



HANDBOOK for Hosts



AURORA
INTERNSHIP
PROGRAM

Proudly supported by the National Indigenous Australians Agency



Australian Government
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Contents

Welcome	3	Helpful tips for supervising	10
About Aurora Education Foundation	4	Hosting Interns ‘working from home’	10
Our Vision	4	Setting interns up for success	10
Our Mission	4	Providing a safe and effective work environment	10
Our Impact	5	Insurance	11
Our Values	5	Cyber security	11
About the Internship Program	6	Intern wellbeing while working from home	11
Contact information	6	Managing the ongoing risk of COVID 19	11
Host expectations and obligations	7	Feedback and complaints	12
Self assessment	6	Useful resources and links	12
Internship contract	6	1.1 Internship Contract	12
Terms and conditions	7	1.2 Terms and Conditions	12
Internship Plan	7	1.3. Day 1 Checklist for Internship Commencement	12
Host organisation checklist	8	1.4 Resources for providing a culturally safe and supportive work environment	12
Mid-Internship Feedback Session	8	1.5 Health and Wellbeing Resources	12
Culturally safe and supportive work environment	9	1.6 Additional Cultural Learning Resources	13
Why is cultural responsiveness as a host of Indigenous interns important?	9	The Healing Foundation	13
		Maps of Indigenous Australia	13
		Coalition of Peaks	13





Welcome

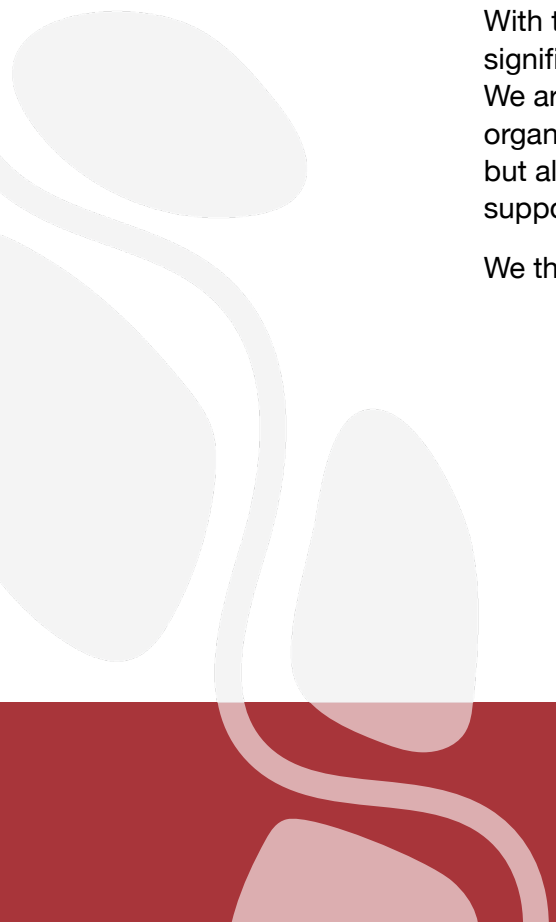
Thank you for registering to host an Aurora intern!

The Program has facilitated over 3,300 internships at over 200 host organisations, providing additional support to effectively deliver services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In turn, host organisations have supported interns to develop their practical skills, gain real-world experience and build professional networks.

Indigenous sector host organisations are rich and diverse, spanning a broad range of areas including health, education, research, law and justice, policy, environment, STEM and youth work, Australia wide.

With the Internship program we seek to effect systemic change through significantly increasing employability and building Indigenous leadership. We are also aiming to build long term relationships with our host organisations, both to provide an excellent opportunity for the interns, but also to provide the best service to our hosts to gain meaningful support from Aurora interns and benefit from capability transfer.

We thank you for choosing to be a part of positive change.

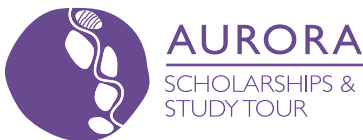




About Aurora Education Foundation

The Aurora Education Foundation is an Indigenous organisation that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to realise their full education and employment potential – whether it is completing Year 12 or achieving a DPhil from Oxford.

We deliver a suite of Interconnected programs that walk with Indigenous students through each stage of their educational development and build their resilience, identity, aspirations and sense of community.



Our Vision

A society in which First Nations Peoples determine their own education and career aspirations through life-long learning, shaping a new future for our country.

Our Mission

Our mission is to inspire First Peoples in their education journey and connect them with educational and career opportunities that enable them to realise their potential.

Aurora supports students and scholars to achieve unparalleled outcomes and shift the conversation to one of proud and talented students with limitless potential. To achieve systemic change, we are committed to an authentic and trusted approach, evidence-based decision making and a long-term focus.



Our Impact

We believe that creating impact across multiple dimensions – individual, community, institutional, and society – is necessary to bring about a changed conversation around Indigenous education from deficit to high expectations and possibilities.

Below are some examples of our impact.

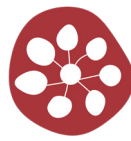
- **More than 170 Indigenous scholars** have participated in the International Study Tour and explored opportunities to study overseas at world-leading universities. 94% of study tour participants who have applied to study at these universities have received an offer.
- In Semester 1 of 2021, High School Program students undertook **more than 1600 hours of private tutoring** and 97% of students received a tailored academic support plan which included funding to address barriers to learning posed by COVID-19 where required.
- Aurora has facilitated internships for **more than 370 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interns** in a field relevant to their study and career goals.

Our Values



Respect

- ▶ We respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the custodians of the land on which we work.
- ▶ We treat each other and our stakeholders with respect and dignity at all times.
- ▶ We develop culturally safe spaces and foster awareness and acceptance of culture, identity and beliefs.



Collaboration

- ▶ We welcome feedback and adapt our practices and approaches when needed.
- ▶ We understand that success can't be achieved in isolation.
- ▶ We participate equally and collaboratively in partnerships with community and stakeholders.
- ▶ We share information, knowledge, and skills across the organisation.



Accountability

- ▶ We deliver what we commit to.
- ▶ We pursue excellence in everything we do.
- ▶ We take responsibility for our actions.
- ▶ We are responsive and transparent in the way we work.



Impact

- ▶ We aim to have a positive impact.
- ▶ We innovate to achieve results.
- ▶ We look to effect change in perceptions, outcomes and opportunities.
- ▶ We believe in empowering ourselves and others to realise our full potential.



About the Internship Program

The Internship Program delivers benefits to Indigenous and non-Indigenous interns through practical skill development, real-world career experience, and exposure to professional networks, as they transition from tertiary education into paid work. The Program also strengthens the capacity of Indigenous sector organisations to effectively deliver services to Indigenous Australians and communities and provides support to the broader Indigenous sector in attracting and retaining talented staff.

Internships are full or part-time 4-6 weeks at organisations involved in native title, social welfare, justice, education, community development and health. Since its inception, the Program has been funded by the Commonwealth Government.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding any aspect of your internship, including your weekly reports, or in case of emergency, please contact the Pathways team:

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Host expectations and obligations

Aurora aims to help your organisation to support interns before and during their internship and grow and improve as a host. We encourage organisations to work with interns to create a mutually beneficial internship experience through focusing on skill development, network building and providing a culturally safe and supportive work environment.

By becoming a host organisation with Aurora, you can expect:

- Introduction to Aurora's network of enthusiastic and motivated interns who represent future workforce
- Support to build the capability of Indigenous and non-Indigenous interns who will increase the capacity of your organisation
- High calibre interns who have progressed through Aurora's stringent selection process
- Interns ready to undertake a 4 to 6 week full time commitment (unless other arrangements have been made)
- Complete an online host intern requirement form each round
- Interns to provide regular feedback to the Aurora Pathways team on their experience and learnings

Host organisations are expected to provide a **safe and supportive work environment** that will support interns to achieve their learning goals and contribute to team outcomes. Additional expectations include:

- Host organisation complete a **self-assessment** to ensure an appropriate working environment is provided for interns
- Sign and return the **Terms and Conditions**
- Sign and return an **Internship Contract** for each intern
- Develop a work plan and complete a **Host Internship Plan** for each confirmed intern
- Provide adequate supervision and **support for interns** including regular constructive feedback sessions. This includes a weekly check-in between intern and supervisor to review the Internship Plan
- Non-indigenous organisations will be required to make a financial contribution to the **support of Indigenous interns**. A host organisation's contribution will be discussed upon inquiry.
- Complete a brief **online feedback questionnaire** at the completion of each internship



Self assessment

We require each host organisation to complete a self-assessment to ensure a culturally safe and supportive work environment is provided to interns.

Internship contract

Prior to the internship commencing the host organisation is required to sign and submit the Internship Contract. The Internship Contract confirms the contact details of Aurora, the host and the intern as well as any relevant clauses from the Terms and Conditions and any other pertinent information. (Resource Item 1.1)

Terms and conditions

By accepting to host an Aurora intern, your organisation agrees to conduct the internship under a set of Terms and Conditions (T&C). The T&Cs must be signed prior to being assigned an intern. Please refer to the resource list at the end of this handbook for a full copy. (Resource Item 1.2)

Internship Plan

It is required that an **Internship Plan** (Resource Item 1.3) be established prior to the internship commencing. This plan incorporates basic details of both host and intern, as well as specifying required work hours and any documentation required (e.g. vaccination, Working with Children Check, police check). Please see example of the template below. A copy will also be emailed to you and this must then be submitted to the Aurora Pathways team at least one week prior to the commencement of the internship.

Host organisation checklist

Prior to an internship commencing please ensure the following host obligations have been completed:

- Sign and return an **Internship Contract** for each intern
- Collaborate with the intern on developing an **Internship Plan**
- Process the host **contribution payment** (Non-Indigenous organisations only)
- Complete the **Day 1 Checklist** provided in the Handbook for Hosts (see below)

Prior to the arrival of the intern, please complete the **Day 1 Checklist** (Resource Item 1.4).

The checklist is designed to support your organisation to facilitate a positive internship experience.

Mid-Internship feedback session

At the halfway point of an internship, host organisations are expected to conduct a feedback session with interns. This session should be viewed as an opportunity for both host and intern to share insights and constructive feedback to ensure the ongoing success of the internship. The session should focus on the following questions:

- What is working well and why?
- What isn't working so well and why?
- What are the areas for improvement?



Culturally safe and supportive work environment

Providing a culturally safe and supportive work environment refers to a host organisation's capacity understand and consider the diverse cultural backgrounds of the people who they engage with in the community and the workplace. It means being respectful of everyone's culture, background, beliefs, values, lifestyle and language. This may challenge your own ideas, beliefs and values, but it is important that you be open to seeing any differences as equal and being 'responsive' to these potentially diverse differences, as opposed to 'reactive' (or judgmental) based on your own cultural framework, misunderstandings or bias.

Being willing to see beyond cultural stereotypes and what you may consider to be 'normal' is a starting point that will allow you to see the world from another point of view, and how this view influences our engagement with others.

While engaging with interns, consider how you can:

- Be an effective deep listener
- Pay attention to non-verbal behaviour
- Learn by asking respectful questions
- Exchange stories

Why is cultural responsiveness as a host of Indigenous interns important?

Cultural responsiveness in the workplace ensures a culturally safe, caring, supportive, inclusive and accepting environment for everyone. This approach requires questioning your own culturally influenced beliefs and how this impacts everyday interactions with staff and stakeholders, decision making processes and outcomes.

By having an empathetic understanding of cultures different from your own, your workplace can become a place in which everyone can be honoured and where new learning pathways can be opened up, welcoming new ideas and innovation that may otherwise not be experienced.

By becoming a host organisation and welcoming Indigenous interns to your workplace, your organisation acknowledges an existing awareness and participation in the following:

- The strength and importance of Indigenous cultures, and the significant contribution they make – not only to Indigenous communities – but to Australia as a nation
- Acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the land and waters
- Your commitment to working in genuine partnership with Indigenous communities
- Your contribution to developing the capacity of the Indigenous sector and meeting the community needs
- Tracking the impact of your work on the Indigenous communities you serve
- Acknowledging the lived experiences and knowledge of Indigenous interns
- Your commitment to the provision of cultural safety training for all staff

It is important to always reflect and consider how your organisation can take meaningful steps towards creating space for Indigenous interns to feel safe in sharing their culture and knowledge.

See [Resource Item 1.5](#) for a list of helpful resources.

Have any questions?

Please don't hesitate to reach out to the Pathways team at internship@aurorafoundation.com.au to chat further.



Helpful tips for supervising

Hosting interns 'working from home'

If you have agreed to host an Aurora intern on a 'work from home' basis the following information will provide some helpful hints and tips to ensuring a successful internship. The information provided below is not intended to be prescriptive but are rather suggestions. Please get in touch with the Pathways team if you require further support with suggestions for this mode of hosting.

Setting interns up for success

Host organisations should be aware that home-based internships can present some unforeseen challenges for interns such as, distractions at home, social isolation and limited in-person supervision. However, there are some simple steps you can take to minimise any challenges and ensure a success internship.

- Establish an agreed **check-in schedule**. This may include daily or bi-weekly check-ins.
- Regular **reviews of the Internship Plan** and any work plans or task list with the intern to ensure there is an ongoing shared understanding of the scope of the work, timeframes and expectations.
- **Keep the communication channels open** so your intern feels comfortable to reach out if they need anything or have questions, or simply need a chat.
- Ensure **regular face-to-face communication** via Teams/Zoom in addition to emails and phone calls.
- Consider connecting your intern to an '**onboarding buddy**' and make time for them to meet other Aurora interns on home-based internships online each week.
- **Facilitate access to technical support** by providing access to training as they navigate new digital platforms.
- Be available and willing to offer **encouragement and support**.

Providing a safe and effective work environment

Aurora will provide an intern with a *Working from Home Checklist* to assess their working from home environment. Please address this with the intern in the development of the Internship Plan.

Some of the key areas of consideration include:

- The intern has the correct **equipment** required for the duration of the internship. For example: computer or laptop, reliable internet access, landline or mobile phone
- A suitable **work environment** and workspace is available that is free from distractions and hazards
- The appropriate **health and safety procedures** for 'working from home' have been communicated to the intern



Insurance

Be sure that your current insurance policy will cover interns working from home including public liability and work cover for volunteers.

Cyber security

If an intern is using their own personal computer it is important you communicate and implement the appropriate cyber security practices.

Intern wellbeing while working from home

Working from home can be a positive and beneficial experience, however, it can create challenges in maintaining a sensible work and life balance. Therefore, it is important to prioritise an intern's health and wellbeing in order to ensure they stay productive and achieve their desired learning outcomes.

To support interns to have a positive home-based internship, Aurora suggest that host organisations encourage interns to:

- Maintain a **regular work routine and set healthy boundaries**
- Establish a comfortable and **clutter-free workspace**
- Keep in touch – **regular communication** is the key to staying engaged and getting the most out of your internship
- Have 'face to face' video chats where possible to help **stay connected**
- Take **regular breaks** – 5 to 10 mins for a cuppa, gentle exercise, sitting in fresh air – all beneficial for increasing the ability to focus and overall wellbeing.
- Don't be afraid to **ask for help**

Resource Item 1.6 in the resources list (at end of handbook) provides some helpful resources for maintaining wellbeing when working from home.

Managing the ongoing risk of COVID 19

It is important to encourage interns to communicate if they are feeling ill and to use the COVID-19 Symptom Checker or call the Coronavirus Helpline on **1800 020 080** to seek further advice.



Feedback and complaints

Aurora seeks to respond to feedback and complaints in a prompt manner, and with a view to improve the quality of our services.

This complaint handling policy is designed to ensure that any concerns are treated seriously and addressed promptly, fairly and equitably. For more information regarding complaint resolution please visit aurorafoundation.com.au/contact-us

Useful resources and links

1.1 Internship Contract

See here to download an editable version of the [Internship Contract](#)

1.2 Terms and conditions

See here to download an editable version of the [Terms and conditions](#)

1.3 Internship plan

See here for editable version of the [Internship Plan](#)

1.4. Day 1 Checklist for Internship Commencement

See here for editable version of the [Day 1 Checklist](#)

1.5 Resources for providing a culturally safe and supportive work environment

Here are some suggested resources for supporting your organisation in growing your cultural responsiveness:

The [Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies \(AIATSIS\)](#) is an Indigenous-led, national institute that celebrates, educates and inspires people from all walks of life to connect with the knowledge, heritage and cultures of Australia's First Peoples.

The Western Australian Department of Education '[Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework](#)', outlines the layers of knowledge, awareness and relationship building an organisation can undertake as it moves from being culturally aware to becoming more cultural responsiveness.

The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) provides a useful resource on [cultural protocols, cultural safety, and social and emotional wellbeing](#).

[Share our Pride](#): A website developed by Reconciliation Australia with input and feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the country.

[Common Ground](#) – A useful resources for learning more about culture, history and reconciliation

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Cultural Protocols Guide shares valuable insight on community engagement and communication practices.



1.6 Health and Wellbeing Resources

Headspace – How to keep home and work separate while working remotely

Back Dog Institute – Working from home: *A checklist to support your mental health*

Mental Health First Aid – Self Care when Working from Home

Healthline – The 12 best Meditation Apps of 2022

Let Go of Stress – One-minute mini mediation, by Headspace

Breathe Bubble – One minute breathing practice (5 minute version)

Stretch at your desk – 9-minute guided yoga at your desk (5 minute version)

1.7 Additional Cultural Learning Resources

Following are a list of useful resources that you may wish to review prior to hosting an intern.

The Healing Foundation

The Healing Foundation is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that partners with communities to address the ongoing trauma caused by actions like the forced removal of children from their families. Their website houses a range of useful resources

Maps of Indigenous Australia

Your organisations may find it useful to refer to maps that show the diversity of Indigenous languages throughout Australia. Such area map such as that produced by AIATSIS. However, in referring to this and other maps, use caution and be aware of the inherent limitations.

Coalition of Peaks

Coalition of Peaks is a representative body of around fifty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled peak organisations and members. The Coalition of Peaks came together as an act of self-determination to be formal partners with Australian governments on Closing the Gap.



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