Indigenous Student Success Program 2021 Performance Report

Organisation	Murdoch University						
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1. Enrolments (Access)

Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre has various strategies and programs to improve access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to university across all levels.

School Engagement and Pipeline Programs

During 2021, the Centre's school relationships officer continued to strengthen relationships between local secondary schools working in collaboration with the University's outreach team. This program is designed to help Indigenous students break down barriers they are facing in education and their community. School engagement activities conducted during the year include workshops, on and off campus visits. Our Deadly Dreaming event, held on campus, brought together students from local schools for a full day program held across two days. These programs funded through university funding, increase participation rates and provide student experience in a university setting.

The Centre works with the university's Future Students Engagement team and has partnered with Madalah Limited, a not-for-profit organisation that works with Indigenous students from remote and regional communities to promote access to Higher education.

K-Track Enabling Program

The ISSP-funded K-Track Enabling Program, delivered by Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre, is a fee-free course over 14-weeks full time (or 28 weeks part time), is designed to give students the skills and attributes they need to study an undergraduate course at Murdoch University. Embedded in this ISSP strategy is a 4-week Summer and Winter program conducted by the Centre for students who have successfully completed K-Track. This bridging unit further strengthens and prepares the student for undergraduate studies. One of the success strategies for this unit works to increase success by creating a smoother transition into their undergraduate degrees.

Another key success strategy for the K-Track program is the delivery of the K-Track Mentor Program. Each enabling student receives one-to-one mentoring support through the semester. Wherever possible, these mentors are program graduates themselves, ensuring that they can provide students with intimate knowledge of the program and their own success strategies. This role modelling, skill-sharing and network building provides vital support for enabling students and significantly improves the retention and success rates in enabling. In 2021, 320 hours were delivered in total.

All K-Track students are offered a PTA Smart Rider at the start of the semester to assist with travel costs to and from the University. (ISSP funded)

K-Track Recruitment

In response to COVID-19, in 2021 Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre participated in several virtual open days hosted by Murdoch University. These open days complemented our standard approach to K-Track recruitment, which also includes hosting 4 K-Track Open Days, and 1-1 appointments. Our digital recruitment drive includes advertising on our website and across social media platforms. We maintain a presence in, and connection with, our community by attending various events throughout the year and investing our time and knowledge into community-based projects.

K-Track Financial Support

All students enrolled in K-Track enabling program are awarded an Education Scholarship (under the Kulbardi Student Success Scholarship scheme) fully *funded by ISSP*. Financial support is the key indicator of success for our student cohort.

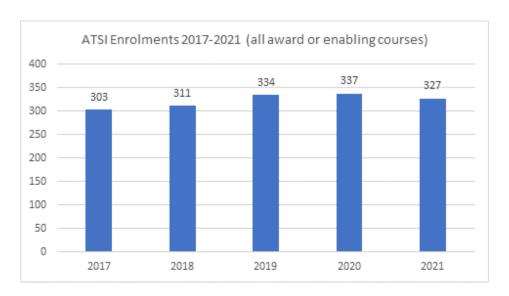
To foster academic achievement and personal initiative, K-Track Commitment prize is awarded to a student who displays commitment and involvement within the Kulbardi Centre community. \$500 prize *funded by ISSP*.

K-Track iHealth prize is awarded to a student with high achievement in the 'iHealth' unit. \$400 prize funded by WA Department of Health. In 2021, 2 K-Track students were awarded these prizes.

For 2021, 12 students successfully completed K-Track and transitioned to undergraduate studies at Murdoch University.

Commencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

	2019	2020	2021
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	134	139	126
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Domestic students only)	5,992	6,320	5,292
Total onshore domestic commencing students	6,126	6,459	5,418



Kulbardi Student Success Scholarships cover costs for Education, Accommodation, Childcare assistance and laptop prize. These scholarships are widely promoted by the Centre (ISSP funded). These scholarships along with other scholarships available through the University encourage and promote academic achievement (University, Donors, NTEU combined funding).

Table 1 ISSP Scholarships – breakdown of 2021 payments¹

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Childcare		Reward (Laptop)		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No (of students)
Enabling	\$27,500	29	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$27,500	29
Undergrad uate	\$51,000	45	\$31,000	27	\$7,500	7	\$18,608	14	\$108,108	58
Post- graduate	\$1,000	1	\$2,500	2	\$0	0	0	0	\$3,500	2
Total	\$79,500	75	\$33,500	29	\$7,500	7	\$18,608	14	\$139,108	89

Kulbardi Student Ambassador Program

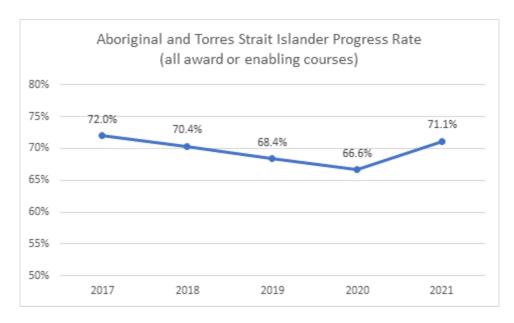
The SSAF-funded Kulbardi Student Ambassador Program aims to develop the personal and professional skills of current students, whilst providing them an opportunity to give back to their community through their engagement with the Kulbardi School Workshop Program.

The Kulbardi Student ambassadors are great role models and are an important part of school engagement, community events, Open days and Orientation days at Murdoch University.

All students of good engagement and progression are invited to apply for an ambassador role within the centre, and it is an effective way of fostering a sense of belonging to the Centre as a community, increasing retention and success rates.

2. Progression (outcomes)

Strategies implemented in 2021 delivered a progress rate of 71%



Kulbardi Student Success Advisors work closely with Centre staff and University support services to provide a whole of university approach to improving retention and progress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Centre provides financial hardship assistance on case-to-case basis to cover urgent financial need. (combined ISSP and Donor funding)

Kulbardi Online Hub

In 2021, various strategies to manage the challenges of Covid -19 were implemented. The Kulbardi Online Hub (KOH) was created, which is an online portal which enables the Student Success Advisors to connect with the students for ongoing academic support, important updates and health & wellbeing resources. Students appreciated the timely information, and it is a great virtual space to connect with the Centre, opportunities and peers. Students were supported in their online learning with IT equipment support as part of the wider University response. Additional contact made with students during this time to keep the communication ongoing. The university's Peer Academic Coaches (PAC) provide a 20-minute free on-campus personalised session, offering students an understanding of different assignment structures and academic tips to help them succeed.

During the onset of COVID-19 lockdowns, and to maintain a sense of community, the Kulbardi Online Hub (KOH) was created within 7 days of the campus closures. The KOH was a digital portal encompassing all the services we offer at Kulbardi - including a virtual tour of the centre, scholarship and tutorial information and application forms, online resources for studying at home, and links to internal and external mental health and emergency support. Every Kulbardi staff member had a profile and revised contact information so they could be easily accessed whilst working-from-home. The KOH offered virtual teaching and support rooms where students could meet their ITAS tutor (a tutor that is provided through the Government Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme) or support staff for private one-to-one sessions, just as they accessed on campus.

We also used the KOH to facilitate weekly Kulbardi Coffee Catch Ups, allowing students and staff to chat informally over a coffee or tea, replicating the experience of the Kulbardi kitchen, which is a popular campus space where students and staff 'hang out' in an informal sense, building a strong sense of community and belonging. Since it's conception, KOH has had over 900 visits to the site from staff and students, both internal and external. Once campus reopened, engagement in KOH continued and increased by 70% from 2020 to 2021. One comment received within our student experience survey stated "it was hard trying to replace face to face support with online support but the Ngoolark [The Student Success Team] staff pulled it off. I felt supported the whole semester even with everything going on in the world."

Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre

Student Resources are available at the Centre with the computer lab open 24x7, Indigenous Student Hub space for study sessions and kitchen facilities well stocked, should students need to use them. Included in the Covid-19 response from Murdoch University, students were able to access IT equipment to keep them connected with ongoing academic support and online lectures.

Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS)

The Centre employs tutors under the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) to provide supplementary academic coaching and students are strongly encouraged to utilise the benefits of one-to-one tutoring. ITAS is an important academic support program contributing directly to student retention and success.

In 2021, a total of 3452 hours of tutorial support was delivered. (ISSP fully funded)

Student Success Working Group (SSWG)

Student Success Working Group (SSWG), comprising of key student-facing staff have weekly meetings to discuss success and retention strategies, case management and ITAS interactions. Necessary support structure plans are made for those students who are flagged through this working group. Timely intervention by the SSWG has helped identify students early in the semester and allowed for a good evaluation of the measures undertaking across support structures. Student cohort is case managed and interactions and follow up plans are recording on the University's student services software 'RightNow".

Ngoolark Unit (see section 4 for more information)

Ngoolark learning support unit delivered by Kulbardi Centre provides a tailored learning experience for Indigenous students enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Business or Bachelor of Nursing. Students are invited to workshops where there is In 2021, 33 students with load enrolled in Ngoolark, progress for units taken was 63.6%. (ISSP funded)

TAPS Data (see section 4 for more information)

Pastoral, Academic Learning, Transition and Support needs (PATS set of questions). Qualitative data collected from informal conversation or catch-up meetings with Student Success assists staff to get a better understanding of overall student progress and wellbeing.

Orientation Day

Orientation Days are run within the university's O-week program, Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre also conducts a dedicated day for all commencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across all disciplines and study levels. It is widely advertised to encourage maximum student participation and students who attend go into a draw to win an iPad / Gift cards.

Celebrating Success

The Student Success Wall is an effective tool to display their achievement and create a positive mindset leading to other students aspiring to reach greater heights in their study or career goals. Outreach tools are used effectively to connect with students via social media and work to tell a success narrative, whilst also sharing helpful tips and services. We also facilitate other forms of online support as standard, such as the Kulbardi Student Support Facebook page, direct phone calls, emails and face to face meetings.

Industry Partnerships

Industry partnerships, Local and State Govt agencies provide many opportunities for Cadetships and graduate placement. During 2021, several information sessions were held at Kulbardi Centre where students had to opportunity to meet representatives from Woodside, PTA, Allen & Overy, BNTAC Aboriginal Trust, Career Trackers, Mainroads (online event). Students enrolled in Law and Health related courses at Murdoch secured fellowships and graduate placements through King & Wood Mallesons Waiwa Mudena Fellowship and WA Health Graduate placements. These programs directly contribute to employability and students can take advantage of working directly with highly skilled professionals and learn valuable life skills.

Events On Campus

In 2021 several events were held on campus to provide an opportunity for staff, students and wider community to connect, provide support and community engagement; NAIDOC @Murdoch, Alumni after dark, Walk for reconciliation at Murdoch University, RUOK Day (combined ISSP and university funding).

Professional Development and Cultural Awareness Training

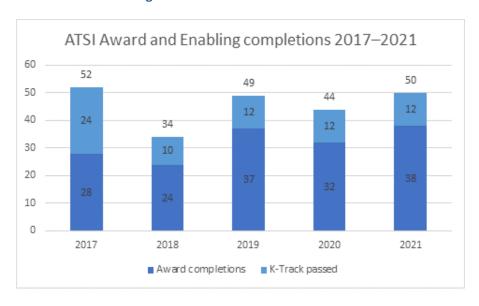
Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training Beyond Black and White, delivered by Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre is a face-to-face training that reflects on Culture, race, and bias. The online "Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Awareness and Workplace Inclusion" led by the University's People and Culture office continues to improve awareness and create an inclusive workplace. Completion of this training is now included in University Leadership's KPIs for Senior Executive Group (SEG) and University Leadership Group (ULG). This training is also available to the student cohort.

Table 2 Tutorial assistance provided in 2021

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted ²	Total number of tutorial sessions attended ³	Total hours of assistance ⁴	Expenditure⁵(\$)
Enabling	29	300	320	
Undergraduate	112	3360	3452	
Post graduate	2	28	56	
Other				
Total				198,209.91

3. Completions (outcomes)

 Table 3
 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Award and Enabling Completions



Through the challenges and restrictions of Covid 19, Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre staff continued to maintain a high level of support for all students. The Student Success Team maintained one to one contact with students who needed additional support for learning.

See Section 2 for all strategies delivered during this time.

4. Regional and remote students

4.1. Regional and Remote EFTSL

ATSI Load	2019	2020	2021
Regional	33.917	32.375	30.458
Remote	13.625	12.958	12.125
Urban	169.667	173.917	157.917
Total	217.208	219.250	200.500

Kulbardi Student Success Scholarships are widely promoted and offered/awarded to all regional and remote students. The student success team provide information and assistance with accommodation within the University's on campus Student Village and maintain contact with the campus accommodation staff to provide any support as needed during their stay. Information regarding off campus accommodation availability is also given through Murdoch Student Guild.

Regional and Remote students were priortised with below targeted support and activities

Ngoolark Online

One of the most successful student success initiatives in Kulbardi is the Ngoolark unit. Ngoolark (unit code KAC101) is an undergraduate enabling unit that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can enrol in, where they are assigned a mentor who provides one-to-one coaching sessions to develop extra-curricular skills that are fundamental to university learning. Ngoolark also mandates appropriate use of student-relevant university support services, such as ITAS tutoring, Equity, Health and Counselling, PAC and PASS etc. Our priority was to maintain a consistent Ngoolark experience, so we set up a Blackboard Collaborate space for weekly study workshops, meeting with ITAS tutor and our usual one-on-one mentoring sessions. The efficacy of this unit normally relies on formal face-to-face weekly check ins and informal student drop-ins to chat with their coach.

To recreate this open and timely relationship between students and their Ngoolark coach, the Student Success Team sent daily text messages with wellbeing scales, allowing students to reply with how they are feeling and if they needed anything. Of the 30 students enrolled in Ngoolark in S1 2020, 12 were counselled to postpone their studies and withdraw before census because their personal and/or home situations were not appropriate for effective study. 64% of the remaining students were successful in their other enrolled units. Each semester we run a Ngoolark survey as part of the assessment requirements and after lockdown, we asked students if there was anything else Ngoolark could do to improve their experience. We received the following responses:

- "Nooglark is great in the support, well done Teri and Ash:) The support Kulbardi provides is a life saver, just simply knowing kulbardi is there to be accessed was enough for me"
- "Ngoolark...gives massive amount of support to us students. I cannot think of a way to improve. I really like the idea of constant txt messages if it was not for that I wouldn't have thought about Ngoolark for support when I needed. As I said above, just knowing the support is there is awesome.
- "I have enjoyed every moment, just knowing that someone is there ready to send a message and that I have a tutor who is always there when I need help with my studies, or I am starting to get overwhelmed. I will be doing Ngoolark next semester."

Transition, Academic, Pastoral Support (TAPS)

After the lockdown announcement, the Student Success Team and Kulbardi staff brainstormed our most at-risk complications. As Kulbardi is a place of connection, we needed to ensure students were, firstly, safe; secondly, mentally, and physically well, and thirdly, kept informed of the rapidly evolving university decisions regarding student learning and support.

To achieve this, we implemented the TAPS outreach program for student check-ins that covers the following:

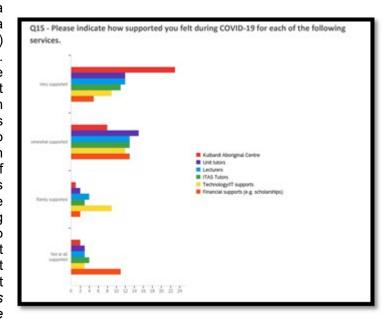
Transition- how are you finding the transition to online study? Have you got enough resources? **Academic-** have you accessed your lectures/tutorials etc. How are your assignments coming along?

Pastoral- how are you going? How are you feeling around the COVID situation? **Support-** what can we do to support you?

COVID-19 Response

As the university shut down put on-campus students in an 'at risk' situation, because they were unaccustomed to online study, and online students were likely to be experiencing additional anxieties due to the pandemic, we decided to perform TAPS outreach for every single Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolled at Murdoch. To achieve this, the Student Success Team recruited all Kulbardi staff to take on some success work, giving each a list of students to follow up

every week during lockdown, via email, phone, or social media (Kulbardi Facebook page) depending on student preference. These TAPS check ins were intentional conversations covered a holistic overview of each student's specific learning needs wellbeing, and week week. Through TAPS, we were in regular contact with 60% Murdoch's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort over the duration of the lockdown, enabling us in the student success team to offer timely and appropriate support for each individual. One student stated in our 2020 Kulbardi Student Experience survey, "Everything has been very touch and go with the



recent pandemic keeping everyone at home but they [Kulbardi] have been very supportive and have kept me from dropping out on multiple occasions."

As indicated in the graph, Indigenous students felt more supported by Kulbardi Aboriginal centre, than any of the other university services available during this time.

Access was restricted due to Covid and so we needed to minimise the impact of this on the students. We regularly checked-in with students, provided academic support and non-academic support to all current students.

The diversity of needs changed from being solely academic to a more holistic approach. This included pastoral care, financial aid, personal/emotional support and also mental health support. We recruited multiple departments within the university to assist, including the counselling team and access team.

4.2. Table 4 ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students⁶

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Childcare		Reward (Laptop)		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2020 Payments	\$13,650	13	\$14,700	14	\$0	0	\$1,600	1	\$29,500	19
B. 2021 Offers ¹	\$16,000	14	\$12,000	10	\$0	0	\$6,500	5	\$34,500	29
C. Percentage (C=B/A*10 0)									116.95%	
2021 Payments	\$16,000	14	\$12,000	10	\$0	0	\$6,500	5	\$34,500	29

5. Eligibility criteria

5.1. Indigenous Education Strategy

Murdoch University's Reconciliation Action Plan, The Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander Workforce Strategy and The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student and Education Strategy forms the University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander commitment.

Education Strategy and the RAP can be accessed here <u>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</u> Commitment (murdoch.edu.au). Consultation has begun on the development of the new strategy.

Murdoch University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student's and Education strategy was refreshed in 2018. Endorsed by the University's Education Committee in 2018, this institutional strategy has provided the university with a coordinated approach to improving education outcomes for Indigenous students. As the strategy is due to come to end in 2021 a new strategy is being developed due to be rolled out in 2022.

Including, but not limited to:

- A broader focus on developing stronger relationships with secondary schools to break down the barriers associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students graduating high school.
- A focus on bringing more Aboriginal students on campus to raise their aspirations to coming to university
- A more coordinated approach to enabling success of undergraduate students
- Research focused success strategies
- A broader focus on graduate outcomes of students.
- Working more collaboratively with colleges to continually reflect on how Indigenous content is including Indigenous knowledges in the curriculum.

5.2. Indigenous Workforce Strategy

Murdoch University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy was launched in 2019 The Employment Strategy can be found here available to access by all staff, students, and the public. A review of the strategy was delivered in October 2021 and has provided crucial insights for creation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2022-2025. A number of full-time s.50d (EEO) roles have been created with further increases projected in 2022. Despite the challenges faced during the pandemic there has been a modest increase in the number of Indigenous staff working at Murdoch University overall from 1.04% in 2019 to 1.30% in 2021. The new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2022-2025 is underway in process with consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, community and other stakeholders.

Following on from Murdoch University's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2019-2021 the next RAP's development is underway 2022-2025. The next RAP will be the university's 3rd consecutive Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and will aim to consolidate and build upon achievements from the previous RAP plan.

The Pro Vice Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership (PVC Aboriginal Leadership) position was established in line with ISSP Guidelines with Ms Chanelle van den Berg in this position since November 2021. The appointment of this position is an ongoing commitment by the University and is included in the Employment Strategy. An important step in representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was taken in 2021 with the PVC (Aboriginal leadership) included in the University's Senior Executive Group (SEG). The membership at the senior executive level is in line with the University's commitment to building a culture that values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion and delivers on a key action item from the Employment Strategy 2019-2021. The Equity & Cultural Liaison role in the People and Culture Office continued to develop in 2021 as the Employment Strategy matured. In addition to providing pastoral care, this role has become crucial in maintaining community relationships and advising on strategic actions through the Indigenous lens.

In consultation with community and key stakeholders, planning is underway to scope and deliver a unique culturally informed Social and Emotional Wellbeing support framework to support the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and university community.

Generally, the milestones outlined in the Employment Strategy 2019-2021 have been achieved with approx.80% of the action plan items either completed or commenced. The University has maintained the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at 1% and whilst we acknowledge the challenges in achieving the 3% target, our activities in 2021 represent Murdoch's continued commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.

5.3. Table 5.2 Indigenous workforce data (2021 breakdown)

Level/position	Pern	nanent	Casual/contract/fixed-term			
	Academic	Non-academic	Academic	Non-academic		
Exec			1	1		
Level A	1					
Level B	3					
Level C						
Level E						
HEW 1 - 5		11		4		
HEW 5 - 8		3		11		
Subtotal	4	14	1	16		
Total				35		

5.4. Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Strategy Committee (ATSIESC) is Murdoch University's Indigenous governance mechanism and is a subordinate committee of the University's Education Committee. Majority of its members are Indigenous with relevant skills and experience. The Pro Vice Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership is the Chair of this committee. ATSIESC also had Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and student representation. IN 2021, ATSIESC was scheduled to meet four times. However due to the University undertaking an academic governance renewal process, it met twice.

Items discussed by ATSIESC included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success rates; implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students and Education Strategy; reporting on K-Track enabling program, and organization of the National Indigenous Business School WA 2022, hosted by Murdoch in January 2022.

The ATSIESC Terms of Reference can be accessed at <u>Academic Council Statement of Governance Principles v.30 (policytech.com)</u>

The Pro Vice Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership is a member of Academic Council. The University's Senate has Indigenous representation. Indigenous representation is included on other committees that report to Academic Council, including Education Committee and Research Committee.

5.5. Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

At its 26 May 2022 meeting, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy Committee resolved the following:

Resolved: to APPROVE the Indigenous Student Success Program 2021

ATSIESC/05/2022 to APPROVE the Indigenous Student Success Program 2021

Performance Report and accompanying 2021 financial acquittal

report.

Chanelle Van Den Berg PVC (Aboriginal Leadership)

6. Additional information for completing the template

This figures provide for the total number of students receiving scholarships and expenditure for those scholarships. For the student count, in cases where a student receives more than one scholarship, the student would only be counted once in the total (consequently the total figure may not be the sum of the preceding columns). For the expenditure, the total should be the total of the preceding expenditure columns.

¹ This information provides for the number of students and cost of the scholarships expended in 2021. The figures for students should include the actual number (head count, not the EFTSL). Scholarship figures (head count and costs) should include the university award scholarships from the flexible finding pool as well as any preserved scholarships. Only payments made during 2021 should be included in this table. For multi-year scholarship agreements, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded in the performance reporting for the relevant future grant year.

²Total number of unique students supported by tutorial assistance (if students have attended multiple tutorial sessions, still count them as 1 student).

³Record total number of tutorial sessions attended by students (each class a student attends counts as 1, the same student may attend multiple tutorial sessions throughout the year).

⁴ Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time).

⁵ Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.

⁶ Only record amounts which required payment during the 2021 calendar year. For multi-year scholarship offers, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded against the reporting for the relevant future grant year. Note the data in this table is a subset of the scholarship data provided in Table 1.