



Policy for use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ceremonial Sashes

The RACGP Ceremonial Gown was re-designed in 2012, to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork into the gown. A new accompanying sash for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander general practitioners was also created.

Becoming a Fellow of the RACGP is an extremely important occasion, and it is particularly significant for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.




Members and Fellows of the RACGP who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander may choose to wear an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander sash with their RACGP ceremonial gown.

1. Gifting of sashes to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander RACGP Fellows

RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health provides a gift of one ceremonial sash to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Fellows to wear with the College gown, to recognise and celebrate their achievements.

The cost of each sash (currently \$140.00) is drawn from the RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health budget. Only one sash is provided to each Fellow. If a replacement sash is required, it must be at the Fellow's own cost.

The artwork on the sash was developed by Gilimbaa to be worn with the RACGP ceremonial gown. Three different sash options are available, with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Fellows to nominate one option:

Sash	Colour	Worn by
	Aboriginal sash: brown/red/yellow design	Those who identify as Aboriginal
	Torres Strait Islander sash: blue/green design	Those who identify as Torres Strait Islander
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sash: brown/red/yellow design on one side and blue/green design on other side	Those who identify as both Aboriginal and as Torres Strait Islander

2. Who else is entitled to a sash?

Sashes have been provided to Fellows who graduated prior to the introduction of the sashes, and also to Honorary members.



3. When can the gown and sash be worn?

Members and Fellows of the RACGP who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander may choose to wear an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander sash with their RACGP ceremonial gown.

RACGP ceremonial gowns can be worn at:

- College Fellowship Ceremonies
- At a ceremony of another College at which a member is representing the College
- Official activities of the RACGP
- Academic ceremonies of other educational institutions, particularly other medical colleges
- Official government or vice-regal ceremonies

Sashes are only to be worn in conjunction with the RACGP gown at the events listed above.

4. What are the roles and responsibilities associated with the sashes?

RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health are responsible for overseeing the policy and procedures for use of the sashes, purchase of the sashes and to maintain communication with state faculties regarding their usage.

Sashes are stored at the Melbourne office, with RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health staff.

RACGP State Faculties will:

- inform graduates who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander that they may choose to wear an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander sash with their RACGP ceremonial gown at the Fellowship ceremony.
- invite Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander graduates to notify them of their wish to wear a sash in sufficient time for sashes to be ordered from RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

RACGP State Faculties can refer to the Appendices for further information: *Procedure to obtain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Sashes for RACGP Fellowship ceremonies* and *Frequently asked questions about gifting and use of RACGP Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ceremonial sashes*.



Appendix 1: Procedure to obtain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Sashes for RACGP Fellowship ceremonies

** This document is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying Policy and Frequently Asked Questions.*

As an RACGP state faculty staff member, how do I arrange to receive these sashes?

- (a) When a fellowship ceremony is approaching, in your ceremony registration correspondence, include context regarding the ceremonial gown and sash, and provide graduates with an opportunity to request a sash for the ceremony.

You can access background and wording from the RACGP website: <https://www.racgp.org.au/the-racgp/about-us/ceremonial-gown>

- (b) Upon confirmation, further enquiries can be made with that member to ascertain which of the three sashes they would like to wear at the Fellowship ceremony.
- (c) Email request to aboriginalhealthunit@racgp.org.au stating the number of each sash required for the upcoming Fellowship ceremony.
- (d) Allow at least two weeks for sashes to be delivered to the Faculty Office. RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health will also include or supply postcards to provide to Fellows with the sash ([DOC/14/24687](#)).
- (e) Extra sashes can be ordered to cover those “just in case someone forgot to notify us” situations.
- (f) The sash is given as a gift to the new Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Fellow.
- (g) Any sashes not used in the Fellowship ceremony can be retained for subsequent ceremonies. Please advise RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health when sashes are gifted, so we can oversee numbers.

Please note:

- There may be people taking part in the ceremony, other than new Fellows, who will also wear the ceremonial gown. Please remember to ask if they identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and wish to wear an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander sash.
- For assistance with this procedure and any other culturally sensitive matters please contact RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health on 1800 000 251.



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Appendix 2: Frequently asked questions about gifting and use of RACGP Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ceremonial sashes

Why do Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Fellows get a free ceremonial sash?

Becoming a Fellow of the RACGP is an extremely important occasion, and it is particularly significant for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. The number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people achieving RACGP Fellowship remains small in comparison to non-Indigenous Fellows. It is something RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health would like to continually celebrate and recognise.

As Faculty staff, how do we really know if the person who has requested a sash is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

If a member ticks the box indicating they are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent and wish to obtain and wear a sash at the Fellowship ceremony, there is nothing more you need to do.

IMIS can be useful in some instances, however, we know that some data in IMIS is incorrect. Therefore, you do not need to obtain any further confirmation of identity in relation to the gifting and use of the sashes.

The number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander registrars is small, most are known to each other in their peer group, are also members of the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) and are generally known to RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

Who will keep track of the sashes given out?

RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health is keeping a spreadsheet of sashes distributed to all state faculties.

Why are there three different sash options?

Some people are Aboriginal, from the mainland of Australia, others are from the Torres Strait Islands, which are north of Australia beyond Cape York, and are a part of Australia. Others may have one Aboriginal parent and one Torres Strait Islander parent, so they identify as both. The colours found on all three sashes reflect the colours of the Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Islander flag.

Will the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Fellows know what the sash is about?

RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health will be undertaking an awareness campaign with members and staff to remind all stakeholders of the significance of the ceremonial gown and sashes to commemorate the RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health tenth anniversary in 2020.