



# HANDBOOK for Interns



**AURORA**  
INTERNSHIP  
PROGRAM

*Proudly supported by the National Indigenous Australians Agency*



Australian Government  
National Indigenous  
Australians Agency



**NIAA**



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# Welcome

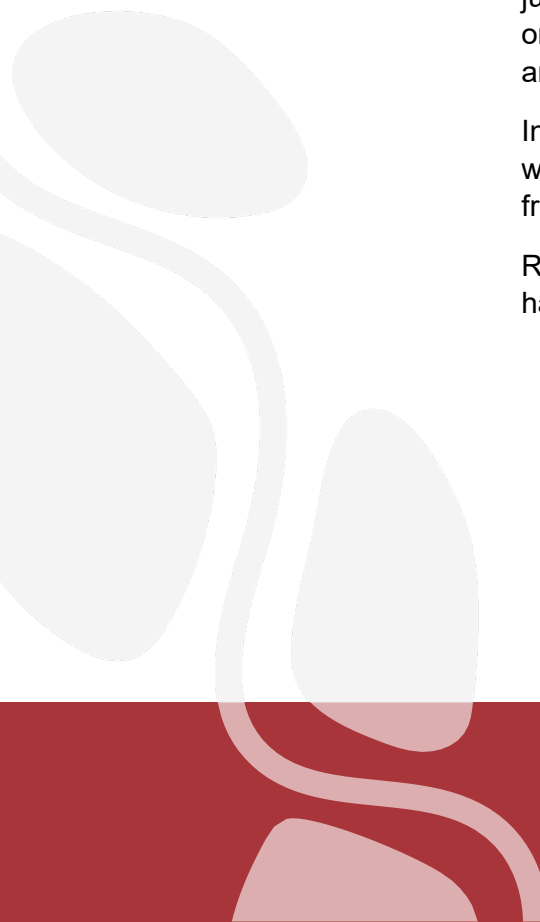
**Congratulations on being successfully placed as part of the Aurora Education Foundation's Internship Program.**

This resource contains information on what you can expect as you embark on this exciting opportunity. We hope it will contribute to supporting you to settle in and get the most out of your internship experience.

Host organisations in the Indigenous sector are rich and diverse. They cover native title, land rights, policy, environmental and community development, advocacy, justice, health policy, research, including Indigenous organisations, government bodies, community groups and policy organisations.

Interns who approach their host organisation and internship with a deep interest, a keenness to learn will gain the most from this experience.

Remember to always be professional, to be safe and to have a rewarding time!

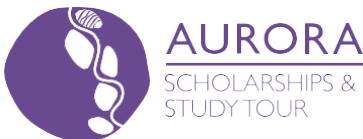




## About Aurora Education Foundation

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.

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### CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Rokiyah Bin Swani  
Pathways Leader (Internships & Mid-career)  
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Pathways team  
[internships@aurorafoundation.com.au](mailto:internships@aurorafoundation.com.au)





## Guidelines and policies

Please read the guidelines and policies below and sign the [Internship contract](#) prior to commencing your internship. If you have any questions please contact the Pathways team.

### Cultural protocols

Please read the guidelines and policies below and sign the Internship contract prior to commencing your internship. If you have any questions please contact the Pathways team.

There are many distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia with unique cultures, languages and beliefs. While there are similarities, there are also significant differences between, and within, Indigenous communities. Prior to commencing your internship, Aurora suggests you research the local history of the area and contact your host organisation to seek further information regarding any cultural protocols you should be aware of. Here are some useful resources you could use as a starting point.

Supporting carers: A useful resource developed by SNAICC 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.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols and Guidelines: A useful guide by Cumberland Council.

Common Ground: A First Nations not-for-profit that provides educational resources that amplifies the voices of First Nations peoples and communities.

### Code of conduct and professional ethics

As an Aurora intern you are an ambassador for the Program and for Aurora and are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times while on placement.

As an Aurora intern, we ask that you:

- Provide assistance to the host organisation wherever needed and are expected to undertake tasks given to you by your supervisor and other staff members.
- Treat fellow staff members at your host organisation as well as their clients and stakeholders with respect, integrity, kindness, dignity, trust, equity, acceptance and in regard to safety.
- Maintain a high level of cultural awareness and sensitivity toward the host organisation staff and their clients and respect and acknowledge the diversity and significance of Indigenous Australian culture, customs and beliefs.
- Not disclose any confidential, sensitive or personal information during or after your internship.
- Contact the Aurora's Pathways Leader, if you experience distress or have a grievance whilst on placement, so the problem can be rectified.

Aurora and our host organisations expect professional behaviour from interns at all times. This includes:

- Treating staff, clients and other Aurora interns with respect and courtesy.
- Following your host organisation's policies or procedures.



## Professional ethics

Interns are expected to provide assistance to the host organisation wherever needed and are expected to undertake tasks given to them by their supervisor(s).

Before commencing your placement, your supervisor will be in touch to discuss the Internship Plan. Your supervisor(s) should provide background research material in preparation for your placement. You should familiarise yourself with all available information about your host organisation - their website is a good place to start if they have one. You are also encouraged to visit the Aurora website for a summary of the type of work you may be involved in and read the reflections of past interns about their internship at your host organisation. The work you undertake on placement may vary between organisations.

Interns report directly to their supervisor(s), taking direction from their supervisor(s) on work to be undertaken on placement. Where a supervisor is unavailable for a period of time, please contact the point of contact (usually a HR representative) who can assist you in the meantime.

In all cases, non-Indigenous interns are responsible for daily living and travel expenses and are expected to work five days a week (usually 9am to 5pm), unless alternate arrangements have been made between Aurora and your host organisation prior to the commencement of the internship, or, where special or unforeseeable circumstances arise.

## Payment and expense guidelines

Non-Indigenous interns are required to self-fund their internship. Please note: Interns are responsible for discussing university requirements with the host organisation if they wish to apply for university course credit or placement hours. Please ensure you discuss your university requirements with your host organisation at the beginning of the internship to ensure everything aligns.

## Privacy and confidentiality

It is likely you will have access to confidential and sensitive information and data during your internship. It is important that you do not disclose any information or data during or after your internship. Disclosing any information places you at risk of breaching your obligations as an intern and increases risks for your host organisation, their stakeholders and Aurora.

You must obtain written approval (email) from your supervisor at your host organisation before publishing any articles or papers relating to your placement, even university assignments. Your host organisation may also ask you to sign a confidentiality agreement at the commencement of your internship.

Aurora may collect and use personal and sensitive information about you in order to provide and promote its work (including your name, photographs, video and articles for the website and newsletter) to partners, supporters and the public. Aurora has obligations under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). In accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles under this Act, Aurora will only collect personal information about you where it is necessary to carry out our activities.

The Aurora Privacy Policy sets out Aurora's practices in relation to the collection, use, storage and disclosure of personal information. By providing personal information to us, you consent to our collection, use and disclosure of that personal information under the terms of the Privacy Policy and any other contractual or other arrangements that apply between us (if any).

Aurora may update the Privacy Policy from time to time and post any updates on our website: <https://aurorafoundation.com.au/privacy>. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Aurora's Privacy Officer on 02 9310 8410 or [privacy@aurorafoundation.com.au](mailto:privacy@aurorafoundation.com.au).





## Insurance

### Personal accident and sickness insurance

While undertaking travels as part of the Internship Program, you will be covered under the Aurora's *Personal Accident and Sickness Insurance* policy. This will cover you for incidents occurring during the periods of undisturbed travel to and from your home address to internship placement location, and during your time on placement.

Please take a moment to read this insurance policy in full [here](#), so ensure that you are aware how you are covered in different situations, for anything pre-existing conditions of concern and anything else of relevance to you.

Your Host is also responsible for providing some cover for their interns such as Public Liability and professional Indemnity. You may need to ask them to confirm cover for any elements not covered by the Aurora policy.

You may also decide it is necessary to purchase your own personal insurance travel related situations and disruptions.

### How to make a claim

Contact the Aurora Pathway team by email at [internships@aurorafoundation.com.au](mailto:internships@aurorafoundation.com.au) to raise an insurance claim. You must make a claim within 30 days of the incident or as soon as reasonably possible. Claims are to be reviewed and accepted by Aurora and its insurer upon submission.

### Media release

Interns are encouraged to take photographs while on placement. Aurora would appreciate the opportunity to share your internship experience on our social media and website.

However, Aurora requires that you seek written permission from your host, community and/or individuals to take photographs of people and/or scenery whilst on placement.

To share your images for promotion purposes (see relevant clause in Internship Contract), please send photographs directly to [internships@aurorafoundation.com.au](mailto:internships@aurorafoundation.com.au)

### Health and wellbeing

All Aurora interns have access to confidential and free support through Aurora's EAP Program (Sonder). If you would like access to use this service please email [internships@aurorafoundation.com.au](mailto:internships@aurorafoundation.com.au) and we will connect you.

### COVID safety

Aurora is committed to reducing the risk of coronavirus transmission to intern, host organisations, and the communities in which interns are based.

Aurora advises all interns to take a vigilant approach to safety and that of the wider community. Host organisations may ask you to provide your vaccination record and Aurora encourages adoption of COVID safe practices. If you develop any symptoms in the weeks preceding or during your internship please test, isolate, and follow state guidelines.

Please contact the Pathways team ([internships@aurorafoundation.com.au](mailto:internships@aurorafoundation.com.au)) immediately to advise of your situation and Aurora will provide the necessary support.





## Tips for a successful internship

### Pre-commencement checklist

- Have you read the **confirmation email**?
- Have you signed the **Internship contract**?
- Have you **made contact with your supervisor**?
- Have you discussed and developed the **Internship Plan** with your host supervisor?
- Have you **created a budget** for your time on the internship so that you can track your spending and be aware of the finances available to you for the duration?
- Have you confirmed your **logistical arrangements** regarding airfare and accommodation?
- Have you been in **contact with other current interns**? Most importantly those who are placed in the same city/town as you? The internships team will periodically send out a contact list – if you have not received this, please get in touch to find out if there are other interns in your area at the same time.
- Have you researched your host organisation and read over any resources they have provided?
- Have you checked that you have all the necessary equipment/working from home setup and documents required for your internship? I.e. vaccination record, working with children check, national police check.

### Internship Plan

An internship plan template is provided to your host when your placement is confirmed. Together you will finalise the Internship Plan and use it as a guide to ensure that your internship is meeting both of your expectations. The Internship Plan includes:

- A description of the learning objectives and specific goals of the internship for the intern and the host.
- Description of work expected by the intern.
- Clarity on practical matters (location, where to go on Day 1, name of supervisor, working hours, required documentation, equipment provided (or expected of intern to bring)).

At this time, you can also discuss if there is

- A dress code;
- Any relevant induction material or policies/ procedures that you should review pre-commencement or;
- Any preparation material to read or websites to visit to learn about the host organisation and/or the communities they work with.



## Onsite internships

- For away from home internships, book flexible flights or travel tickets to cover you for any unexpected changes.
- Consider long stay holiday accommodation, hostels, student housing, private rooms (e.g. AirBnB) or even staying with family/friends where possible. We can provide suggestions upon request [internships@aurorafoundation.com.au](mailto:internships@aurorafoundation.com.au)
- Reach out to fellow Aurora interns who are placed in the same city town as you.

## Home-based internships

Some interns agree to undertake an internship from home at the request of the host organisation. Here are our tips to have a successful home-based internship:

### Cyber security

If you are using your own personal computer, please check with your host that you are set up and covered for cyber security practices to limit any risks.

### Setting up for success

Discuss with your host how they can support you to successfully engage and participate in the work place, particularly in these key areas:

- Staying focused and productive
- Engaging with colleagues
- Accessing information and technology
- Receiving guidance and advice

### Communication

Despite the challenges that home-based internships can present, we suggest the following:

- **Review the Internship Plan** with your host organisation at the start of the internship to ensure that you have a clear idea of the scope of the work, including confidentiality, timeframes, expectations.
- **Establish structured daily check-ins** with your host either one-on-one or team call, providing a forum for open communication so that you can discuss any concerns you may have and feel comfortable to ask for any additional support you may need while working from home.
- **Be sure to take regular breaks!** Prolonged screen time can create fatigue and reduce productivity. Be mindful of managing this.
- **Be ready to use multiple modes of communication** such as email, phone calls and video via Teams or Zoom. Video conferencing will allow you to connect with colleagues and clients as if you were meeting in-person face-to-face, so it is advised that you always ensure your camera is turned on.

We want you to feel engaged and part of the team at your host organisation throughout your internship experience.



## Health and wellbeing when 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 your health and wellbeing in order to stay productive and achieve your desired learning outcomes.

Working from home can be a very beneficial experience and allow you to complete a successful internship. However, without the right support and working from home set up it can be an isolating experience. Self-care when working from home is vital and it is important for you to set healthy boundaries and prioritise your mental and physical wellbeing.

To support interns in a positive 'work from home' experience, we suggest that supervisors encourage them 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

At the end of this handbook you will find a list that provides some helpful resources for maintaining health and wellbeing when working from home.

## Reports and surveys

You are required to complete a short survey at the end of the first week, at the mid-point, and then upon completion of your internship. The purpose of the survey is to provide Aurora with feedback to ensure you are receiving the right level of support to engaged in your internship and achieving your desired outcomes. We will send a link to the survey directly to your email.

Please feel free to contact the Pathways team on [internships@aurorafoundation.com.au](mailto:internships@aurorafoundation.com.au) or (02) 9310 8412 at any time throughout your placement. We will provide a safe space for you to talk about your experiences and any issues you may be having.



## 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](http://aurorafoundation.com.au/contact-us)

## Useful resources and links

Below is a list of useful resources that you may wish to review prior to undertaking your internship.

### **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 policies and practices. Their website houses a range of useful resources.

### **Maps of Indigenous Australia**

You may find it useful to refer to an Aboriginal Australia language 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.

### **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)



[aurorafoundation.com.au](http://aurorafoundation.com.au)

