
First Nations Australian Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Updated October 2022

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The First Nations Australian Advisory Group (the Group) has been established to provide ACARA's Board and Executive with high level advice and expertise regarding the needs of First Nations Australian students and the needs of all young Australians, in relation to ACARA's national curriculum, assessment and reporting programs.
- 1.2 These terms of reference set out the overall structure and operation of the Group.
- 1.3 The terms of reference are approved by the ACARA Board.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Group will be requested by ACARA to provide advice in relation to matters referred to in 1.1 above and specifically in relation to:
 - a) the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority in the Australian Curriculum
 - b) the protocols and cultural sensitivities that need to be taken into account by ACARA business units as ACARA proceeds with its national curriculum, assessment and reporting programs and other relevant areas
 - c) communication strategies and key groups that should receive information from ACARA
 - d) the development, implementation and evaluation of ACARA's Reconciliation Action Plans.
- 2.2 The Group will be required to:
 - a) represent the high-level views of their communities on matters discussed by the Group and provide input that includes community interests with the broader national interest
 - b) ensure as far as practicable that information relating to the work of the Group is communicated to all relevant parts of their communities, subject to any relevant considerations regarding Board and Executive deliberations.
- 2.3 The Group provides high level advice to ACARA's Board and Executive and has no delegation of authority and is not a Committee of the ACARA Board. The ACARA Board Chair may invite the Chair of the Group or his/her delegate to attend and participate in board meetings for relevant items as an observer.

3. Membership

- 3.1 The Group will comprise up to 12 persons with expertise in First Nations Australian education who are recognised by their communities as Australian First Nations Peoples:
 - a) up to three nominees of state and territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Bodies
 - b) up to three practising teachers and/or principals nominated by the education sectors and/or peak bodies
 - c) up to three senior officers responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education nominated by their state and territory education systems
 - d) up to three individuals with relevant research and other expertise invited by ACARA.
- 3.2 Ex officio members of the Group will comprise the following:
 - a) members of the ACARA Board
 - b) the ACARA CEO or his/her delegate
 - c) the ACARA Director, Curriculum or his/her delegate
 - d) the ACARA Curriculum Specialist, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures (as executive officer).
- 3.3 Only members of the Group and invited ACARA officers can attend or participate in any meetings.
- 3.4 Observers may be invited to attend at the discretion of the Chair.
- 3.5 External expertise may be called upon to assist in the work of the Group by invitation from the Chair.
- 3.6 Formal mechanisms will be developed by the Group to guide members in consulting with a broader constituency group.
- 3.7 Before accepting the position, nominees must declare formally, in writing, to ACARA any potential conflicts of interest (financial, material or partiality) directly relating to the purpose of the Group and members will be asked to confirm and declare any conflict of interest at each meeting given that individuals' circumstances may change.
- 3.8 Members will be asked to provide their formal position and qualifications to be made publicly available on the ACARA website.
- 3.9 Where a conflict arises preventing the member from fulfilling their duties to the Group, or where a member is otherwise unable to appropriately fulfil their role, on advice of the Group, ACARA reserves the right to seek a replacement nominee.

4. Appointment of members

- 4.1 Membership of the Group is through invitation by the ACARA CEO, or his or her delegate.
- 4.2 The Chair will be a member of the Group, invited by the ACARA CEO in consultation with the Group.
- 4.3 Ex officio members are members only for as long as they hold their substantive role.
- 4.4 A member may resign from the Group at any time via a letter to the Chair, or in the event that the Chair resigns, via a letter to the ACARA CEO.
- 4.5 Membership will be reviewed every two years in line with the review of the Terms of Reference of the Group.

5. Meetings

- 5.1 The Group will meet at least three times a year.
- 5.2 If a member is unable to attend a meeting for any reason, then apologies should be sent as soon as practicable.
- 5.3 Should a member be absent for two consecutive meetings without apologies having been given, the Chair will initiate a discussion with the member about ongoing membership of the Group.
- 5.4 Meetings of the Group will be held at the ACARA Sydney office or via tele/video conference or another venue as agreed.
- 5.5 Through negotiation with the Chair, proxies for members may be nominated where a member cannot attend to ensure representation of the relevant community at the meeting (either teleconference or face-to-face meetings). It is desirable that a proxy is identified in advance for this purpose so that proxies attending meetings have some familiarity with the Group's remit.
- 5.6 Costs associated with attendance at these meetings may be covered by ACARA's travel policy for some members. Members will be advised if they are eligible for coverage under this policy.

6. Administration

- 6.1 ACARA's Curriculum team will be responsible for:
 - a) the provision of secretariat services to the Group and will act as the primary point for communication between members and ACARA.
 - b) the review of the Terms of Reference for the Group every two years or earlier if requested by the ACARA Board or CEO.

7. Guiding Principles

7.1 Members agree to:

- a) maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information or data considered by the Group unless otherwise agreed to by the Chair
- b) not make public comment on behalf of the Group or ACARA.