



2024 Mission-Based Compact Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Murdoch University

Purpose

This compact is an agreement between the Commonwealth and the University. Entering into a Compact is one of the quality and accountability requirements, which a higher education provider must meet under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA) as a condition of receiving a grant. Specifically, subsection 19-110(1) of HESA requires that Table A and Table B providers must, in respect of each year for which a grant is paid to the provider under HESA, enter into a Mission-Based Compact with the Commonwealth for a period that includes that year.

All strategies should provide qualitative and/or quantitative measures of assessment.

Mission and Strategic Planning

Murdoch's legislated purpose is "the advancement of learning and knowledge, and the provision of university education", expressed through our core activities of Education, Research, and Engagement. Our Vision is "to be widely recognised as the university of choice for people who care, who value inclusion, curiosity and innovation, and who desire to make a positive social impact".

Our Purpose and Vision is put into action through Murdoch University's [Strategy 2023-2030: Building a Brighter Future, Together: Ngala Kwop Biddi](#).

Three Strategic Themes - Sustainability; Equity Diversity and Inclusion; and First Nations –flow through the strategy and characterise the distinctiveness and identity of Murdoch. Three core activities - Education, Research, and Global Engagement – are fundamental to achieving our purpose.

Murdoch is an 'international university' with campuses in Australia, Singapore, Dubai and Malaysia. We aim to provide a consistent experience across our campuses with academic staff involved in teaching and research, regardless of location.

Objectives are defined for each strategic theme and core activity, and key performance indicators are defined that provide holistic measures against which we will measure our success.

Key outcomes for 2024 are:

- Strengthen pathways to university for all students, provide relevant support and engagement to ensure students reach their full potential and succeed through to graduation.
- Support academic staff to strengthen the interdependence of their teaching and research.
- Review systems and processes to enhance responsiveness, accuracy, and user experience for staff and students. Aligned to this, develop an AI strategy that considers the implications and potential benefits for teaching, research and administration.

- Develop campus physical and digital infrastructure to enhance the experience of staff and students.

Sustainability

Murdoch aims to ensure a sustainability ethos guides all activities of the University, with a Sustainability Operational Plan being developed. Energy and waste audits have been undertaken and processes put in place to embed change across operational areas, education, research and campuses to support Sustainability. Performance is measured by net carbon emissions and waste to landfill, with public reporting under The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System.

Murdoch is a member of the [Responsible Futures International Pilot](#) that facilitates curriculum mapping and to sharing of good practices, issues and challenges in sustainability. Murdoch is a signatory to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and member of the [UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#) and a foundational member of [Climate Action Barometer for International Education](#). Outcomes are also aligned through commitments to the Nature Positive Campus, the Race to Zero Pledge, and as a member of [Australasian Campuses toward Sustainability](#).

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

EDI is a guiding principle for Murdoch and we have developed a whole-of-university [EDI sub-strategy](#) and action plan.

Advisory groups have been established representing Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, LGBTIQ+, and Disabilities and Neurodivergent communities. These groups are made up of both students and staff and offer lived-experience expertise and advice in the development of targeted initiatives for these equity cohorts.

Foreign interference

In line with Murdoch's [Foreign Interference Policy](#), training and resources are made available through the intranet to assist staff and research students in identifying foreign interference activities.

Cyber and data security

Murdoch participates in CAUDIT and as a result partners with AusCERT and AARNet, in the Australasian Higher Education Cyber Security Service (AHECS) which provides services in engagement, advocacy, advisory and support and operations.

Security technologies are employed in accordance with advice provided by the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) 'Essential 8' and a Data Breach Response Plan for Information Technology systems and data is in place.

Freedom of speech and academic freedom

[Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Regulations](#) serve to uphold freedom of speech and academic freedom as paramount values, as required under the Model Code, ensuring the management of such issues promptly, actively and in good faith.

The Regulations are above policies in the hierarchy of University legislation and prevail over any inconsistencies between them and policy/procedure/guideline documents.

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

First Nations students

Murdoch has a strategic objective to “become the university of first choice for First Nations peoples, and an exemplar in embracing and promoting and benefiting from Indigenous knowledges and cultural inclusivity”. The University acknowledges, understands and values that Indigenous knowledges and ways of learning are valuable to the broader community and in enhancing the value of university study for First Nations people. Success is measured by increasing the proportion of First Nations students at Murdoch, aiming for population parity by 2030.

Strategies and programs to achieve this objective include:

- Expanding our successful links with high schools with high proportions of First Nations students, currently 25 schools with over 600 Aboriginal students, and providing pathways to the [K Track and Ngoolark Enabling programs](#).
- The K Track Enabling Program teaches the fundamental skills for university, such as critical thinking, academic writing, basic scientific concepts, and exposure to different disciplines offered at Murdoch. The [Ngoolark Enabling](#) unit provides tailored learning support for at-risk First Nations students.
- The Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre provides support to First Nations students. The team provide administrative, academic and pastoral support through coordinated programs and services that actively support students throughout all stages of their degree, including the [Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme, and scholarships](#) to help meet student needs (providing financial support as well as helping meet additional expenses such as laptops and childcare).
- Support a self-determination agenda for First Nations students that supports students to complete their degree and go into their communities as leaders. This focus has led to a doubling of graduates since 2017.
- Support the growth of the School of Indigenous Knowledges, a multi-disciplinary school that introduces students to Indigenous Knowledge across a range of topics including health sciences, education, physical sciences, and the social sciences.
- Providing a training suite to build the cultural competency of educators and strengthen institutional cultural inclusivity.
- Support postgraduate research students through development of a data sovereignty process, providing training on culturally safe research, and supporting engagement with Indigenous communities.

Non-traditional students

Murdoch’s student population includes proportionally higher cohorts than sector averages of Low Socioeconomic Status (SES) students, students with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and first in family students. Strategically, Murdoch aims to “build a welcoming, diverse and inclusive community” in which we “deliver contemporary, accessible and inclusive education”.

Student satisfaction with their university experience and student progress provide measures of institutional performance (Institutional KPIs).

Key Priority Areas (KPAs) were identified in the [EDI sub-strategy](#) as the appropriate measure for determining our EDI maturity, development and impact. Qualitative and quantitative measures of success aligned to KPAs are defined to guide institutional actions.

Strategies and programs to achieve these objectives, linked and in addition to the programs for First Nations students, include:

- Increase access and participation of equity groups by providing [pathways](#) in addition to traditional ATAR routes. This includes a range of in-school programs ([TLC Learning for Tomorrow](#), [FlexiTrack High](#)), [intensive pre-university](#) and [bridging courses](#), and TAFE articulations.
- [Learning support](#) for students strengthen their skills to enable students to meet the academic standards of their course and maintain progress through to graduation. Programs recognise the individual needs of students from groups whose educational background and equity status has resulted in broader educational support requirements.
- Murdoch values the interdependence of the student journey, for example through development of a [mentorship model](#).

Higher Education Continuity Guarantee Equity Plan

Murdoch will submit an HECG Equity Plan to address the significant educational disadvantage in the region to the south and south-east of Perth from which the majority of Murdoch’s students are drawn. This is a region of relatively high unemployment, low educational attainment, relatively high proportion of Low SES households (low SEIFA), low preparedness for school (significant vulnerable student populations, AEDC Performance), and educational disadvantage (average secondary ICSEA score 989). A dashboard of key social statistics for the Peel Region, where Murdoch’s Mandurah Campus is located, is available through the [People of Peel](#) project.

Given our cohort mix, Murdoch is focussed on students developing ‘cultural capital’ through academic support, pastoral care and financial assistance (guided by learning analytics) to support students’ successful transition to university study.

Activities will be funded across the student journey, including:

- building the student pipeline through activities to foster awareness of career opportunities linked to university pathways;
- providing enabling programs and in-school programs to provide ATAR-alternative pathways to direct entry to university;
- student engagement, access and inclusion, and well-being activities to enhance student success; and
- learning and teaching support, particularly in the first year of study, to provide scaffolding for students with an educationally disadvantaged background.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

Murdoch will “deliver contemporary, accessible and inclusive education, with a high quality and engaging student experience, producing graduates who are adaptable and have fresh perspectives and a social conscience”. This strategic objective seeks to enhance course design and curriculum flexibility, increase opportunities for a variety of placements, and promote the student experience on campus while accommodating hybrid learning.

Implementation of these objectives is through key directions:

- Provide learning opportunities that prepare students for a changing world. In addition to core graduate knowledge, this captures a knowledge and understanding of the Strategic Themes, and competencies developed through university study in a research-led teaching environment.

- Review academic offerings through a regular cycle of comprehensive course review, in addition to student evaluation of units annually.
- Staff development to strengthen skills to provide positive support, engage students, and assess learning in an evolving academic environment. Active engagement with [Advance HE](#) provides staff support to address systemic inequalities and advance education to meet the evolving needs of students and society.
- Mandatory requirement for all students to complete an academic integrity skills unit adjacent to their first teaching period of study to ensure baseline awareness to set-up students for success.
- Promote learner engagement through a rich digital learning environment following contemporary digital learning guidelines and active monitoring of student engagement in the digital environment.
- Robust tiered learning support framework guides supports available to students
- Facilitate learning that expand learning opportunities off campus, such as WIL, professional placements, and international exchange, particularly through mobility between Murdoch's onshore and offshore campuses.

Student retention

The rate of retention at Murdoch of domestic students who have recently commenced studying towards a bachelor degree is a key institutional performance measure. Strategies to improve our retention rate include early identification of students at risk of attrition combined with effective, compassionate, and supportive options that leave dropping out as the avenue of last resort.

Murdoch has a strong framework of academic and pastoral support, with automated and reporting mechanisms to identify at-risk students. Associated policies and procedures are identified in our [Support for Students Policy](#).

Murdoch aims to increase the contact points for students and to help students to recognize when they need assistance. This latter issue is particularly relevant for international students who do not necessarily have the appropriate cultural capital. Initiatives such as the International Café bring students together in an environment focused on social and relational activities that offers social connection, information sharing, and normalising of student challenges and support seeking behaviour that strengthen engagement and retention.

Early intervention and support for At-Risk students

A variety of proactive measures are employed to bolster student success and facilitate the completion of academic units. These interventions operate at both the unit and course levels.

During each teaching period, academic teaching staff use an online reporting system to identify students deemed "at-risk", to be supported by Student Success Advisors. This system flags indicators such as poor academic performance, lack of engagement, failed assessments, and welfare concerns. Moreover, an automated IT system identifies students who display inactivity on the Learning Management System (LMS) for a consecutive two-week period, triggering further attention from Student Success Advisors.

Upon receipt of an at-risk incident report, Student Success Advisors engage directly with students via phone and email. They provide personalised pastoral care, guidance, case management, and referrals to appropriate support services tailored to the student's needs. These other services may include the following:

- [Specialist Advice](#) – Complex case management and international student specific advice
- [Peer Academic Coaches](#) – General academic support

- [Learning Advisor Consultations](#) – Intensive academic support
- [Academic support workshops](#) – General and discipline-specific academic workshops
- [Librarians](#) – General and intensive research support
- [Counselling](#) and [Medical](#) Services – Psychosocial and medical support
- [Access and Inclusion](#) – Support for physical and mental health conditions and disabilities
- [Community and Wellbeing Events](#) – Peer-to-peer engagement and wellbeing education

At the course level, academic progression is monitored through a completion rate, calculated based on successfully completed units against attempted units. This metric serves to identify students in need of additional support and as an indicator of the efficacy of interventions.

Students with completion rates falling between 62.6% and 75% receive information about available support services. Those with completion rates at or below 62.5% are required to undergo an interview with their Academic Chair to establish an Academic Performance Plan. This plan outlines recommended services and actions aimed at improving completion rates. Further reinforcement of interventions is provided through targeted campaigns led by the Student Success teams, involving personalized phone calls and case management to guide students in adhering to their Academic Performance Plans. Additionally, students with completion rates ranging from 20% to 49.9% face a mandatory suspension period of one semester/trimester or may opt to transfer to a more suitable course. Students with completion rates below 20% are ineligible to re-enrol in their course for a period of one year.

Labour market outcomes

Murdoch provides students with an education that provides graduates with skills that are valued in the community. Strategies and programs to enhance labour market outcomes include:

- Helping students explore options in courses and career paths by encouraging a mindset that is open to learning and ‘finding their passion’. Ensure that graduates have the skills to adapt to new career options as opportunities arise, including new job/career categories.
- Support workforce development through development of microcredentials and professional development to facilitate upskilling and reskilling, particularly in the Strategic Theme areas.
- An Employability Teaching Toolkit to support all academic staff in integrating (embedding or making more explicit the existing) employability in curriculum as well as including two employability questions in the student feedback surveys for all undergraduate units.
- Offer industry engagement and skill development programs aimed at increasing the employability and job/career readiness for students, including:
 - [Students as Change Agents program](#) that empowers students to undertake a project aimed at creating positive change at Murdoch, including mentoring and project funding.
 - [Launchpad Academy](#) focused on entrepreneurial skill development.

International Student Support

All students are supported in their learning through a mix of learning and pastoral care services. The learning support is informed by a robust tiered learning support framework that seeks to offer students a range of support options. International students are supported through the offering of specific gateway communications skills units in key programs, designed to actively improve learning outcomes. Additional services such as Grammarly, Studiosity and Peer Academic Coaches are available to all students, with targeted programs to identify students in need of additional support. Where appropriate, students are provided targeted workshops or one-to-one consultations with learning advisors.

Admissions Transparency

Murdoch provides a range of [pathways](#) to entry that are detailed in our annual [Admission and Pathways Guide](#). Entry requirements are provided for all courses with specific requirements for the four applicant groups identified (Higher Education Study, Vocational Education and Training, Recent Secondary Education, and Work Life Experience).

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

Murdoch seeks to “increase our impactful and progressive research in our areas of strength and excellent research across our disciplines”. This objective will broaden the research base at Murdoch and ensure all academic staff have the opportunity to research and, in doing so, strengthen the University’s research outcomes and reputation. The key measure of success is the number of research publications.

To meet this objective, Murdoch will:

- Develop effective (internal) communication strategies.
Murdoch’s organisational structure has been defined and includes [Colleges](#), [Research Institutes](#), Schools, and Centres. The structure defines pathways for two-way communications between University leadership and Schools/Centres. We will focus on facilitating communications *across and between* Schools and Centres and Institutes and Colleges.
- Encourage collaborative research (internal).
Development of policies and processes to encourage collaboration *across and between* Schools, Centres, Institutes and Colleges.
- Acknowledge and grow (and disseminate) research impact.
Development of strategies to define and demonstrate the University’s research impact.
Murdoch’s 50th year celebrations offer opportunities to highlight Murdoch’s impactful research.
- Optimise research support.
Support and ensure strong leadership in the [Research & Innovation Office](#) and the Graduate Studies Office.
Prioritise optimising the research support offered to all staff who wish to undertake research across the University and to all HDR students.
- Develop Research (& Innovation) Strategic Plan.
Research Strategic Plan to be developed and presented to Senate in July 2024.

The University is committed to ensuring we provide best-practice support to students, which will be informed by our First Nations Research Strategy. This research strategy is aligned with Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles and Indigenous research ethics.

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

Within its Research strategies, Murdoch aims to “build commercialisation, entrepreneurship and consultancy activities”. To meet this objective Murdoch is going through the implementation of an Innovation Framework that will:

- Educate: Provide all academic staff with an opportunity to develop commercialisation and entrepreneurial skills.
Initiatives include workshops and seminars, and 1:1 coaching and advice. Outcome measures are the number of staff completing training and the number of consultations.

- Innovate: Empower staff by supporting their innovative ideas and facilitating technology transfer through the provision of expertise, state-of-the-art facilities, and seed funding. Initiatives include Seed funding, support for external funding. Outcome measures will be invention disclosures, and patents.
- Incubate: Provide technological facilities, advice, initial growth funds, networks and linkages. Initiatives include Innovation Incubator, and Murdoch Ventures. Outcome measures will be Funds raised, and the number of Spin-Outs.
- Collaborate: Murdoch will be the partner of choice, being reasonable and fair to deal with. Initiatives include Showcases, and networking programs. Outcome measures will be Licences/Assignments, and Research Income

Student experience funding

Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre actively engages with over 15 corporate networks to provide opportunities to First Nations students. These partnerships are fostered through relationships with corporations, where they are invited to provide either financial or in-kind support. These opportunities can include workplace experience, mentoring, cadetships, and internships. The financial support includes scholarships and bursaries that can be given to students.

SIGNED for and on behalf of
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

Madonna Morton

Full name (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

Position

of the Department of Education



Signature

29/05/2024

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of

Murdoch University

by

Professor Andrew J Deeks

Full name

Vice Chancellor & President

Position

Signature



In the presence of:

Gemma Cominelli

Witness

Executive Officer

Position or profession of witness

Signature

