



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

### 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

Established in 1911 alongside the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River) on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar, UWA's mission is to provide world-class education, research, and community engagement for the advancement of the prosperity and welfare of our communities. *Seek Wisdom* guides the ethos of our comprehensive university.

2024 will see us continue our pursuit of our [UWA Strategic Plan](#) 2020-2025, and with particular focus on four priorities listed below. 2024 will see launch Future State vision engagement initiate next five year plan.

#### UWA 2024 Key Performance Indicators

- *growing student enrolment*, participation, and access to deliver identified % increases in relevant domestic cohorts, underrepresented groups of domestic students and international students.
- *enhancing the student experience* through a range of initiatives in teaching and learning, student wellbeing and support programs, employability, and career development opportunities, upgrading campus facilities and digital engagement to lift UWA's overall student experience performance measure scores.
- *building research capacity* by expanding research revenue sources, improving HDR entry, retention, and completions, and generating world-leading publications and research outputs.
- *ensuring sustainable finances and operations* through achievement of growth in EBITDA indicator to service debt and invest in UWA's capital infrastructure roadmap, manage inflationary/wage pressures, and deliver on sustainability goals which focus on place (a vibrant, sustainable, and connected hub that blends heritage with state-of-the-art facilities and protects our natural environment) and people (our students, our partners and the wider community) and retaining, growing and attracting staff from diverse backgrounds to drive continuous improvements and excellence across the institution, learning and research environments.

UWA continues to engage in sector-wide communities of practice across an ever-changing external, regulatory, and global environment.

- **Addressing Workforce Skills & Needs** – A [Work Integrated Learning and Experience program](#) tailored for the needs of students and industry and government priorities, with flexible lifelong learning aligned to the Government’s Diversify WA themes. Launch of new courses for Bachelor of Education and Social Work are evidence of this.
- **Ensuring Student and Staff Safety** – in preparation for the proposed National Action Plan addressing gender-based violence in higher education, UWA is directing resources to raise awareness for students and staff, student accommodation providers and affiliated residential colleges, and the Student Guild, to improve wellbeing and support programs and embed respectful and safe behaviours, increasing prevention measures, disclosure, and reporting. UWA’s recently refreshed [Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework](#) and [UWA’s 2022-2025 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\) Strategy](#) are progressing initiatives around inclusive language, gender affirmation, and training (on gender-based violence, appropriate behaviours, cultural safety, working with children, and accessibility and inclusion). Indigenous access, success, and engagement as a key priority area, while the Framework cites Indigenous knowledge as a key principle.
- **Countering Foreign Interference** -[UWA’s Foreign Interference Policy](#) is updated annually and governed by an Executive led accountable authority FIAC (Foreign Interference Advisory Committee) that reports bi-annually to UWA Executive. In addition, the Foreign Interference Due Diligence Group provides a gateway for advice, identification of risk thresholds, and tailored risk mitigation strategy development. All Academic, HDR and Professional Staff above Level 7 must complete the [International Activities Declaration](#) annually to raise awareness of risks and ensure accountability. Screening for employees through mandatory police checks, visa checks and work history are being introduced based on potential exposure risk. UWA is a member of the [Defence Industry Security Program \(DISP\)](#). We regularly consult with DFAT, Home Affairs and other sector stakeholders to ensure risks are identified early and managed effectively.
- **Cyber-Security** – UWA continues to improve Cyber-Security controls in line with the new State Cybersecurity Policy Framework set by DGov. [UWA’s Cyber-Security](#) approach is two-fold:
  1. through improving awareness and controls for cybersecurity within the staff and student body, and secondly strengthening technology governance and the ability to detect and respond to attacks.
  2. In line with [UWA’s Cyber Risk Appetite Statement](#), the most critical and at-risk assets (such as the student information system and financial systems) are being upgraded across this multi-year program.
- **Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom** – UWA applies layers of due diligence to management of risks and ethics to ensure that the principles of free speech and academic freedom are protected. Relationships with visiting fellows, public presentations and events are managed through [UWA’s Academic Freedom Policy](#). This includes an avenue for advice through a governing panel. [UWA’s Research Integrity Policy](#) is managed by the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity. The Office of Industry and Commercialisation guides industry and government contractual obligations and partnerships to ensure independence of research outcomes and initiatives. The topic was also addressed in the new Enterprise Agreement, currently with Fair Work Commission for approval.

## Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

UWA recognises the importance of creating an environment that provides opportunity and access to a diverse staff and student population across Western Australia, and beyond. The [UWA's 2022-2025 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\) Strategy](#) expresses the University's commitment to supporting its diverse staff and student communities, removing systemic barriers and fostering an inclusive environment. More information please refer to our [DEI webpages](#).

UWA employs a lifelong learning approach to equity from pre-tertiary (Children's University, Aspire), a bridge to tertiary (Fairway, Broadway, UWA Starter), tertiary (new programs, course relevance and new delivery models) and post-tertiary (EdX bootcamps, UWA Plus).

The **HECG Equity Plan** will identify revised and expanded scholarships, enhancement of our outreach and engagement activity, coordinated and targeted preparatory options aligned with expanded support programmes and an expansion of offering and support in regional activity. Specifically, strategies for improving equality of opportunity are:

1. To reposition UWA within the community to be a supportive partner in higher education for all students and a refresh of our school engagement program,
2. To remove barriers to participation and success, particularly financial and ongoing support via dedicated scholarships,
3. To open pathways into UWA to increase the opportunity for more students to participate, including improved transparency for admissions, and
4. To ensure our courses are relevant to our broader community so students have more options to choose what, where and how they learn.

Further detail on current initiatives that will continue through the year ahead are listed below. UWA will measure success through growth in participation rates of under-represented students as a percentage of the total commencing domestic cohort.

1. **Building an inclusive learning environment that supports access and success for all students** (see [the Student Access and Participation Framework](#))
  - UWA launched Experience-base Entry in November 2022 to attract under-represented students.
  - Inclusion and diversity awareness seminars to grow inclusive leadership embed equity and inclusion.
  - Developing an Inclusive Language Guide.
  - Physical access and wayfinding improvements.
  - Library sensory room and accessibility upgrades.
  - Implementation of Universal Design for Learning.
  - Implementation of Automatic Speech Recognition on Echo360 for lecture recordings.
  - Capacity building and leadership development training under a new Strategic People & Culture Plan.
2. **Recruiting and supporting a diverse student body**
  - New Bachelor of Education (Honours) and Bachelor of Social Work introduced to meet skill shortages and demand from non-traditional, remote, and rural students.
  - Redesigning, increasing investment and improving access/timing in scholarships.
  - Embedding the first-year experience project and reforming a comprehensive bridging programme.
  - Redevelopment of existing pre access programs e.g. [The Fairway Program](#) for Year 12s facing financial hardship.
  - A new current-student program supporting social and academic engagement for Priority Learners.
  - Continuous internal quality improvements with local teams developing Program Logic Models to support program monitoring and measure outcomes.
  - Build on the external 2023 HEPPP Health Check which will inform our 2024 Equity Plan, including a focus on improving local team capability and capacity for evaluation in line with the SEHEEF, including engagement with the NCSEHE.

- Addressing outcomes of an extensive internal review of student equity programs in 2023.

### **3. Indigenous access, success, and engagement**

- Specialist gateway support and bridging courses for Indigenous students will be continued through the [School of Indigenous Studies](#).
- Initiatives to improve cultural safety and engagement for the student experience and build on efforts to Indigenise the curriculum, and learning on country initiatives to improve awareness, cultural respect, and safety.
- Increased awareness of UWA's cultural story and history through the recent UWA Masterplan project and Reid Library Initiative to improve the experience for Indigenous students and support cultural enrichment.
- Increasing appointments and pathways for Indigenous Academics to improve attraction, retention, and curriculum enrichment.

### **4. Building regional, community and industry partnerships to support the equity program**

- Establishing key relationships to position UWA within the communities of need, including the Aspire partnership schools (70 schools) and regional and remote school engagement.
- Continuing to work with community organisations, such as Follow the Dream, to identify aspiring students and establish new community partnerships to support access.
- Making our courses more relevant and accessible to broader members of our community
- Building on our new regional engagement strategy through networks via Regional Development Commissions and associated organisations.
- Lifting the delivery of programs and regional outreach at UWA's Albany Campus in the areas of Health, Agriculture, Oceans and Environment, and Creative Arts, as well as our Global MD program

## Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

UWA has experienced growth in student experience QILT results since 2020, including an improvement in Teaching and Learning across the institution. This improvement has primarily been led by the undergraduate cohort across creative arts, teacher education, psychology, business and management, humanities, society and culture and social sciences consistently performing well nationally in indicators driving teaching and learning and student experience. Further work to understand and learn from these high-performance areas is underway and will assist in delivering further positive change across UWA.

Admissions transparency will be further enhanced on the University's webpages to ensure admissions information is more readily available to prospective students, including, expanded equity accessibility initiatives, pathway entry requirements and admissions policy and procedures.

Our success will be measured through QILT SES and GOS and the UWA Student Evaluation of Learning and Teaching (SELT) surveys.

Strategic initiatives to improve teaching and learning quality include:

- Fostering an environment of teaching excellence through programs such as Communities of Practice and the Academy Fellowships Scheme
- Investing in a tailored pathways support program to provide specialised academic and social support to entry-based pathway students, and students at risk of not progressing in their studies
- The Education Enhancement Unit provides support for educators to meet the evolving needs of learners through pedagogical support in learning design and educational technologies. Staff also have access to Learning and Coursera courses for continual professional development
- The SELT promotes continual improvement in teaching and learning and informs professional development for educators
- A new online learning system as well as using digital and performance dashboard tools to monitor success rates and at-risk students for early intervention
- Industry and alumni engagement that contributes to the curriculum and programs
- Implementation of a universal design for learning, aimed at increasing access, participation, and success for all students

Gaining meaningful employment post-study is an indicator of this achievement, as well as a significant driver of student experience and satisfaction. A continued focus on work-integrated learning opportunities, links to industry and practice through curricular and co-curricular experiences, such as the planned [UWA Centre for Employability](#), and monitoring of emerging trends in employment growth and opportunity will ensure continued growth in relevant and appropriate options to embed life-long learning for the betterment of the individual, and society.

The [Experience UWA 2025 Strategy](#) supports teaching and learning in a holistic program throughout the student life cycle, including:

- Peer and Alumni Mentoring
- Peer led workforce
- Partnership with the UWA Student Guild, its clubs, and services
- Indigenous knowledge sharing
- Engaging digital student interfaces and flexibility in learning offerings (academic support, after hours study help and hybrid learning environments for greater access and participation)
- Exposure of students to internationalisation and cross-cultural competencies via formal and informal curriculum within the domestic learning environment

## Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

UWA demonstrates a steadfast commitment to advancing research excellence and fostering innovation. As a top-100 ranked research-intensive university (QS), we are known for our trusted, reproducible, transformative, open research and accessible data. We are recognised for leading teams in resolving real-world challenges that are critical to the planet and its people.

This commitment manifests in both strengthening existing capabilities in established areas like agriculture, oceans, health, and sustainable resource management, and in cultivating expertise in emerging fields such as critical minerals, artificial intelligence (AI), and quantum technologies. Through the strategic support of a diverse range of research initiatives, UWA aims to generate impactful research that is not only relevant to industry and community needs, but also adaptable and responsive to the ever-changing global landscape.

Research funding earned by an institution provides an indication of effectiveness in conducting relevant and valued research. The University exceeded its total research income target in 2023 due to the increased success in Australian Competitive Grants through the Medical Research Future Fund schemes, Commonwealth and State Funding, as well as industry funding. Growth in research funding was particularly strong in the fields of ocean science, blue economy, health, and medicine, in collaboration with medical research institutes (MRIs) affiliated with the University.

Growth in research income relies on diversification of funding sources and UWA aims to apply a greater focus on strategic partnerships with research end users such as industry, other research organisations and community organisations.

Mentoring and support of UWA's academic workforce whose research is aligned by discipline, methodology or infrastructure with research end users will support growth in UWA's research income, both in total research income and more importantly as a share of the national research income.

Investing in HDR success is a critical element to ensuring a pipeline of critical thinking and ground-breaking research remains a fundamental pillar. 2023 saw the highest level of HDR completions across the institution since 2016. This focus will continue via the following initiatives:

- Investment in a candidate management system, which provides live dashboard milestone tracking, training needs diagnostic and skills development tools with links to relevant events and activities and an online application, project, and scholarship opportunities portal.
- Researcher training via investment in development of transferable skills and support for internship opportunities through bespoke workshops and an online research skills toolkit.
- Leadership and development training for supervisors is supported by a suite of online resources and peer workshops to lift mentoring, support, and enhance the student experience. A supervisor registration process ensures that supervisory teams have the right mix of experience and development opportunities.
- Identification and maximising pathways to attract a more diverse range of domestic HDR applicants, including those in mid-career, or changing professional direction, via a refresh of key professional doctorate programs.
- Appointment of Indigenous HDR Co-ordinator to recruit and support Indigenous HDRs.
- Continuing to attract a broad range of international applicants through scholarships and partnerships, and
- Extend collaboration with WA universities to support supervisor and HDR skills development.

## Strategies for Engaging with Industry

Creating and sharing knowledge through our industry and government partnerships to make a positive impact is at the heart of what we do at UWA. Through these initiatives and partnerships, we are improving the lives of those in our communities and the prosperity of Western Australians.

Engagement with industry occurs across our institution in research collaborations, education partnerships and importantly, graduate connections. Graduates and industry partner through Workplace Integrated Learning (WIL), work placements, McCusker Centre for Citizenship internships, innovation programs, guest speakers, alumni networking events and our Centre for Employability who match WA's top students and graduates with industry partners.

UWA has over 4500 industry partnerships across both education and research, including licensing opportunities and industry collaborations on our world-class research supported by the [UWA Office of Industry and Commercial Development](#).

Through our industry funded research, we aspire to partnerships that deliver impact, such as helping new parents overcoming breastfeeding challenges with Medela, innovating grazing practices with Meat and Livestock Australia and restoring kelp forests with Canopy Blue. Pursuing such partnerships will continue in line with our target to grow industry and commercial CAT3 research income.

Our core strength is in delivering and commercialising innovation that relates to the Western Australian economy, including, Indigenous health, agriculture, critical minerals, future energy solutions, oceans, environmental, biodiversity and new urban development solutions.

We currently generate nearly \$10 million per annum in commercialisation revenue with noteworthy spinouts including [OncoRes Medical](#), [Orthocell](#) Ltd and [Argenica Therapeutics Ltd](#). [SCOPR](#) ranks UWA at No. 2 in Australian universities for commercialisation revenue and these efforts achieve flow through to reinvestment in research, education, HDR training and graduate employment.

UWA has a small pre-seed fund and planned commercialisation panel to be implemented in the coming year. Plans are in place to improve equity participation, launch a range of new micro-credential learning offerings, and establish a formal centre for innovation, teaching and learning.

UWA is also working to grow domestic students' participation in areas of high workforce demand through a range of advisory boards at school and discipline level that shape curriculum, such as new courses in B Education (Hons) and B Social Work and planning for further Allied Health initiatives. These are being introduced to satisfy workforce demand and increase participation.

Following engagement with industry in the regions, UWA is expanding the [Experience-based Entry pathways](#), developing regional pathway partnerships to improve accessibility, streamlining articulation from other education providers, and providing opportunities for regional experience to enhance learning options by reinvigorating activity in our regional centres at Albany, Allied Health outreach in Bunbury and Geraldton.

2024 will also see significant growth in our ability to build domestic and international graduates in IT (including AI and Cybersecurity), data and computer sciences, commerce and analytics, and engineering to support areas of near-term workforce shortage.

SIGNED for and on behalf of  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

Madonna Morton

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Full name (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

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Position

of the Department of Education



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Signature

29/05/2024

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Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of:  
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

by

Professor Amit Chakma

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Full name (please print)

Vice Chancellor

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Position



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Signature

In the presence of:

Sonya Redmond

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Witness (please print)

Chief of Staff

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Position or profession of witness (please print)



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Signature