Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Allowance Guideline

Section 1 - Guideline Statement

(1) ACU acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and recognises the many different nations and languages that existed prior to Australia's colonisation and, that still exist today.

(2) This document provides information and guidance to staff about the language allowance provisions in the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2026-2029 (Enterprise Agreement).

Section 2 - ACU Enterprise Agreement provision

(3) Clauses 2.6(m) to (o) of the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2026-2029 sets out the entitlement to the language allowance:

a. In recognition of the increased effectiveness and productivity of employees proficient in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples languages, continuing and fixed-term employees who are required to use these languages in the course of their employment will be paid an allowance in accordance with the rates specified in Schedule 3:

Allowance Level	Period	30 June 2026	30 June 2027	30 June 2028	30 June 2029	1 October 2029
		3.35%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	1.15%
Level 1 is an introductory level. This level of proficiency is appropriate for employees who are capable of using minimal knowledge of language for the purpose of communication.	per annum	$ 2,917.78	$3,019.91	$3,125.61	$3,235.01	$3,272.22
Level 2 represents a level of ability for the ordinary purposes of general business, conversation, reading, and writing.	per annum	$ 5,252.16	$5,435.99	$5,626.25	$5,823.17	$5,890.14

(4) Language allowance amounts will be updated in accordance with the percentage increases in salaries set out in the Enterprise Agreement.

Section 3 - What is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Language Allowance?

(5) The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language allowance is an annual allowance, payable fortnightly to eligible employees, including during periods of paid leave.

(6) For part-time staff members, the allowance will not be paid on a pro rata basis.

(7) Please note that the language allowance does not apply to overtime, penalty rates, allowances or leave loading.

Section 4 - Eligibility

(8) The language allowance applies to fixed term and continuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members during the course of their employment.

(9) To be eligible for the language allowance, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members are:

a. required to use languages/s in the course of their employment; and
b. be able to demonstrate a degree of proficiency in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language/s.

(10) Staff are eligible for a Level 1 allowance if they are capable of using minimal knowledge of language for the purpose of communication.

(11) Staff are eligible for a Level 2 allowance where their language skills are more proficient than Level 1 for example, where they are using language for general business, conversation, reading and writing.

(12) Staff who hold multiple appointments may be entitled to the allowance in respect of each appointment.

Eligibility examples

Example 1

(13) Lucy holds an Identified professional position, that contributes to supporting success for ACU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Engagement with local First Nation communities forms part of this role and requires regular travel to community to engage with prospective students and their families about studying at ACU. Lucy regularly uses language as part of this engagement, especially when engaging with Elders and community members. Lucy’s use of language is consistent with the Level 2 allowance requirements.

(14) Lucy’s application for a language allowance was accepted on the basis she is required to use language when engaging with community.

Example 2

(15) Ross is the only Indigenous academic appointment in his School and Faculty. He receives multiple requests each year to provide an Acknowledgement to Country at various events. Ross is happy to do an Acknowledgment to Country which he does with a mixture of English and traditional language. He usually does 2 or 3 a year but he will decline depending on work demands and conflicts.

(16) Ross is not entitled to a language allowance as he can decline the invitations to undertake the Acknowledgement to Country. Further Ross is not required to use language in the course of his employment.

Example 3

(17) Michelle’s position provides University wide leadership to develop and implement a First Nations curriculum

framework as well as developing teaching and pedagogical practices with academic staff members. As a Traditional Custodian of the Kaurna Nation, Michelle has extensively incorporated Kaurna knowledges and languages into the University-wide First Nations curriculum framework which enhanced and strengthened the framework. Michelle's use of language is consistent with the Level 2 allowance requirements.

(18) Michelle's application for the language allowance was accepted on the basis that she uses language to enhance the development of teaching and pedagogical practises.

Example 4

(19) Gary holds two separate continuing appointments at ACU. He works two days a week in the Indigenous Higher Education Unit (IHEU) supporting students and is not required to use language in this role. Three days a week, Gary works as an Indigenous academic teaching culturally safe practices in the School of Nursing. Gary's proficiency in language is minimal but he uses it from time to time in his teaching. Gary's use of language is consistent with the Level 1 allowance requirements.

(20) Gary has made an application for the language allowance to his nominated supervisor in the School of Nursing. This was accepted and will be paid to him on a pro rata basis for that position. If Gary was using language in his IHEU role, he would need to make a separate application to his nominated supervisor in that role.

Section 5 - How to apply for language allowance

(21) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff can apply for the language allowance via the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Allowance Form located in Service Central.

(22) Prior to application, staff should talk to their nominated supervisor about the ways in which the staff member uses language/s in the course of their employment. Staff should also discuss with their manager / nominated supervisor about what level of language allowance would be appropriate.

(23) Where an application for language allowance is made, it must be approved by the staff member's nominated supervisor.

(24) Where a staff member commences in a new role, a new application needs to be made and approved by the nominated supervisor.

Section 6 - Revisions made to this Guideline

(25) ACU may make changes to this Guideline from time to time. Any staff member who would like to provide comment or feedback about the Guideline can forward their suggestions to firstpeoplesemployment@acu.edu.au.

Section 7 - Further Assistance

(26) Staff are encouraged to speak to their nominated supervisor if they have any question about this Guideline. Should further information or advice be required, staff should contact firstpeoplesemployment@acu.edu.au.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	19th November 2026
Review Date	19th November 2031
Approval Authority	Governance Officer
Approval Date	19th November 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
Responsible Manager	Kelly Roberts Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment
Enquiries Contact	Kelly Roberts Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment --- People and Capability