and 97 Academic staff. The MIPEP program has been a large contributor to this professional staff outcome, producing many Indigenous professional staff members now working in administration and management positions. Recent data shows an average of 30.49% of MIPEP participants still employed at the University of Melbourne.

Figure 1. Traineeship model
Getting Started

1. Register your interest
There will be an opportunity to register your interest to host a participant in the program via the University of Melbourne’s many communication channels. You will find an opportunity to register interest via a link in Staff News, Yammer, Indigenous Staff Network Newsletter, and the University of Melbourne’s website. There’s a link to a survey where you will list your faculty, school, or department’s contact details which will be added to our data base for program updates and next steps.

2. Formal expressions of interest
From the registered information, you will be contacted to formally submit an expression of interest. By completing the expression of interest, you provide us with more details about the role you wish to fill. For example, position title & number, key responsibilities, which UoM salary level will be offered and any special requirements.

3. Program information sessions | Online
There will be information sessions scheduled after expressions of interest submissions close. They will be facilitated by the Program Manager and Program Coordinator. These will be delivered online to accommodate the changing needs of the University’s community. This is an opportunity to hear from the program management team about the expectations of the program and details of the cultural enrichment and professional development obligations.

4. Recruitment process
Once we have identified how many positions are available across the University, we can move to advertising the various positions. The positions will be advertised via a range of culturally appropriate media channels such as SEEK, Koorie Mail, OurMob.com, Indigenous Staff Network and UoM Careers website. Those who register an interest will be contacted via telephone in the first instance for a conversation to gauge their motivations and suitability for the program, and to discuss their career goals. Successful candidates will be invited to a meet and greet with the program management team, then progress to a formal interview if appropriate with a selection panel. The selection panel will consist of the MIPEP Management team and/or anyone deemed suitable by the management team who is able to assist. If the candidates are successful at interview and reference checks indicate suitability, they will be offered one of the positions made available by the host faculty, school, or department.
5. Confirmation of participation
Once the recruitment process has been completed, we will notify faculties, schools, or departments of their success in securing a MIPEP participant.

6. Position allocation
The successful candidates will be given an opportunity to meet with their supervisors to discuss the key responsibilities of the role, complete the faculty, school or department specific on-boarding and any other necessary tasks such as OH&S inductions and in-house mandatory training.

Advertisement and selection process
Advertising for the program does not outline the particular roles on offer and their requirements but rather that they are business administrative and support functions at a UoM 4, UoM 5 & UoM 6 in a developmental capacity.

Our selection procedures and guidelines appropriately respond to the wider demographic of the Indigenous Australian community we serve. They are equitable and relative to the varying circumstances of the current pool of job seekers.

Participants are selected through a thorough, multi-stepped process that involves the MIPEP Program Manager, Program Coordinator, Human Resources, and panel selection.

Cultural awareness sessions
To ensure a culturally appropriate work environment for the MIPEP participants, cultural awareness training is important and mandatory for all workplace supervisors and mentors. The cultural awareness sessions will help to prepare you to successfully communicate and engage with your MIPEP participant, and to provide a culturally accepting workplace for the diversity of Australian Indigenous peoples. The training will align with the University’s Indigenous Strategy 2023-27 commitment “to empower staff to enact the University’s vision for advancing our Indigenous Priorities” (Mermuk Djerring, 2023. p.26). Further information on cultural awareness training (online and in-person), including dates and costs will be provided in due course.

Pool of candidates
Since the program first commenced in 2013, the University has employed people with varying backgrounds and skill sets including those who have recently finished high school, through to mature age candidates with a tertiary qualification and life/work experience. If your faculty, school, or department role requires a specific and immediate skill set, be aware that it may not be prevalent in the current pool of candidates. Please contact the MIPEP Program Manager to discuss further.
2023-2024 MIPEP Delivery timeframes

Development
- **11 August**: Initial registrations from university work units
- **30 August**: MIPEP Information Session for university faculties, schools, or departments.
- **31 August – 25 September**: Formal Expressions of Interest OPEN-CLOSE

Promotion
- **02 October**: Traineeship applications open
- **20 October**: Traineeship applications close

Assessment & Selection
- **From 30 October**: First round yarns/meet and greet.
- **From 13 November**: Shortlist formal interviews and reference checks

Confirmation
- **27 November**: Program acceptance offers made.

Employment
- **22 December - 02 January 2024**: UNIVERSITY SHUTDOWN PERIOD
- **08 - 09 January 2024**: Pre-engagement cultural enrichment activity on campus
- **10 - 12 January 2024**: Pre-engagement training retreat off site
- **15 January 2024 (TBC)**: Trainees begin in new roles (induction)
- **February 2024**: Trainees signs on for formal qualification.

*These timeframes are estimate and are subject to change*
**Formal Qualification**

**Diploma, Certificate IV & Certificate III**

The formal qualification component provides sound knowledge and skill base for a business and administrative career. It is a necessary educational component to complement the hands-on experience and capability level whereby the learnings can be applied and/or have real benefits to their role.

Completing the formal qualification is an integral part of the MIPEP, and the expectation is to successfully complete the course in the first 12-18 months. It must be embedded in the participants probationary criteria and Performance Development Framework goals and outcomes.

In the event the qualification is not completed by the participant within the timeframes allocated; the participant is required to provide an explanation in writing to the MIPEP management team and their current supervisor. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and its impact on their Professional Development Framework. The participant may complete their formal qualification within the second year, but conditions do apply.

**Cultural Enrichment & Professional Development**

To complement the overall program and cohort experience, participants benefit from cultural enrichment activities and professional developmental opportunities over the two years through the support of the MIPEP management team and the participating areas. These enrichment activities take place during normal working hours with prior notification from MIPEP management team.

**In the first year, participant’s benefit from:**
- Participation in a series of Indigenous Staff Network events and annual forum
- Participation in a leadership development program
- Mentorship to support their career development.
- Varied cultural enrichment activities that reaffirm the University’s commitment to Indigenous staff retention.
- Integration support thanks to a campus buddy assigned by MIPEP management team.

**In the second year, participant’s benefit from:**
- The Indigenous Staff Network meetings and annual forum
- Learning and development: The selection of appropriate courses either internally or externally will be examined by the participant and current supervisor. This will assist in the participants career development giving an opportunity to apply the principles and key learnings for their role.
- The opportunity to be a campus buddy to future program participants.
• Career development workshop to support participants applying for ongoing roles at the university.
• Mentoring is continued to support their career development.

**Program expectations | Participant**

- **1st Year - Developmental.** The first year forms their developmental year requiring intensive support and resourcing to embed professional habits, behaviour, and awareness to build a strong career foundation.
- **2nd Year - Consolidation.** The second year of the program is to consolidate skills and experience, empowering the participant to demonstrate their learnings and acquire further skills and capabilities. The participant is to be supported and where possible, provided opportunities to grow professionally.
- **3rd Year - Mastery.** The third year, whilst not a provision under the program but relevant to the hiring area post the program, is an understanding that the participant can fully master the requirements of their role and clearly demonstrate an adequate level of professional maturity and initiative.

Our overall commitment is to provide employment opportunities to enable self-empowerment and contribute to Indigenous outcomes. It is also on the basis that Indigenous employees will bring with them a wealth of experience, expertise, knowledge, and skills that will inform, enrich, and fundamentally improve the work that the University does.

*Staff Success: ‘a state where Indigenous staff recruitment, retention, workloads, promotion pathways, pipeline development, and professional development are all appropriately supported, so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have effective opportunities to gain employment at universities and to develop their careers.’* (Universities Australia, 2023. p.30)

**Retention**

The overall objective of the program is that participants secure ongoing employment at the University at the end of the traineeship contract. A series of actions are considered key to meet this target and they require an active contribution from the participant and their supervisor.

It is important to note that MIPEP participants can secure an ongoing role at any time during their two-year program; this does not preclude them from fulfilling their commitments under MIPEP. The position must be within the MIPEP rotation and does not include positions outside the program. If a MIPEP participant accepts an ongoing role, this may impact the allocation of resourcing.
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