WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY

CHANCELLOR'S
INDIGENOUS
POSTDOCTORAL
RESEARCH FELLOW

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Dharawal, Gadigal, Gundungurra and Wiradjuri peoples and thanks them for their support of its work in their lands (Greater Western Sydney and beyond).

PREAMBLE

Western Sydney University's (WSU) vision is not only to promote Indigenous Acceleration across all levels of the university (WESTERN, 2030), but also through the Division of the Deputy Vice-Chanceller Indigenous Leadership (DDVC-IL) and the Indigenous Strategy 2026-2030 to "...lead the nation in Indigenous excellence enabling Indigenous students, staff, and communities to thrive. We will embed Indigenous leadership, knowledge, and perspectives at the heart of education and society, through genuine partnerships and truth-telling" (p. 3).

In tandem with the university's Indigenous Research Strategy 2024–2028: Sharing Knowledges in Good Spirit a key element of this vision is to ensure that both internal and external Indigenous PhD, DCA, and equivalent candidates have the opportunity within this university to advance their research careers. The Chancellor's Indigenous Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Scheme has been established to recruit an Indigenous scholar for a fixed-term three-year Level B (FTE 1.0) position.

The Fellowship aims to:
→ Build the research capacity of an Indigenous Early Career Researcher (ECR) who has completed their PhD within the last five years, or recently had their PhD submitted and conferred.
→ Ensure the Indigenous candidate's research directions aligns with, and are supported by, the Strategic Objective 3: Indigenous Research of the Indigenous Strategy 2026-2030 and/or Priority 5: Driving Research and Innovation of WESTERN 2030, and the Faculty/School, and/or Institute they will be situated within.
→ Empower the candidate to mentor and supervise Indigenous and non-Indigenous postgraduate research candidates by the end of their tenure.
→ Enhance the candidate's research and analytical skills to create and disseminate impacting traditional and/or non-traditional outputs.
→ Develop a research track record that allow the Indigenous ECR to compete for highly competitive external funding opportunities (e.g., ARC/NHMRC) and partnerships (e.g., industry, international).
→ Provide a pathway for the Indigenous ECR to become an Indigenous research leader.

FELLOWSHIP WORKLOAD ALLOCATION
To support the Fellow's research focus while also building academic capability and engagement, the workload for the Chancellor's Indigenous Postdoctoral Research Fellow will be:
→ 80% Research
→ 10% Teaching (primarily HDR supervision and occasional guest lectures)
→ 10% Governance and Engagement
This ensures strong research development while providing opportunities to gain broader academic experience.

For the purposes of simplicity, a PhD will refer to all equivalent level research studies from this point on.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

For four straight years (2021-2025), WSU has been the number one ranked university across the international Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) measured within the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

These rankings examine over 1500 universities around the world and assess their research, teaching, and general operational activities in relation to key social and environmental goals (e.g., sustainable water and management, addressing poverty and hunger, inequalities in education).

The ongoing strength of WSU's results within these rankings is, in part, a testament to the university's dedication to not only developing quality researchers across a range of disciplines, but to ensure that the university is a cultural and gender safe environment for the researchers, and the communities they may engage with, to work within.

WSU has strategically committed to supporting all levels of development for Indigenous scholars. This includes diverse pathways and support into the Higher Degree Research space (e.g., the Yarramundi Post-Graduate Research Scholarship), identified Indigenous ECR awards, key identified Indigenous leadership positions within and across university divisions, faculties and institutes (e.g., Associate Deans Indigenous, Director of Indigenous Research), a wide range of Indigenous representation across key governance bodies (e.g., Academic Senate), and senior Indigenous leadership (e.g., DVC-Indigenous Leadership, PVC-Indigenous Education).

In addition, the university has committed to multiple Indigenous Strategies (with Indigenous Advancement imbedded within policies) that further empower Indigenous research and teaching at the university (e.g., Indigenous Strategy 2026-2030, Indigenous Research Strategy 2024–2028: Sharing Knowledges in Good Spirit, Indigenous Futures Decadal Strategy 2023-2032).

With the development and building of the Indigenous Centre of Excellence, which will house a state of the art Indigenous Research Institute) by 2028, and the ongoing support of the Division of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, Western Sydney University is well positioned to build the next generation of Indigenous researchers in a range of disciplines.

RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT

WSU has introduced a sector-leading researcher development program, beginning with HDR candidates and extending to expert researchers, guided by its bespoke Researcher Development Framework. This framework structures training, resources, and initiatives across the university, supported by phased Capability Statements including self-assessment and planning tools.

Indigenous researchers thrive at WSU within a vibrant ecosystem of dedicated initiatives, including strategic leadership from the Director of Indigenous Research, an annual Indigenous writing retreat, high-profile professoriate lectures, and a flagship Indigenous research symposium.

Our Indigenous-led research agenda is firmly grounded in Indigenous knowledges and driven by a commitment to meaningful, community-owned change. This work is powered by a rapidly expanding cohort of emerging and established Indigenous scholars.

The University's investment in Indigenous research excellence is reflected in a strong and growing pipeline of higher-degree research candidates. Recent years have delivered record achievements, including the graduation of four Indigenous PhD scholars in 2025—the highest annual number in the University's history. Our senior Indigenous researchers bring outstanding research track records and a proven ability to mentor, develop, and elevate the next generation of Indigenous academics.

PROJECT FUNDING

Schools, faculties or institutes should provide project funding (this excludes the salary for the Postdoctoral Research Fellow which will be covered by the Scheme). A detailed annual budget outlining and justifying research funds must be submitted with the research proposal. Items in the budget should be essential to the project and consistent with the research being proposed. Eligible expenses could include salaries (for example for research assistants), conference travel, small equipment and consumables. The budget should be developed in collaboration with the project supervisor, who will need to approve the outlined budget.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

A project proposal of no more than 8-10 pages is required. The project proposal should include the following:
→ Project background and context
→ Project aims
→ Anticipated outcomes and research outputs
→ Significance of the research and innovation
→ Methodology
→ Benefit to WSU and Disciplinary Field
→ Contribution to Indigenous Community where relevant (the Fellowship is available for Indigenous researchers undertaking Indigenous research or more general topics)
→ Timeline
→ Budget

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

CV
up to 5 pages

PROSPECTIVE SUPERVISOR AND RESEARCH AREA LETTER OF SUPPORT
A letter of support from the Prospective supervisor, outlining the following, is a requirement of the Fellowship:
→ Why the candidate is suitable for the post-doctoral position.
→ How the proposed Fellowship Project and its outcomes will contribute to building research capacity in areas relevant to the Centre, Institute or Faculty.
→ The availability of infrastructure, facilities or equipment which will be required for the successful completion of the proposed project, and whether these are currently available or plan to access external facilities.

→ The Supervisor's experience mentoring and supporting researcher development.
→ What resources, including funds, that will be available to the candidate for project costs.

LETTER CONFIRMING PROJECT FUNDING SIGNED BY THE SCHOOL DEAN OR INSTITUTE DIRECTOR
→ What funding will be available to the candidate for project costs.

APPLICANT CHECKLIST FOR FELLOWSHIP POSITION

Applicants will need to address the selection criteria and develop a detailed project proposal, with the support of a WSU project supervisor.

1. CONFIRM ELIGIBILITY

☐ I am an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person (as per Section 14(d) NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977).

☐ I hold a PhD or have submitted my thesis.

☐ I meet the required research experience and skills outlined in the job ad.

☐ CV (5 pages or less)

☐ Project Proposal (8-10 pages or less)
See checklist 2 'Prepare Project Proposal' for more details

☐ Letter of Support from Prospective Supervisor.

☐ Letter confirming funding for the research project provided by School Dean or Institute Director.

2. PREPARE PROJECT PROPOSAL
Below outlines what should be included in the structure of your project proposal.

☐ Project proposal background and context
☐ Aims
☐ Anticipated outcomes & research outputs
☐ Significance & innovation
☐ Methodology (including cultural and ethical considerations)
☐ Benefit to WSU & disciplinary field
☐ Contribution to Indigenous community (if relevant)
☐ Timeline
☐ Budget (itemised + justification)
See checklist 3 'Preparing Annual Budget'

3. PREPARING ANNUAL BUDGET
Below outlines what should be included the annual budget.

☐ Budget justification clearly explains necessity and alignment to project aims.

Eligible expenses considered:

☐ Salaries (e.g., RAs)
☐ Conference travel & knowledge exchange
☐ Small equipment & consumables
☐ Software/licenses & data management
☐ Community engagement costs (e.g., cultural protocols, honoraria, venue, translation)
☐ Budget developed with and approved by the Project Supervisor.
☐ Notes on leveraged funding/partnerships (if applicable).