

THE KOORI CENTRE
ACADEMIC BOARD REVIEW
PHASE ONE
TUESDAY 29 JULY 2003
REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following Academic Board Review Team members visited the Koori Centre, as part of the review and evaluation of teaching and learning and research training in all faculties across the University.

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Prof Michael Jackson
Prof. Rif Ebied

Chair and Chair, Academic Board
Faculty of Economics and Business
Faculty of Arts

Administrative Officer
Rachel Symons

Quality Assurance Officer (Teaching and Learning)

- 1.2 During the visit, the Team interviewed the following people:

- Ms Janet Mooney, Director, Koori Centre and Ms Michelle Blanchard, Deputy Director, Koori Centre
- Mainstream and Block Indigenous undergraduate students; Mainstream non-Indigenous undergraduate students; Postgraduate coursework students
- Internal and external Koori Centre staff

- 1.3 This report is based on the findings of the Review Team in relation to the activities of the Koori Centre. It is based on the Self-Evaluation Report, the report of the Cadigal Program and interviews conducted with staff and students during the visit. In some places, text from the Self-Evaluation Report has been incorporated directly into this report.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Koori Centre was established in 1974, with the introduction of a block mode program for Aboriginal Teaching Assistants. It is part of the Central Administration of the University, and supports a Board of Indigenous Studies and Policy Advisory Group. The Centre provides access, academic, cultural and personal support to Indigenous students, and involves non-Indigenous staff and students in its integrated approach to teaching and learning. In terms of teaching the Koori Centre has three main functions – Indigenous Australian Block Programs; Mainstream Programs; and Indigenous Australian Students – recruitment, entry and support (Cadigal Program).

3 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE KOORI CENTRE

- 3.1 In January 2001 the Koori Centre began a successful internal reorganisation and restructure, which improved the Centre's effectiveness in serving the diverse educational needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and enhancing teaching and learning practices. Staff from the previous three units have been integrated into one whole Centre, and are working collaboratively. Staff reported favourably on the restructure which had freed them up to undertake research and had improved access to the community. They considered that they were now working together as a team and helping each other with teaching, research and studies. This collegiality was flowing down to the student body, and they had noticed that there was more intermingling between the mainstream and block students than previously. The Review Team commends the Centre on the successful implementation of the restructure, as evidenced by the collegial, collaborative environment for both staff and students. *(See Commendation 1)*
- 3.2 The Koori Centre works closely with the Faculty of Education and Social Work in the area of Indigenous studies education. This includes the coordination of the block mode Bachelor of Education (Secondary: Aboriginal Studies); the rescheduling of core units of Indigenous Studies in the Bachelor of Primary Education from third to second year; and ensuring that all primary

school undergraduates have an understanding of Aboriginal issues. The Faculty of Education and Social Work has reviewed all programs to include Aboriginal perspectives.

- 3.3 The Aboriginal Studies major in the Faculty of Arts, previously run by the Department of Anthropology, is now coordinated by the Koori Centre. The number of students undertaking this major is increasing. From 2004 the Centre will also teach a core Aboriginal Studies unit in the Faculty of Nursing. This will assist nurses in dealing with Aboriginal issues in the community.
- 3.4 The Review Team commends the Centre on the diversification of its courses, particularly the coordination of the Aboriginal Studies major within the Faculty of Arts. The resulting relationship with the Faculty of Arts will add value to both sides. *(See Commendation 2)*
- 3.5 When comparing themselves to other institutions staff considered that the Koori Centre has developed strong and supportive relationships with students. Retention rates for Tertiary Preparation Certificate and Diploma 1 and 2 block program students have improved dramatically in the past three years – from 8-9/20 four years ago, to 18/20 in the past three years. Staff acknowledged that more work was required to improve the retention rates of students in the Bachelor of Education (Secondary: Aboriginal Studies) years 3 and 4. The Review Team commends the Centre on the improvement in student retention rates and notes that staff retention rates are also excellent. *(See Commendation 3)*
- 3.6 Koori Centre staff presented a paper on indigenous knowledge and social justice pedagogy at the University of London. Another academic staff member was invited to present papers in the fields of aesthetics, international experimental poetics and ethnopoetics at Trinity College, Cambridge and at Dartington College of the Arts, UK, in April and May 2003. Subsequently this staff member was invited to be a guest of the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, Kings College University of London and is building partnerships with the University of Cambridge and the University of London. The Review Team commends these areas of research and suggests that it would benefit the Centre to share this pedagogical work with other communities. *(See Commendation 4)*
- 3.7 The curriculum in testing communication skills has been rewritten using research on reading and writing for academic purposes. This has resulted in an improvement in reading and writing skills over the past four years. The Review Team commends the development of a literacy pedagogy and encourages the Centre to further develop this area of research. *(See Commendation 5)*
- 3.8 *Meanjin*, a prestigious national journal, is currently edited by a staff member from the Centre. They have also been approached by Salt Publishing, Cambridge, to edit a critical monograph on Indigenous Australian literature.

4 EVALUATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

4.1 Self-Evaluation Report

- 4.1.1 The Review Team noted that the Self-Evaluation Report was developed by the Director and Deputy Director of the Centre in consultation with all full-time staff.

4.2 Benchmarking

- 4.2.1 The Review Team commends the current informal benchmarking activities which are in place with similar Indigenous education and support centres in Australian universities, and with the University of British Columbia and the University of Waikato. These aid in the professional development of staff and reaffirm and provide different perspectives on the Centre's activities. The Team noted that there are no formal benchmarking activities in place and suggest the formalisation of the current relationships. *(See Commendation 6 and Recommendation 1)*

4.3 Evaluation of teaching

- 4.3.1 The Koori Centre evaluates teaching through a variety of methods. The Institute for Teaching and Learning external evaluation forms have been used since second semester 2002 to provide student feedback. Block students provide feedback during debriefing sessions at the end of each block. They considered that this personal approach was preferable to the more formalised staff-student liaison committee which existed in faculties. Feedback from the students was used to change units in the following semester.
- 4.3.2 The culture of collaboration involves staff observing and evaluating each others lectures. They considered that this was important for their personal and professional development.
- 4.4 The Review Team recommends that the Centre consider implementing a more systematic form of data collection, documenting and recording activities. This would aid in the development of a quality assurance culture within the Centre. *(See Recommendation 2)*

5 TEACHING AND LEARNING

5.1 Quality of Teaching and Learning

- 5.1.1 The Centre recognises the diversity of Indigenous Australians and provides an environment where all perspectives of Indigenous history and culture are presented in its teaching, both in block mode and mainstream programs. Support for Indigenous students is on-going – both on campus and when they return to their communities. The students commented positively on this aspect and reported favourably on their experiences, indicating that the Centre ‘gave people the gift of learning’. All students considered that they had good interpersonal relationships with the lecturers, and described their experiences at the Centre as supportive, enlightening, friendly, awesome and professional. They also considered the guest lecturers to be stimulating. The Review Team commends the Centre on the positive feedback from students on their teaching and learning experiences and the use of stimulating guest lecturers. *(See Commendation 7)*
- 5.1.2 Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff are employed at the Centre. Students appreciated the mix of staff, considering that they provided different perspectives to their teaching. The Review Team commends the Centre on the integration of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff and the consequent development of the community. *(See Commendation 8)*

5.2 Rewarding good teaching

- 5.2.1 One staff member applied for a teaching excellence award in 2001, and another had submitted an application for the AUTC Neville Bonner Award for Indigenous Teacher of the Year for the past two years. Staff considered that since their strength was team teaching, they would prefer a team teaching rather than an individual teacher award. The Review Team recommends that staff should be encouraged to continue applying for awards, and suggests that mentoring may improve the quality of applications. *(See Recommendation 3)*
- 5.2.2 Students considered that good teaching was rewarded by the positive feedback they provided to lecturers at the end of each block. They suggested, and the Director agreed, that rather than awards for individual teachers, they would prefer a celebration of the delivery of teaching. The Review Team therefore recommends that the Centre institute a celebration of good teaching. *(See Recommendation 4)*

5.3 Graduate Attributes

- 5.3.1 Although the Director reported that generic attributes had been discussed at the staff retreat, and were included in outlines of units of study, the Review Team found that students were unaware that they were developing the skills. The Review Team recommends that the Centre more clearly integrate the graduate attributes into all units and effectively communicate these to students. *(See Recommendation 5)*

5.4 Compliance with the Academic Board policy on Academic Honesty in Coursework

- 5.4.1 The Review Team noted that all students were made aware of the Academic Board policy on Academic Honesty in coursework through handouts and presentations in tutorials. Students reported that since most assignments were presented from a personal point of view, it would be difficult to plagiarise the content.

5.5 Online learning

- 5.5.1 Students had varying experiences of the use of WebCT and other online learning platforms. Whereas the postgraduate coursework students made extensive use of the Internet and database resources, undergraduate students reported limited use of WebCT and Blackboard for lecture notes. The Review Team recommends that the Koori Centre increase the number of units using WebCT, and should take advantage of their connections with the faculties of Arts and Education and Social Work to use their technology hub. *(See Recommendation 6)*

5.6 Aboriginal Studies major

- 5.6.1 The Koori Centre has processes in place to encourage non-Indigenous students, including international and study abroad students, to enrol in units in the Aboriginal Studies major and take advantage of the resources available at the Centre. Opportunities provided through university open days and orientation weeks are utilised, and the Centre is currently working on information pamphlets. The number of international students taking the course is increasing, and the Centre is cognisant of the fact that the preconceived perceptions of this cohort regarding Indigenous peoples need to be addressed and transformed. They reported that the change in perspective by the students was best shown by the changes in feelings described in the 'reflective journal'.
- 5.6.2 The Review Team commends the Centre for the growth in student numbers undertaking the Aboriginal Studies major, particularly in the international student cohort. It advises them to remain cognisant of the assumed knowledge of students undertaking these units, and continue to present to them all aspects of the diversity of Indigenous culture. *(See Commendation 9)*

5.7 Learning resources

- 5.7.1 Students were positive in their comments regarding the resources and support provided by the Koori Centre library and the Review Team commends them on this excellent service. *(See Commendation 10)*

5.8 Research-led teaching

- 5.8.1 The Centre is involved in the concept of teaching Aboriginal content to non-Aboriginal students and staff recently presented a paper on this topic at an international conference. Feedback from the paper had been positive. *(See also Section 3.6).*
- 5.8.2 All staff incorporated their research into their teaching where relevant. They considered that because the range of topics they taught was so broad, it was impossible to introduce their research

into everything. Teaching materials are reviewed annually and updated in response to the research that was being undertaken. Students confirmed that staff integrated their research into their teaching.

5.8.3 The curriculum in testing communication skills has been rewritten using research on reading and writing for academic purposes. This has resulted in an improvement in reading and writing skills over the past three years. *(See also Section 3.7)*

5.8.3 Although the Review Team found evidence of research-led teaching, particularly in literacy work, it suggests that there is still room for improvement. There is an opportunity for members of staff to provide national and international leadership in the area of literacy and pedagogy. The Review Team strongly urges staff to make this material available to their academic peers through publication in research journals. *(See Recommendation 7)*

6 ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

6.1 The Koori Centre accommodates the different learning styles within its students by the use of a variety of assessment tasks: essays, journals, cultural icons and exhibitions. The Review Team was concerned about the range of assessment types but noted that the students were appreciative of the variety provided. They considered that the range of assessments allowed them to approach tasks in different ways and to research and present topics in an Indigenous framework, thereby increasing their understanding of Indigenous culture. Staff reported that they had received positive feedback from students on an exhibition related to Aboriginal health, and that they considered that the 'reflective journal' allowed students to think about their own learning journey. The latter was considered particularly important for Indigenous students.

6.2 Staff considered that a particularly useful assessment task for non-Indigenous students was the development of a resource kit using information collected from Indigenous communities and organisations. Students undertaking the block program were exposed to mainstream knowledge e.g. excursions to the Holocaust Museum. All students were provided with assessment tasks that would engage them on an emotional, cultural and physical level, rather than just an intellectual one.

6.3 The Review Team commends the Centre on its innovative teaching methods, particularly in the form of assessment. It suggest that other parts of the University could learn from the assessment pedagogy developed by the Centre. *(See Commendation 11)*

7 RESEARCH AND RESEARCH SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

7.1 Research output

7.1.1 Although the Centre is working on research projects with other Centres such as the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies and SELF at the University of Western Sydney, and is cooperating with the Department of Gender Studies on a future research project, it is aware that its research output is low. It acknowledges that there is work to be done in this area and has recently appointed a research fellow to help the Centre build its research profile, and help staff publish papers and work towards being awarded PhDs. The recent restructure had provided more time for staff to do research and they were being actively encouraged to take Special Studies Program (SSP) leave to develop areas of research.

7.1.2 The Review Team commends the Centre on the appointment of the research fellow and see this as a positive move towards the development of an improved research culture and output. It encourages the Centre to support staff in the completion of their higher degrees, and suggests contacting the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) for appropriate funding. *(See Commendation 12 and Recommendation 8)*

7.2 Research supervision and training

- 7.2.1 The Centre has a number of enquiries from students, particularly from those who have completed the mainstream program, who wish to undertake research in Aboriginal studies. Currently it is unable to provide supervision for these students since few staff have completed research higher degrees and that structurally the Centre can not offer research programs. This is an area which the Centre sees as a priority, and it hopes that the appointment of the research fellow together with the likelihood of more staff completing higher degrees, will improve the situation in the future. Staff were concerned about developing the necessary skills for postgraduate supervision, and the Team suggests that they consider entering into co-supervision arrangements with other faculties, for example the Faculty of Arts or the Faculty of Education and Social Work.

8 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Use of the Institute for Teaching and Learning programs

- 8.1.1 The Review Team noted that all staff from the Centre had completed the Three Day Program: Principles and Practice of University Teaching and Learning and were using the strategies from the program to inform their teaching practice. It commends the Centre on this achievement and the positive use of the program. (*See Commendation 13*)

8.2 Mentoring and induction programs

- 8.2.2 Although there is no mentoring or induction program in place, staff considered that they benefited in this area from the close relationships between staff, and the individual and personal support provided by management. As mentioned in Section 7.1 the research fellow mentors staff in their research, but there is no formal mentoring program in place. Staff were aware that if the Centre were situated within a Faculty, there would be regular Faculty mentoring available. However they considered that attachment to another Faculty would restrict the development of the Koori Centre in its work with Indigenous communities. The Review Team suggests that it might benefit the Centre to work with another Faculty in mentoring of staff. (*See Recommendation 9*)

8.3 Staff workload

- 8.3.1 The Review Team were concerned about the intense staff workload, particularly for staff involved in the block programs. They acknowledged that the semesterisation of the block program had freed up staff to attend conferences and work on their research. This had also helped ease the workload resulting from 9-5 teaching days, coupled with being on-call to students after the end of the day and when the students returned to their communities. The Team also noted that Indigenous staff were more involved with the Indigenous communities than their non-Indigenous colleagues. Staff are encouraged to schedule 'personal time' into their timetables. This would ensure uninterrupted time for them to undertake their own research activities.

9 CADIGAL PROGRAM

- 9.1 The Cadigal Access and Support Program for Indigenous Australians was developed and implemented in 1992. It is administered within the Koori Centre. The Centre liaises with schools and communities regarding the program, and supports all students who enter the University through the program. Students who enter through UAC are identified and contacted to make them aware of facilities and services which are available to them as Indigenous students. The Centre has no record of student progression rates since it is not informed when students graduate. Success is measured by the number of students who integrated into the university community and no longer need the services of the Centre. The Director hoped that the 30th anniversary of the

Koori Centre next year would provide an opportunity to commence an alumni register of students.

10 SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

10.1 The Centre has strong links with the Indigenous communities that it serves. The Aboriginal Education Consultative Group discusses issues on education in all sectors, maintaining links with the community and ensuring that their work should benefit the community. Community members are invited as guest lecturers. Individual staff members work closely with their own communities. The Review Team commends the Centre on its work with Indigenous communities in New South Wales. *(See Commendation 15)*

11 AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE (COMMENDATIONS)

Based on the Self-Evaluation Report, the Strategic Plan and the findings of the Review Team, the following areas of good practice are commended:

Commendation One

The Review Team commends the Centre on the successful implementation of the restructure, as evidenced by the collegial, collaborative environment for both staff and students. *(See Section 3.1)*

Commendation Two

The Review Team commends the Centre on the diversification of its courses, particularly the coordination of the Aboriginal Studies major within the Faculty of Arts. The resulting relationship with the Faculty of Arts will add value to both parties. *(See Section 3.4)*

Commendation Three

The Review Team commends the Centre on the improvement in student retention rates and notes that staff retention rates are also excellent. *(See Section 3.5)*

Commendation Four

The Review Team commends of the research activities of the Centre and suggests that it would benefit the Centre to share their work on indigenous knowledge and pedagogy with other communities. *(See Section 3.5)*

Commendation Five

The Review Team commends the development of a literacy pedagogy and encourages the Centre to further develop this area of research. *(See Section 3.7)*

Commendation Six

The Review Team commends the current informal benchmarking activities which are in place with similar Indigenous education and support centres in Australian universities, and with the University of British Columbia and the University of Waikato. *(See Section 4.2)*

Commendation Seven

The Review Team commends the Centre on the positive feedback from students on their teaching and learning experiences and the use of stimulating guest lecturers. *(See Section 5.1.1)*

Commendation Eight

The Review Team commends the Centre on the integration of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff and the consequent development of the community. (See Section 5.1.2)

Commendation Nine

The Review Team commends the Centre for the growth in student numbers undertaking the Aboriginal Studies major, particularly in the international student cohort. It advises them to remain cognisant of the assumed knowledge of students undertaking these units, and continue to present to them all aspects of the diversity of Indigenous culture. (See Section 5.6)

Commendation Ten

Students made very positive comments regarding the resources and support provided by the Koori Centre library. The Review Team commends them on this excellent service. (See Section 5.7)

Commendation Eleven

The Review Team commends the Centre on its innovative teaching methods, particularly in the form of assessment. It suggest that other parts of the University could learn from the assessment pedagogy developed by the Centre. (See Section 6.3)

Commendation Twelve

The Review Team commends the Centre on the appointment of the research fellow and see this as a positive move towards the development of an improved research culture and output. (See Section 7.1.2)

Commendation Thirteen

The Review Team commends the Centre on the completion by all staff of the Three Day Program: Principles and Practice of University Teaching and Learning and the positive use of the program in its teaching practice. (See Section 8.1)

Commendation Fourteen

The Review Team commends the Centre on the semesterisation of the block program which had freed up staff to attend conferences and work on their research. (See Section 8.3)

Commendation Fifteen

The Review Team commends the Centre on its work with Indigenous communities in New South Wales. (See Section 10)

12 AREAS OF CONSIDERATION FOR IMPROVEMENT (RECOMMENDATIONS)

The Review Team identified a number of areas for consideration for improvements and makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation One

The Review Team recommends the formalisation of current informal benchmarking relationships with Indigenous tertiary education centres in Australian and overseas universities. (See Section 4.2.1)

Recommendation Two

The Review Team recommends that the Centre consider implementing a more systematic form of data collection, documenting and recording activities. This would aid in the development of a quality assurance culture within the Centre. (See Section 4.4)

Recommendation Three

The Review Team recommends that staff should be encouraged to continue applying for teaching excellence awards, and suggests that mentoring may improve the quality of applications. (See Section 5.2.1)

Recommendation Four

The Review Team recommends that the Centre institute a celebration of good teaching day. (See Section 5.2.2)

Recommendation Five

The Review Team recommends that the Centre more clearly integrate the graduate attributes into all units and effectively communicate these to students. (See Section 5.3)

Recommendation Six

The Review Team recommends that the Koori Centre increase the number of units using WebCT, and should take advantage of their connections with the faculties of Arts and Education and Social Work to use their technology hub. (See Section 5.5)

Recommendation Seven

There is an opportunity for members of staff to provide national and international leadership in the area of literacy and pedagogy. The Review Team strongly urges staff to make this material available to their academic peers through publication in research journals. (See Section 5.8.3)

Recommendation Eight

The Review Team encourages the Centre to support staff in the completion of their higher degrees, and suggests contacting the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) for appropriate funding. (See Section 7.1.2)

Recommendation Nine

The Review Team suggests that it might benefit the Centre to work with another Faculty in mentoring of staff. (See Section 8.2)

Prof Judyth Sachs
Chair, Academic Board
Chair, Review Team

20 August 2003

APPENDIX ONE: KOORI CENTRE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT



Koori Centre

Self Evaluation Report 2003

Introduction:

The University of Sydney Koori Centre has had a long and distinguished history in promoting equity of access, participation and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the tertiary sector. The block mode program for Aboriginal Teaching Assistants began in 1974, attracting and retaining large numbers of Indigenous students. The ongoing challenge of maintaining Indigenous enrolments and success remains at the forefront of Koori Centre planning, leading for example, to modifications in block mode teaching and innovative approaches to enhancing academic literacy. Urgent community needs, such as the need for fully qualified school teachers with an Indigenous specialisation, and the need for graduating nurses with the cultural awareness and skills to work more effectively with Indigenous patients and communities, provided a powerful impetus for the establishment of new programs in both Education and Nursing, among others. It is also acknowledged, however, that more needs to be done to support Indigenous students in entering and succeeding in mainstream courses, and that this requires broader institutional changes.

The Koori Centre operates proactively across the University of Sydney. It provides access, academic, cultural and personal support to Indigenous students while working to create a holistic learning environment in which they can optimise their participation and learning. Reinforcing Indigenous students' sense of identity and belonging has accompanied opportunities to interact with non-Indigenous students and staff in the mainstream, to their mutual benefit. Importantly, Indigenous student programs are co-located with mainstream programs. Another dimension to the Koori Centre's work is its integrated and inclusive approach to teaching and learning initiatives which involves non-Indigenous staff and students (including a growing and enthusiastic cohort of international students) being part of a single, institution-wide strategic goal. That goal is to promote Indigenous learning, knowledges and perspectives across the whole University.

The Context:

The Koori Centre is part of the Central Administration of the University and supports a Board of Studies in Indigenous Studies and Policy Advisory Group. Its Strategic Plan aims to advance the University's quality assurance program in teaching and learning, and its public reporting to the University and wider community. The Koori Centre's main focus is, therefore, to maximise the research, teaching and learning potentials and outcomes of its staff and students.

The Koori Centre Strategic Plan 2001-2005 supports the University of Sydney's Strategic Plan 1999-2004: Major Goal Number 2 – Diversity, Access and Equity – which states that the University will provide access to tertiary study and appropriate support for students from a diversity of backgrounds. Under this goal, the University encourages and supports the participation and success of Indigenous Australian students by increasing opportunities for their participation in the University as students, educators, administrators and researchers, and by providing mechanisms to ensure successful outcomes.

In January 2001, the Koori Centre began a successful internal reorganisation and restructure. The Change Management Proposal provided a flexible utilisation of all staff and resources, with the goal of improving the Koori Centre's effectiveness in serving the diverse educational needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and enhancing teaching and learning practices. The restructure was undertaken in 2002.

In terms of teaching, the Koori Centre has three main functions:

1. **Indigenous Australian Block Programs:**
The Koori Centre operates its own academic block mode programs for Indigenous Australian students in the Tertiary Preparation Course and the Diploma of Education (Aboriginal); and coordinates the block mode Bachelor of Education (Secondary: Aboriginal Studies) for the Faculty of Education and Social Work.
2. **Mainstream Programs:**
The Koori Centre coordinates the Aboriginal Studies major in the Faculty of Arts, involving one core unit and, at present, three additional units of study; teaches a core and an elective Indigenous Studies unit in the Primary Teacher Education course in the Faculty of Education and Social Work; from 2004 the Koori Centre will teach a core Aboriginal Studies unit in the Faculty of Nursing; and the Centre also engages with teaching in many other University contexts, including the Summer School, and various guest lecturer appointments across the University.
3. **Indigenous Australian Students: Recruitment, Entry and Support:**
The Koori Centre co-ordinates the Cadigal Access and Support Program and teaches the Academic Skills Program as well as providing various integrated support services for Indigenous Australian students across campus (See Cadigal Program report). The Centre also services marketing, scholarship and other programs designed to recruit and retain Indigenous Australian students at the University.

Core Business and Strategic Goals:

Key strategic directions in relation to teaching and learning include four main goals which are to:

1. Provide the best possible physical, social and education outcomes for teaching and learning for students;
2. Provide opportunities for Koori Centre Staff to maximise their educational, training and professional development, thereby aiming at a high level of teaching excellence;
3. Ensure that the Koori Centre pursues funding consonant with high quality educational outcomes;
4. Ensure diverse community engagement in the teaching and learning process.

1. Graduate attributes, aims and outcomes: How does the Koori Centre ensure that each course and subject has an appropriate aim and outcome, clearly communicated to and understood by students and including generic as well as disciplinary skill?

The Koori Centre's commitment to maximising teaching, learning and research outcomes is reflected in its application of current best practice in Unit of Study and overall program delivery. This has been achieved by the successful staff-driven restructure of the Centre over the past 2 years, staff training in University program and module delivery expectations, and the benchmarking of all Units of Study within the Centre across the board. The internal restructure has enabled the Koori Centre to streamline its communication lines and responsibility profiles, with the outcome of improving performance in the creation and administration of Units of Study.

With the establishment of the role of an Academic Coordinator within the Centre, through the commencement of the Change Management Proposal, and the ongoing collegiality of administration services, teaching and learning programs have felt the impact of stronger leadership and co-ordination. This has provided a pivotal base from where the delivery, assessment, evaluation and development of our teaching and learning programs take place. This mechanism encourages academic staff to contribute extensively to the existing and future teaching programs and units of study within the Koori Centre, through the designation of Course Convenors and Lecturers-in-Charge. This has enabled shared visions, commitment, consolidation and innovation in teaching and learning within the Centre and across the University by:

- Regular Academic staff meetings
- Regular internal evaluation and critical appraisal sessions
- Discussions with all staff in regard to planning, delivery, assessment and evaluation of academic courses and projects
- Facilitation of closer association with administration staff in relation to timetabling, room bookings
- Provision of input into appointments of academic staff within the Centre
- In collaboration with Director and Deputy Director, advising all academic staff in respect of professional practices and academic responsibilities
- Facilitation of innovative practice, including future development of Postgraduate courses and programs
- Promotion and recognition of achievement of academic staff and students
- Maintaining professional contact with relevant government agencies, particularly those in matters of Indigenous education
- Liaison with other Faculties and Departments across the University
- Fostering multi-skilling amongst academic staff and access to a broader range of professional experience
- Flexible and adaptive methods of operation to address the Centre's unique position and clientele base.

The Koori Centre implements University best practice in the collation and publication of its Units of Study and course information at all levels. Lecturers are required to utilise the first tutorial session with students to guide them through the Unit of Study outline; to clarify and answer any questions regarding all course information. Learning outcomes are directly related to assessment items to ensure success of teaching and learning. Students are also encouraged to talk to lecturers and are advised to negotiate appropriate time and dates for consultation.

Students are encouraged to access University guidelines in regard to their academic responsibilities to all matters. In addition, many Koori Centre Units of Study outlines refer to, and provide specific information on, issues such as referencing, plagiarism, and rules of attendance.

2 How does the Koori Centre ensure integration of research, including both disciplinary research and evidence about effective learning and teaching, into its undergraduate and postgraduate courses?

The Koori Centre's commitment to excellence in teaching and research is demonstrated by the professional excellence of its academic staff, and the capacity of each staff member to integrate current best practice within their teaching and research activities. Staff teaching and research profiles include:

- Aboriginal Education
- Aboriginal History and Cultures
- Arts, Media and Communication
- Aboriginal Music and Ethnomusicology
- Computer Education
- Creative and Literary Writing
- E-Learning
- Geography
- Health
- History
- Land Management and Conservation
- Linguistics
- Literacy
- Primary and Secondary Teacher Education Training and Experience
- Performance Studies
- Poetics and Aesthetics
- Physical Education
- Science
- Social Justice Education
- Torres Strait Islander cultural and pedagogic expertise
- Visual Arts

Indigenous and Non-Indigenous part-time Lecturers are also engaged for their particular expertise in specific subjects areas.

The Centre has successfully attracted and recruited what it calls 'a substantial critical mass' of Indigenous academics who carry out most of the teaching and are vital to the Centre. Two-thirds of the academic staff are Indigenous, and they act as mentors and role models for Indigenous students. The presence of a Torres Strait Islander academic also aids in an inclusive approach to teaching about Australia's Indigenous communities. Staff play a strong leadership role in the wider University in advising on curricula involving Indigenous issues and perspectives. They also provide an authentic voice while modelling culturally appropriate practices in teaching and learning.

In addition to their personal and cultural attributes, our academic staff are professionally astute in applying current research to their teaching activities. For example, established Indigenous teaching and learning practices, such as the use of story-telling and oral history, are broadly located within newer theories of narrative inquiry. 'Narrative inquiry' is a western concept providing a theoretical framework that closely represents what Indigenous peoples have always done. The framework enables students to engage with knowledge on another (emotional) level, which can extend and deepen their learning. The use of symbols in Indigenous ways of learning is also drawn upon in Koori Centre pedagogy.

Current research methodologies, as well as the needs of Indigenous communities, have underpinned and informed decisions relating to teaching in and by the Koori Centre. For example, the Koori Centre is implementing innovative approaches in the teaching of academic literacy using methodologies derived

from academic research in Aboriginal communities. This highly innovative and research-based Indigenous Academic Literacy scheme has been put in place for the Koori Centre's Indigenous students in both the Tertiary Preparation Course and the first year of the Diploma course. Recognising both the urgent need for students to develop academic literacy skills, and the fact that existing methodologies have had limited success, a Research Fellow, David Rose from the Faculty of Education and Social Work is currently working closely with several Koori Centre staff to utilise 'scaffolding' methodology. With this methodology, students are better able to read academic texts through intensive deconstruction. This approach is informed by functional linguistics and the work of Vygotsky, and its success in rural Aboriginal communities has been documented (Rose, Grey & Cowie, 2000). While initially not included in the study, second year Diploma students learned of the benefits of this program from their first year peers and requested their inclusion. Once the scheme has been fully researched and developed it will also be extended to the Cadigal Access and Support Program.

The Koori Centre consults widely with Faculties and Departments within the University. Aboriginal professional and community groups actively consulted with include organizations such as: the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group; Aboriginal Medical Service; NSW Aboriginal Education Council; NSW Department Education Science and Training; Board of Studies; and Aboriginal Units in the NSW Department of Education and Training; the Health Department; Westmead Hospital; Orange Base Hospital; and North West Area Health Services. In addition, Indigenous people are engaged to deliver guest lectures in specialist subject areas throughout the University. Selected individuals and organizations are co-opted on the basis of their expertise and ability to contribute to specific issues and projects.

The Koori Centre has also established a Research Committee and an Innovations Committee. The Research Committee initiates, guides and facilitates research in the Koori Centre, including research training, workshops, liaison with internal and external bodies and prioritising projects. The Innovations Committee initiates, guides and facilitates significant innovations in, teaching and learning, including on-line teaching, new courses and Units of Study, cross-campus programs, internal networking and revenue earning.

Online learning using WebCT was implemented in Semester 1, 2002 in the second year Bachelor of Education (Aboriginal) Unit of Study; KDEA1206 Introduction to Teaching B. Student feedback to the implementation has been generally positive, notwithstanding student access issues (although in-class access time was included in each unit from inception). Participating staff has also found the experience challenging but useful and are reviewing further units for adaptation to this method of delivery.

3 How does the Koori Centre ensure that student assessment is effective and contributes to learning and that the assessment processes are well understood by students?

The Koori Centre draws on the teaching and research expertise of its staff to ensure that its assessment processes are effective, appropriate and clear. It ensures that all Units of Study employ assessment processes which reflect current thinking in pedagogy, and the University's expectations in assessing students' compliance with its generic graduate attributes.

The Academic Coordinator, in consultation with Course Convenors and Lecturer-in-Charge, is responsible for all Units of Study, block, and other programs in which Centre staff teach. Mainstream programs are approved in the Faculties in which they sit, block mode programs are approved by the Board of Studies in Indigenous Studies. All programs are subject to formal University approval mechanisms. Marking and assessment meetings are a regular agenda item at the Koori Centre's monthly academic staff meetings.

The process in which assessment is linked to learning is through:

1. Lecturers ensuring that students are provided, verbally and in written form, with assessment criteria. To allow for the accommodation of different learning styles a variety of assessment tasks such as: essays, journals, cultural icon and exhibition have been devised (See Appendix 4). The

assessment items are also spread across the entirety of unit of study, block, and other program to ensure ongoing feedback, guidance and clarification. Negotiated assessment tasks in association with learning outcomes for postgraduate students in the Graduate Certificate in Aboriginal Studies, in the Faculty of Education and Social Work, are currently being trialed. Essay cross-marking also ensures equitable learning outcomes for all students;

2. Providing students with prompt and useful feedback. The Koori Centre endeavours to return essays, with written feedback, in the shortest time-frame possible; and
3. Ensuring that field trips are carefully linked to the learning outcomes. For example, when the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal health are being discussed in class, the impact of the material presented can have a negative effect on students. So it is important to introduce them to some positive examples of how the issues are being addressed in practical ways, by visiting relative organizations first hand.
4. How does the Koori Centre ensure the quality of its teaching and recognise good teaching?

Academic staff at the Koori Centre bring to their teaching and learning a wide range of experiences such as, primary teaching, secondary teaching, TAFE teaching and knowledge and experience gained from teaching in other universities. They also bring with them a range of specialist areas (see section 2). The Centre ensures the quality of teaching and recognition of good teaching practice by:

- Supporting and encouraging academic staff to attend each other's lectures, as this provides the opportunity for constructive peer assessment. It also addresses issues of consistency, subjectivity, and encourages best practices to be discussed openly, particularly at Course Convenors and Lecturer-in-Charge meetings and at the monthly academic meetings.
- Undertaking internal evaluation and critical appraisal sessions at which Course Convenors and Lectures-in-Charge of Units of Study, are required to bring to the sessions: brief summary of evaluation material, brief summary of issues identified by all tutors, updated reading and resource lists, ideas, suggestions and amendments for shifts in pedagogy or assessment procedures, what worked well/what wasn't so successful, and recommendations for modifications.
- Committing the Academic staff to undertake Professional Development. For example, academic staff were alerted to the Institute for Teaching and Learning workshop entitled "Principles and Practices of Good Teaching". All academic staff have now attended this workshop.
- Ensuring that staff are aware of and have an understanding of sound academic principles in reference to Graduate Attributes and University guidelines.
- Encouraging attendance at national and international conferences and supporting staff to present their innovative teaching practises.
- Encouraging staff to present and showcase teaching excellence within the University as well as attending and delivering conference papers nationally and internationally.
- Benchmarking and developing best practice mechanisms for the teaching of Indigenous studies with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues, nationally and internationally.
- Considering student evaluations when reviewing and developing Units of Study and other programs (see section 5).

5 What arrangements does the Koori Centre have in place to monitor and support student progression?

The Koori Centre supports and monitors progression of various student cohorts.

The successful progression of all students enrolled in the Units of Study offered by the Koori Centre through mainstream Faculties require that all academic staff contribute to providing students with the best possible teaching and learning outcomes. This occurs through, constructive academic student feedback, as shown in sections 3 and 4. In line with all Unit of Study, block and other programs, the review teams frequently discuss student matters in regard to special consideration and flexibility to student crisis. Extensions are clearly articulated verbally and in written form within unit of study outlines, liaison and collaboration with Departments and Faculties in regard to particular student needs.

Block mode programs are designed for students who find it difficult to spend time away from their employment, family or community to study full-time on campus. The Tertiary Preparation Course develops academic skills for entrance to the Diploma in Education (Aboriginal) and other university programs. The Diploma in Education (Aboriginal) in turn articulates directly with the new Bachelor of Education (Secondary: Aboriginal Studies) so that students are supported throughout their entire University experience. In teaching block mode students, the majority of curricula relate to their personal experiences. Students can engage from their own perspective, making learning more meaningful. Encountering 'mainstream' learning also encourages confidence and self-reliance.

Even more significant than developments in the Diploma course, has been the setting up of the Bachelor of Education (Aboriginal) – the only undergraduate degree of its kind in NSW. This is a secondary teacher education degree in Aboriginal studies and history. Students can initially enrol in the Diploma and then 'pipeline' through to the Bachelor's degree, which is an innovative way of encouraging able students to maximise their academic capacity. This is an important aspect given the sometimes low levels of academic confidence experienced by commencing students. The enormous boost in self-esteem and sense of empowerment that graduation provides for these students carries them to unanticipated levels of achievement throughout their lives.

Koori Centre staff are in regular telephone and electronic communication with the students when they are back in their communities, and assignments maybe sent in by email. This may seem normal practice in distance teaching but these particular students are not necessarily electronically skilled from the outset, and much planning and effort goes into skilling them and providing access to the necessary equipment information technology through local TAFE colleges, schools, community centres, libraries etc, especially since they often do not have home computers. Email also enables the Koori Centre's Aboriginal Tutorial Assistants to maintain better contact with the students between blocks, so that an effective triangulation between lecturer, student and tutor is achieved. The Centre also supports a small research library which is accessed extensively by Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The Centre's block programs are currently undergoing a review in collaboration with the Faculty of Education and Social Work.

The Academic Skills Program is an integral element of the Cadigal Access and Support Program. It provides first year, Indigenous Australian students with a semester long, Academic skills teaching program. Approximately five sessions are timetabled each week to allow students studying in various degrees to access the program. This program is specifically designed, to teach students the essential academic skills needed to successfully undertake an undergraduate degree. Moreover, it assists in guiding and monitoring student progression whilst they are simultaneously enrolled within mainstream courses. In this way, the Cadigal Coordinator is aware of how students are progressing and can address support needs as soon as they become apparent. The core of this program provides students with the opportunity to learn and/or enhance their abilities in: essay writing, understanding texts, university culture, bibliography, referencing, seminar and tutorial presentations, etc. The program is taught through a generic set of curricula and students can then apply learnt skills to their individual needs, depending on the specific outcomes of their degree course. Students can access this program either on a part-time (2 hours per week) or full-time (4 hours per week) basis.

In Second Semester, students are encouraged to seek academic support from the Cadigal Coordinator, through consultations on a one-on-one basis when needs arise. In addition, if students require tuition in more specialist areas, the Cadigal Coordinator can organise tutorial assistance through the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme.

The Cadigal Coordinator position also provides academic, personal and cultural support to Indigenous Australian students enrolled across all years and programs. All Koori Centre academic staff make themselves available for this purpose and administrative staff provide relevant assistance.

6 How does the Koori Centre ensure the quality of research supervision and training?

Koori Centre staff engage in their own research, in the attainment of higher degrees and support Indigenous students in developing research skills. They also provide assistance to mainstream students engaged in research projects on Indigenous issues. For example, a research student from Ireland, Fiona Murphy, has been accommodated for twelve months within the Centre to work on her PhD. Koori Centre staff who have worked in Indigenous units elsewhere report that heavy teaching loads in such units often mean staff are given little time for research. The Koori Centre Director makes it explicit to staff that they will be supported in undertaking Special Study Leave for their research and higher degrees, and this appears to be one reason for the Centre's success in achieving a highly Indigenous staff profile.

The Centre currently teaches in the Faculty of Education and Social Work, Graduate Certificate in Aboriginal Studies, which is a component of the Faculty's Masters of Education program. Students in this course are encouraged and supported on a one-on-one basis, particularly, in relation to the major research component for this Unit of Study. Staff are also encouraged to undertake the Institute for Teaching and Learning's Postgraduate Supervision Development courses.

The Koori Centre wants to encourage more Indigenous and Non Indigenous students to undertake postgraduate research in a range of disciplines at the Centre. This can only be undertaken if the Centre is classified as an academic unit and can supervise and manage such students in association with the other resources offered by the University for postgraduate students. The Centre is currently looking into this matter and would appreciate any advice or assistance from the Review Committee.

Postgraduate qualification in Indigenous issues is seen as an area of great need for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. As it would:

- Be an appropriate strategic response to fulfil an urgent national need for more Indigenous students to gain postgraduate qualifications and contribute further to Indigenous research, teaching and policy development
- Allow the development of wider research competencies and further in-depth research programs and new teams within the Centre
- Allow higher degree students interested in Indigenous Studies to participate in the Centre
- Allow the Koori Centre to develop innovative teaching units for postgraduate degrees.

7 What are the Koori Centre's arrangements for evaluation and quality improvement, including the use of student and graduate feedback and other performance indicator data to monitor and enhance performance? How does it recognise good teaching?

The Koori Centre regularly monitors the effectiveness of its teaching activities. This is done by conducting internal and external teaching evaluations, both from a student and staff perspective. The Centre undertakes these evaluations by:

- Utilising the University's Institute for Teaching and Learning electronic evaluation forms to receive student feedback, to assist staff in reviewing educational programs and Units of Study.
- Devising an internal Unit of Study evaluation sheet designed to give students the opportunity to offer more in-depth qualitative comments, thereby allowing staff to monitor whether or not learning outcomes are achieved.
- Providing a de-briefing session for block-mode students which is timetabled into the end of the six weeklong blocks to allow students the opportunity to verbally comment on any perceived positives or negatives within their study whilst on campus. Due to comments from students and to ensure no conflict of interest, the facilitators for de-brief sessions are selected from teaching staff who do not teach within the student's block mode course. This ensures complete objectivity and personal and cultural safety for students.
- Utilising assessment items, such as a "Reflective Journal" which provide insight into the pedagogical processes throughout the course, and is invaluable information used for review of units of study.
- Inviting student representation and participation on Centre committees and attendance at the Centre's annual retreats.
- Holding an annual retreat where we continually revisit the Koori Centre Strategic Plan and review units of study, block and other programs.
- See section 4, for staff evaluations and quality improvement mechanisms on teaching.
- Close collaboration and liaison with faculty personnel in regard to Indigenous student progression, especially first year students.

Conclusion:

The staff at the Koori Centre have welcomed the exercise of reviewing our quality assurance processes. Procedures that need further development have been highlighted, but we have also illuminated many of the formal and informal quality assurance procedures which are utilised to ensure the best possible physical, social and educational outcomes for student learning. We look forward to any comments from the review committee that can further assure best practice in our teaching and learning procedures.

APPENDIX TWO: REVIEW OF CADIGAL PROGRAM

**Cadigal Access and Support Program
for Indigenous Australians**

“The transition from secondary school to university is very confronting, more so when you don’t necessarily receive the preferred UAI for the tertiary course you wish to enrol in. The Koori Centre’s Cadigal Program allowed me to apply for entry into University of Sydney’s combined law degree. I was accepted by the University and now I am two years into my course.” (Quote: Cadigal Student, 1998)

Introduction:

In response to the increasing demand from Indigenous Australians to access undergraduate degrees, the Cadigal Access and Support Program (Cadigal Program) was developed and implemented in 1992. The program’s aim was to improve access to undergraduate courses at the University through the implementation of an Admissions Policy and through the development of support provisions which effectively meet the needs of Indigenous Australian students as articulated by students participating in undergraduate courses. In particular, the Program provides the opportunity to undertake an undergraduate course on a reduced load of study and to concurrently participate in additional tutorials in different content areas where necessary.

Brief Overview:

Students seeking admission into the Cadigal Program do so through special provisions made available by the University.

The Cadigal Program assesses entry for Indigenous Australian applicants who do not meet the entry requirements under the University’s other access and equity admission programs. There are two avenues of entry to the Cadigal Program: Higher School Certificate (HSC) and Mature Age. The program is open to either:

- a. People under 21 years of age who have completed the NSW Higher School Certificate or an equivalent examination (HSC applicants)
- b. People over 21 years of age. (Mature Age applicants)

HSC and Mature Age applicants submit a Cadigal Program application to the Koori Centre and the Universities Admissions Centre. HSC applicants are considered for entry on the basis of their Universities Admission Index and may be recommended to Faculties for entry into an undergraduate degree.

All Mature Age applicants are required to undertake a diagnostic test (see Appendix 1) and attend an interview with academic staff of the Koori Centre to assess their suitability for study at the University and the particular course/s they wish to enter. The interview panel considers each application on the basis of three main areas:

- Educational background
- Life and employment experiences
- Evidence of motivation and goals, and interest in the courses/s selected.

Students admitted under the Cadigal Program may be offered enrolment with a full-time course load or a reduced load with academic skills support.

Application Process:

Indigenous Australian applicants who have completed their Higher School Certificate maybe eligible for admission through the Cadigal Program based on their University Admissions Index (UAI) score as well as their overall application. In addition, HSC students are requested to put in writing a case to support their application. This process includes the Cadigal Program Coordinator speaking and/or meeting with the applicant to discuss any questions or queries the prospective student may have. Applicants are required to apply through the normal processes of admission through the University Admissions Centre and all Indigenous applications seeking admission to the University of Sydney as a preference are forwarded to Special Admissions of the University and then forwarded to the Cadigal Co-ordinator.

On the basis of **HSC** applicants' UAI scores and/or informal interview, the Koori Centre will forward a recommendation to the relevant Dean. This recommendation may include an applicant's personal file containing a summary of the experiences, skills and attributes to support their application. In the event that an applicant's UAI score is significantly below the entry requirements of the degree/faculty, the Sub Committee may also seek to advise students of another pathway (negotiated with the Dean) with a view to expanding the opportunities available to students. As mentioned previously, **Mature Age** applicants are required to sit a diagnostic assessment and to attend a formal interview process conducted by the Koori Centre, as well as provide supporting documentation. Similarly, recommendations are then forwarded to the relevant Dean or the student may be advised of alternative pathways.

- All Indigenous Australian applicants are considered by the Koori Centre Academic Sub Committee, which consists of the Director or Deputy Director of the Koori Centre, Academic Coordinator and Cadigal Coordinator. The Committee takes into consideration the above mentioned support mechanisms as well as particular individual student circumstances, such as those listed below, before making a final recommendation to the Faculties.

Academic Skills Program:

Students who enrol in the Centre's Academic Skills Program are seen as full-time students for the purpose of ABSTUDY. Students combine first year subjects with academic skills classes run by the Cadigal Coordinator responsible for the Cadigal Program and 'Academic Skills' classes. This has the effect of prolonging the time students study at the University but better prepares them to acquire academic skills essential for them to successfully undertake an undergraduate degree (See section 5 *Self-Evaluation Report*).

There are many factors impacting upon the final decision regarding entry to the Cadigal Program including: UAI score, Faculty entry requirements, willingness of Faculty to enter negotiations, consideration of Koori Centre recommendations by Dean, reasons for recommendations based on individual subject scores and base knowledge of subjects is satisfactory and above, (ie. applicant's English mark is higher than Maths mark and applicant wants to enrol in English based subjects). Ultimately it is the Dean who has the final decision on who is admitted through the Faculty programs.

When considering all applicants for entry into the University, the Koori Centre specifically takes into account the support which will be available to Indigenous Australian students, once they commence study. Support factors include:

- The **ATAS support program**, whereby a student is entitled to free private tuition up to two hours per week per subject, which is assessed by the ATAS coordinator (Cadigal Coordinator) in consultation with lecturers or course advisors. The student is interviewed by the ATAS Coordinator to assess student needs, eg. 2 hours per week in essay writing may cover the required assistance in all their subjects.
- A **Reduced Load** option may be appropriate where the Indigenous Australian student is recommended to a Faculty on a course load of up to 16 credit points (usually two full semester

subjects) and may undertake an additional course of **Academic Skills** on a fulltime or part time basis.

- A negotiated pathway which enables the student to undertake study at a **3/4 Load** (24 credit points) to assist the Indigenous Australian student through their transition into academic study. They may also be advised to take up the **Academic Skills** course on a **part-time** basis.
- Recommendations of enrolling as a **fulltime** student in a particular degree and participating in the **Academic Skills Program** on a **part time** basis. This particular support is in addition to the course requirement, however most students take up this option.
- Indigenous Australian prospective students who apply for a more competitive degrees such as **Arts/Law** or **Media Studies** maybe advised by the Sub Committee to enrol in a less competitive degree such as a BA. This pathway allows student enrolment in a chosen degree and if successful, completion occurs within the first year. Entry into the more competitive degree is considered the following year. This could also be the recommendation of the Dean in consultation with the Cadigal Coordinator.
- **Individual scores** - for each subject within the applicant's HSC. The **weighting** for each subject which may affect their overall UAI, for example, a high mark in Visual Arts will not rate as high as an average mark in 3 Unit Maths, however it will show that the student can apply themselves and achieve academically.
- **Demographics** - is another element which could affect an applicant's UAI, for example, a student from Moree High School may have less opportunity to score as high in the HSC as someone from a number of higher ranked demographic areas, such as Fort Street High.
- **Portfolio** – the Cadigal application consists of a student **portfolio** which includes an application, curriculum vitae, references from employers, teachers, achievement certificates and any other information about themselves which may help their application.

There may be a recommendation from the Sub Committee that Cadigal applicants be referred to further study prior to entry into University. This could be in the form of courses offered through the University's Summer School or bridging courses offered by individual Faculties. Advice of other eligible study may include courses offered through the Koori Centre, such as the **Tertiary Preparation Course** or courses offered at other institutions such as **TAFE**, if the applicant is deemed to be not quite ready for University study at this time.

If a student is unsuccessful, students are advised by phone or face-to-face and offered alternative avenues for study, including information relayed from the Faculties for requirements of particular courses, or TAFE and other study or traineeship opportunities.

Tracking, Documentation and Reporting:

- Current first year applications, successful and unsuccessful, are kept in a filing system in folders marked with individual student names and degrees.
- At the commencement of each year, files containing information about new applicants are established and previous year students are then placed in the mainstream file held by the Cadigal Coordinator.
- All personal student information is kept in a secure filing system, and access limited to the Cadigal Coordinator (hard copy). However, Deans also request information contained in a student file, which is systematically forwarded to the relevant Dean and returned to the Cadigal Coordinator.

- The Koori Centre Administration Officer has access to student information through the use of the Flexis System as does the Cadigal Coordinator.
- Once a student is progressing well in their chosen course as a consequence of their successful entry through the Cadigal program, they may choose not to seek support from the Centre, but may feel confident and comfortable enough to access mainstream student and academic services. The Koori Centre intermittently phones and forwards correspondence to students, in order to touch base and to ensure that students are aware of available Koori Centre services. Students who visit the Centre to utilise support services, common room or computer facilities, may choose not to make contact with Koori Centre staff.
- Students are notified throughout the year via email and News Letters, regarding Koori Centre services, news and events.
- The Cadigal Coordinator and Administrative Assistant regularly monitor all students utilising the support service offered through the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme including those who were admitted through the Cadigal Program. Correspondence is also forwarded to other Indigenous Australian students reminding them of the scheme.
- If a student is unsuccessful, students are advised by phone or face to face and offered alternative avenues for study, including information relayed from the faculties for requirements of particular course, or TAFE and other study or traineeship opportunities. Cadigal applications which do not meet the requirements for any reason, are advised how they could better prepare their application to support their entry into a University.
- Recommendations take the form of a written document addressed to the relevant Dean, or Dean's support person, this encompasses a list of students recommended for enrolment, a copy of student file (original file) and a covering letter. Deans are asked to reply and discuss recommendations with the Cadigal Coordinator either by, phone, meeting, or written correspondence. Upon receiving confirmation of recommendation agreement, from the Dean, the Koori Centre forwards a final official letter to the University's Admissions Centre and this office then makes a 'forced offer'
- The Cadigal Program is reported to the Board of Studies in Indigenous Studies at quarterly intervals.

University Places:

Although the Cadigal policy (See Appendix 2) states that a 5% admission of Indigenous Australian students through the Cadigal program should be a target percentage, this is quite a substantial amount and is not consistent with Indigenous Australian population numbers being 2.8% of total population. However, we are informed by documented resources that the Program intake numbers are steady in comparison to other Indigenous Education centre 'special entry' programs.

2003 Numbers:

Number of students admitted through the program in 2003:

- 39 confirmed applications
- 28 offers of enrolment
- 6 applicants followed through to the negotiation stage but for a variety of reasons, including the taking up of other opportunities, including other University enrolment, Traineeships and Cadetships etc, withdrew their application
- 5 applicants deferred or did not take up offer, or declined offer
- 15 students out of the 28 offered places are enrolled in the Academic Skills Program offered by the Koori Centre, in 2003.

Total Numbers 1999 – 2003:

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

ATSI Enrolments and Students, 1999 to 2003

Year	Cadigal Enrolments	Total ATSI Enrolments	Total ATSI Students
1999	48	467	368
2000	19	338	288
2001	16	333	297
2002	14	307	269
2003	15	364**	338**

** Provisional only, as 2003 numbers for Health Sciences to be revised.

Recommendations for amendments to program procedures include:

- An anomaly of the present Cadigal Program is that it is administered in two separate centres of the University. The Koori Centre administers and co-ordinates the Cadigal Program for students seeking admission into all educational programs offered across all University campuses, except for the Cumberland Campus. Yooroang Garang administers and co-ordinates the Cadigal Access and Support Program specifically for entry into the courses offered within the School of Health Sciences.
- **Reduced Load Level.** If Cadigal students have been granted permission on the recommendation of a Reduced Load level, there is no mechanism in place at present to prevent students from applying for a varying program and enrolling in a full-time load. Some students see the prospect of full-time study as a fast track way of achieving their degree.
- **Faculty partnership and collaboration.** Commitment to the University's strategic plan in relation to Indigenous access and participation is a crucial element in the success of the Cadigal Program. The Koori Centre would welcome more commitment by Faculties to the processes and knowledge of the necessity of such 'special entry' programs such as this one. It should be noted that the Koori Centre endeavours to do everything in its capacity to support students to access and participate in tertiary study at the University of Sydney, particularly through the Cadigal Program. However, it would be against the principles of self-determination and the beliefs of the Koori Centre's philosophy to recommend students for entry who are not equipped with the overall skills necessary to pursue university study. The setting up of students to fail, for the sake of numbers in relation to gauging or measuring success, is a deficit model and one which the Centre strongly opposes.