

OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT

Abstudy

Abstudy is the Aboriginal Study Assistance Scheme delivered by Centrelink. To receive Abstudy you must be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person and studying an approved program (such as a university course). Abstudy is means tested, so you can only receive it if you have earnings and assets valued at under a certain amount.

Abstudy mainly consists of a fortnightly **Living Allowance** as well as an **Incidentals Allowance**. Living Allowance is an income support payment for full-time students. The amount of your payment varies depending on whether ABSTUDY considers you to be a dependant or independent student. Incidentals Allowance helps you to pay for books and student union fees and other costs associated with undertaking your education or training.

Students on Abstudy may also be eligible to receive **Rent Assistance** to help with the cost of accommodation when studying, and **Fares Allowance** if you are living away from home to undertake their studies. Students receiving Abstudy may also be eligible for a **Low Income Health Care Card, Remote Area Allowance, and/or Pharmaceutical Allowance**.

Contact Centrelink for details.

University Indigenous Support Centres

These centres help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access university study. They provide support to students so that university doesn't seem like such a scary place. They provide support for students such as:

- A study environment with computers, a library, and often a librarian who can help you to locate materials for academic work
- Student Support Officers to help with academic and personal concerns and offer advice on university issues
- Activities (such as sports and barbeques) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- These centres usually also administer the Commonwealth Government's Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS)

These centres usually also teach the Aboriginal Studies courses that the university offers, and administer the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alternative entry programs and non-award courses (like bridging programs) as well as Indigenous Student Orientation Programs and Indigenous student mentoring programs.

As well as providing assistance to students these centres also advance knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, develop links with community, are involved in research, and promote Indigenous staff employment and development within the University.

Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS)

ITAS stands for the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme. It is funded by the Commonwealth Government and administered by universities, usually through the University's Indigenous support centre. All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander undergraduate students should be entitled to a certain amount of tutoring under the scheme. This includes both undergraduate and graduate-entry medical students. The service is provided free to Indigenous students at the University and should be available at all universities in Australia, although some universities might utilise and support the scheme more than others.

Many students have had great success with ITAS, although it does involve a lot of paperwork and can take time to organise. Access to ITAS is also heavily dependent on the availability of appropriate tutors in your area.

Details can be found here:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/publications_resources/profiles/aboriginal_tutorial_assistance_scheme_guide.htm

Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA)

AIDA provides collegiate support and professional development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors and medical students and supports Indigenous Australians interested in pursuing a career in medicine.

Ph: 1800 190 498

Email: aida@aida.org.au

Web: www.aida.org.au

Open Days

Most universities have open days where you can tour the campus. Different faculties, centres and courses within the university usually have staffs where you can go to get information and ask questions.

Some medical faculties have information nights where they discuss the medical course they offer and give you an opportunity to visit the school, meet the staff and ask questions.

Some schools do university visits and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can also visit the Indigenous support centres for information specific to you.

Contact the medical faculty at the university you are interested in to find out if they hold information session and when they will be. You may need to book a place.