Australian Government

Department of Education

2024 Mission-Based Compact Between the Commonwealth of Australia and the University of New South Wales

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

UNSW's vision is to improve lives globally through innovative research, transformative education, and a commitment to a just society.

2024 marks UNSW's 75th anniversary and [Strategy 2025](#) drawing to its end. With eyes on the future, the University will evolve its strategic aspirations, informed by consultation across UNSW's extended community. Leveraging distinctive characteristics and strengths, the University will identify priority areas offering the greatest positive societal impact and channel resources accordingly.

UNSW's 2024 Operational Plan details planned actions and key outcomes across 21 priority areas, spanning the strategic themes of Education and Student Experience; Lifelong Learning; Research Excellence and Translation; Societal Impact; People and Culture; Systems, Processes, and IT; and Operational Model. The Plan specifies targets and measurement of outcomes using a suite of strategic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are reported to the University Council, together with both shorter-term operational and organisational unit KPIs. Several strategic KPIs incorporate metrics that are widely available within the sector, including QILT Student Experience Survey and Graduate Outcomes Survey results for defined student cohorts, HDR completions, HERDC results, field-weighted citations, and staff and student demographics. Other KPIs rely on tracking more UNSW-specific data, including startups supported by the University, students accessing international study experience, research papers co-published with international partners, and staff engagement.

UNSW is committed to providing an environment where students, staff, and visitors are respected. We want to ensure that all who experience or are exposed to potential physical and mental harm, including sexual harassment and sexual assault, have straightforward and transparent processes for reporting and a person-centric response. Our [Safer Communities](#) model is a collaborative approach to preventing injuries and minimising harm to our students and staff. It

is centred around gendered violence, respect at work, and managing psychosocial risks through prevention and early intervention.

UNSW has an unequivocal commitment to freedom of speech and academic freedom. The only constraints are those that apply to the community under the law. The [Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Code of Conduct](#) adopts the Model Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers. The Code of Conduct prevails over all other policies and positions academic freedom as a foundational value.

UNSW has implemented a framework to counter foreign interference including mandatory disclosures, a comprehensive policy review, and the establishment of a foreign interference advisory committee to better manage the risk of interference. UNSW's [National Security team](#) focuses on international collaborations and research security, and maintains relationships with government and national security agencies. As a key research and education partner for Defence, UNSW exceeds the obligations in the UFIT Guidelines. UNSW is developing the expertise, systems and processes to confidently pursue its international research and education strategy while meeting its security obligations and protecting the national interest.

The security of the University's information, and the privacy of our students and staff, are paramount. UNSW has adopted [a defence-in-depth approach to managing cybersecurity risks](#), aligned to international standards and underpinned by a cybersecurity risk management framework.

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

UNSW is committed to having an undergraduate community that reflects the broader Australian population through enabling access, participation, and graduate success for students from equity cohorts. Equality of opportunity has two component parts: access and success. One cannot exist without the other. UNSW's [Widening Participation Strategy 2030](#) and the [UNSW Indigenous Strategy](#) address student equity, outreach, and access for students from underrepresented backgrounds, including Indigenous students and students from low-SES backgrounds, regional and remote areas, and educationally disadvantaged schools.

The Gateway Equity Target (GET) and accompanying programs are integral to this strategic objective, supporting access and success for cohorts that are underrepresented in higher education. The GET will be partnered with commensurate success targets. The GET aims for 25% of the commencing domestic undergraduate cohort to be from low-SES backgrounds and/or socio-educationally disadvantaged schools ('[Gateway partner schools'](#) – schools with a three-year average ICSEA at / below 1000 or a three-year average proportion in the bottom quarter of socio-educational advantage) by 2027, and University-wide KPI's track the academic performance, progress and retention of equity cohorts. Partnering GET with success targets will ensure that gateway students continue to have the same success as the average student cohort. UNSW has had the highest success rates for underrepresented student cohorts for 11 years in a row.

UNSW ensures students have a positive university experience that considers their specific requirements, and that academic and professional staff receive the support and resources required to develop and advance key activities to achieve the GET. The GET and underrepresented cohorts are supported and enabled through the Gateway Admission Pathway and Program, alternative entry options, scholarships and awards, support programs, academic support, Work Integrated Learning, and staff training.

A range of tailored mechanisms support the success of students from equity cohorts, including a targeted support program which builds university awareness, confidence, and a sense of belonging at UNSW. This includes a bespoke student mentoring program, Start@UNSW, pre-orientation events for students and their supporters, and the UNSW Co-NNECTIONS program which improves workforce transition.

UNSW also has a target that commencing Indigenous students will make up 1.5% of the commencing domestic cohort in 2024. UNSW maintains a keen focus on promoting access to higher education through dedicated recruitment and outreach programs including the Indigenous Youth Leaders Program for high school students; the Indigenous Preparatory Program; the Indigenous Admission Scheme for undergraduate students and postgraduate Indigenous Alternative Entry Schemes in Law and Medicine & Health; and community events, outreach visits and key partnerships with community organisations including the Arthur Beetson Foundation, Deadly Choices and Souths Cares.

The University will refine its Indigenous Strategy in 2024 to create a university environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples thrive and are empowered. The strategy will focus on enhancing student belonging, underpinned by the establishment of an Indigenous student success framework. Key 2024 activities include the creation of a forum for HDR indigenous student collaboration, development of an Indigenous Workforce Plan, and a focus on Indigenous Curriculum Immersion.

Nura Gili, UNSW's Centre for Indigenous Programs, provides student-facing services, programs and study facilities including the Indigenous Tuition Program (ITP); student support services; Ngurra Orientation Program; and networking, career pathway and social events. Nura Gili staff also proactively monitor student progress and engage with students through the Pastoral, Academic, Transitional and Support (PATS) and Students Not At Good Standing (SNAGS) programs.

Further information:

Annual Impact statements & Outreach programs

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

Our Education and Student Experience Strategy – *Listening, Challenging, Supporting* - sets the direction for improved performance through targeted interventions and investments in staff training and support; curriculum, assessment, and feedback transformation; physical and digital environments; student support and success; employability; and health and wellbeing, all with the aim of driving an outstanding educational experience.

Our Education Focussed (EF) academics, supported by the insights and leadership of the Scientia Education Academy, lead in education and pedagogical practice. Academics are supported through our Advance HE-accredited Foundations of Learning & Teaching program, our Course Design Institute, a targeted Course Enhancement Program, institution-wide peer review of teaching, and digital learning technologies and platforms. In 2024 the University is aiming for a 30% increase in the number of academic staff attending professional development opportunities led by our Division of Education & Student Experience; that 80% of staff completing the Course Design Institute go on to implement course enhancements; and three Teaching Accelerator Programs to be offered throughout the year.

UNSW is investing in an additional 40 EF staff above the current 534 EF staff this year – the single largest investment in teaching focussed permanent staff - and is focussing on assessment

transformation and further embedding belonging and wellbeing, WIL and industry relevancy, digital literacies, diversity and inclusion, and societal impact into all of our degree programs. This aims to ensure that our curriculum is engaging and relevant, supports students to succeed, and ensures our graduates are both work-ready and can make a positive impact in their communities. UNSW is also focussed on supporting casual staff. Indeed, UNSW is committed to increasing the accessibility of casual positions to students and to people working in industry.

Students are supported through a wide range of mechanisms across the student lifecycle. Our onboarding and peer mentoring programs assist students in their transition to higher education, with specific programs to support international students and equity cohorts. Our comprehensive Student Mental Health Strategy, with its Prepare, Prevent, Respond approach, aims to ensure students flourish and have a positive student experience. UNSW's Academic Success Monitor uses learning analytics to provide early interventions for students at academic risk, encouraging them towards support services to improve success and retention. UNSW Employability leads our student industry engagement strategies through curricular (WIL), co-curricular, and extra-curricular opportunities. All our student success programs have efficacy measures to track impact on student outcomes, with reach and success targets. During 2024 baseline measures of students' wellbeing will be established by surveying students in all undergraduate programs. In addition, by 2025 UNSW aims to have 79% of undergraduate & postgraduate students positively rating the overall quality of their educational experience, based on outcomes of QILT surveys.

UNSW is committed to providing applicants with accurate and detailed information about the application process and entry requirements for our programs and annually publishes domestic undergraduate admissions transparency data.

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

UNSW strives to be one of the world's leading research-intensive institutions known for pioneering research, attracting and nurturing the best researchers, and fostering a culture of research excellence and innovation that addresses pressing global challenges, by:

- **Creating a research ecosystem that builds collaboration and interdisciplinary partnerships to generate relevant, high-quality research, and embedding an innovation culture to drive opportunities for research translation and commercialisation.**

    Continued focus on interdisciplinary initiatives (Futures Institutes, Institute for Climate Risk and Response) and leveraging large multidisciplinary, trans-institutional teams supported by significant infrastructure and a broad range of funding opportunities and government schemes. The recent Survey of Commercialisation Outcomes from Public Research Summary Report highlights the societal and translational impact that is cultivated through UNSW's spinout companies and patent applications. Supported by a robust framework of policies and practices, UNSW will continue to invest in the commercialisation of research outcomes and foster discovery of pathways to translation. With the inclusion of Startup Accelerators such as Climate 10x and Defence 10x, UNSW's Trailblazer for Recycling and Clean Energy (TRaCE), and Defence Trailblazer will lead the paradigm shift in research commercialisation and upskill researcher capabilities to engage with industry and build long-term partnerships.

- **Recruiting and retaining world-leading researchers and high-quality higher degree research (HDR) candidates to drive research quality and impact.**

    Ongoing investment in the Scientia Academic and Industry PhD recruitment programs, and expansion of integrated training that embeds compliance and career development to

build a strong, industry-engaged academic workforce. Particular focus on cultivating indigenous HDR recruitment with competitively funded pathways for candidates, and expanding global engagement programs for HDRs via student mobility and new joint PhDs with strategic partners and expanded opportunities for global collaboration. HDR satisfaction is measured through the [Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)](#) where UNSW came 2nd overall in 2023, ranking in the top quartile in all 9 categories assessed, coming 3rd for Research Culture and 5th for Supervision in 2023.

UNSW will strengthen its Living Wage initiative, further increasing the HDR stipend rate to help mitigate financial stress and cost-of-living pressures for this key cohort of researchers.

- **Strengthening world-class research infrastructure to advance research capacity.**

  UNSW will maintain its leading reputation for state of the art, [highly specialised research infrastructure & facilities](#), instrumentation, and expertise with a centralised approach to core management, skills, and training. In 2024, this will focus on a major multi-year program of work to deliver sustainable, safe, and fit-for-purpose next-generation data services to researchers.

University-wide KPIs track and measure progress in these initiatives, including the number of HDR completions; total HERDC income per FTE and knowledge exchange income; number of startups supported; ranking in the [Aggregate Ranking of Top Universities](#); and research published with international partners.

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

UNSW's 2025 *Championing Employability Strategy* drives our student-focussed engagement with industry, government, and community partners, taking a holistic approach to students' personal and professional development that ensures UNSW graduates are highly employable and industry ready. In collaboration with Faculties, UNSW Employability supports the delivery of disciplinary and interdisciplinary work integrated learning (WIL) that provides authentic work-learning activities embedded in the curriculum, [AHEGS-accredited](#) co-curricular and extra-curricular programs that focus on societal impact while enhancing students' employability, industry and other alumni coaching and mentoring programs, and a wide range of other engagement and networking activities including those specifically designed for our equity cohorts.

Research translation is a key priority for UNSW. Our world leading research & innovation is foundational to this mission, with its focus on real-world application, securing Australia's sovereign capability, and delivering social and economic impact. UNSW will maintain its focus on leveraging existing industry partnerships and developing multidisciplinary projects with industry as we continue to embed the culture of innovation, by:

- **Growing interdisciplinary and collaborative industry partnerships**
  Increasing the reach and engagement of the UNSW [Entrepreneurial Campus initiative](#) (co-location of a growing number of industry partners); the [UNSW RNA Institute](#) (positions UNSW at the forefront of developing and translating novel RNA technologies and treatments); TRaCE and the [Defence Trailblazer](#); the [Randwick Health & Innovation Precinct](#) (offering high impact collaborative environments for industry to easily partner with clinicians, academics and innovators); ARENA projects and the [NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Hub](#).
- **Strengthening UNSW's entrepreneurial and translation capabilities and ecosystem**

Providing an integrated approach to innovation, engagement and enterprise across UNSW through the newly established Industry & Innovation portfolio; creating programs and networking opportunities showcasing the breadth and depth of research translation and technology development emerging from UNSW; increasing the capability of researchers to embed translation and commercialisation practices and build partnerships through professional development and Industry PhD recruitment programs; engaging with Australian Government funding opportunities such as the ARC Industry Fellowship and National Industry PhD programs.

- **Drive strategic initiatives in commercialisation and industry engagement with an international and regional focus**
  Establishing networks with regional neighbours; developing opportunities through the UNSW Defence Research Institute to accelerate the translation of fundamental research into rapid proto-typing and scaled up sovereign manufacturing of Australian capabilities as well as contributing to the AUKUS partnership.

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

The University of New South Wales

by

Professor Attila Brungs
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Full name (please print)

Vice-Chancellor & President
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Position

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Signature

In the presence of:

Simone Lehmann
_____

Witness (please print)

Senior Executive Assistant
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Position or profession of witness (please print)

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Signature