2025-2026 Mission-Based Compact Between the Commonwealth of Australia and CQUniversity 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

In 2024, CQUniversity commenced its Strategic Plan 2024-2028, *We Change Lives*, which reinforces the University's vision to be Australia's most accessible and supportive university, connecting our regions to the world through innovative education, training and research excellence. The Strategic Plan and its goals and priorities is framed around the following three pillars:

People: CQUniversity is committed to creating an environment of lifelong learning where people feel empowered and proud to learn, work and grow with CQUniversity. CQUniversity will be leaders in providing innovative, accessible, supportive and flexible learning, engaged workplaces and enriched societies.

Planet: CQUniversity is committed to advancing our stewardship to ensure a sustainable future for the University and, in turn, build sustainable regions through our presence and research that aligns with societal needs. CQUniversity is focused on striking the right balance with our investment decisions to ensure a positive impact on the planet.

Partnerships: CQUniversity is committed to making a brighter future through drive and imagination in close partnership with our communities and stakeholders. CQUniversity recognises and values our partners and actively develops our partnerships for the benefit of all.

The success of CQUniversity's Strategic Plan will be measured by:
- Student retention and satisfaction.
- Staff retention and satisfaction.
- Reduction in carbon emissions.
- Underlying operating surplus.
- Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Local and global research and strategic partnerships.

Workforce and skill needs: To inform the Strategic Plan, the Education Futures project was undertaken to assess the external landscape and analyse emerging opportunities in light of the education, training and research demands expressed by CQUniversity's students and industry partners. Each year, Regional Profiles are refreshed using the Education Futures framework to guide the annual planning cycle.

Student and staff safety: CQUniversity is committed to developing and implementing strategies that promotes student and staff health, safety and wellbeing. Strategies include:
- MindWaves 2.0 Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan 2024-2028
- Safer Communities - CQUniversity initiatives
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Project RESPECT (in development)

Countering foreign interference: CQUniversity is committed to complying with the Australian Government's national security legislation, and to give compliance obligations priority consideration before proceeding with any international engagement. The University's procedures are aligned to the University Foreign Interference Taskforce (UFIT) *Guidelines on Countering Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector.*

Cyber and data security: CQUniversity is committed to managing cyber and data security in accordance with university policy and all relevant laws and regulations. The University's Cybersecurity Plan and Roadmap 2025–2028 sets out how we will strengthen our cybersecurity posture across people, policy and process and technology and data. The following policy documents also apply:
- Business Continuity Planning and Incident Management Policy and Procedure
- Cybersecurity Management Policy
- Information and Communications Technology Passwords Procedure
- Information and Communications Technology Acceptable Use Policy and Procedure
- Research Data Management Policy and Procedure

Freedom of speech and academic freedom: At its May 2019 meeting, Academic Board approved its position statement on Academic Freedom, which is consistent with the principles of the Independent Review of Freedom of Speech in Australian Higher Education Providers. Subsequently, the University Council approved the Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy at its June 2021 meeting. Both policy documents outline CQUniversity's commitment and protection of freedom of lawful speech and academic freedom.

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

CQUniversity is committed to improving equity in higher education through targeted strategies that support access, participation, retention and completion for students from under-represented and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Our approach is informed by our Strategic Plan, HECG Equity Plan, and a suite of inclusive education strategies, including those focused on First Nations students, students with disability and regional and low SES cohorts.

Key Priorities and Targets:

First Nations Student Success
CQUniversity's commitment to First Nations student success is guided by our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and the key actions outlined in our First Nations student performance framework. These actions - strengthening data, pathways, curriculum, teaching,

governance and performance targets - aim to increase First Nations student participation, retention and completion.

Targets include a 5% increase in retention and a 3% increase in completion by end-2026.

Low SES, Regional, and Remote Students
Leveraging our regional footprint, we will enhance onboarding and transition support for students from low SES and geographically isolated communities.

Initiatives include peer-led support and tailored advising, with a goal to reduce attrition by 8% across these cohorts by 2028.

Students with Disability
CQUniversity's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) is due to be formally launched on 3 December 2025. The plan outlines strategies to improve accessibility and inclusive teaching practices.

Progress will be measured via student engagement and satisfaction metrics, with a target of a 15% increase in positive feedback, as well as a 3% increased success rate for students with a disability.

Community and School Outreach
Programs such as Start Uni Now and Connect2Uni will be expanded to reach equity groups in regional and remote schools. Success will be tracked through participation rates and conversion to enrolment.

HECG-Funded Initiatives:

Within the provisions of the Higher Education Continuity Guarantee funding, CQUniversity will invest in initiatives that directly address barriers to equity. These include:

Retention Equity Program (REP):
REP consolidates multi-stream equity work into a unified program focused on student support, academic design, onboarding, and pathways. In 2025 and 2026, REP will expand tailored advising, renew WIL access for equity students and strengthen VET-to-higher education transitions.

Student Empowerment:
This initiative provides new opportunities for the student voice to be heard in university decision-making, new services for advocacy and student ombudsman services, oversight of the allocation of funding for services and amenities for students from equity backgrounds.

Safer Communities and Mindwaves 2.0:
These services provide gender-based violence and mental wellbeing support. HECG funding will enhance data-driven interventions, conduct management and expand access to wellbeing resources.

Monitoring and Evaluation:
CQUniversity is developing a comprehensive Student Success and Engagement Framework to guide and evaluate equity initiatives. Progress will be tracked through our Student Success Data Evaluation Framework, with disaggregated data analysis across equity groups and annual reporting to inform continuous improvement.

CQUniversity's equity strategies reflect our deep commitment to inclusive education and our role as a national leader in supporting diverse student cohorts, particularly in regional and remote contexts. Through evidence-based initiatives, strong community partnerships, and continuous

improvement, we are working to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed and thrive in higher education.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

CQUniversity is redefining teaching and learning through a learner-centred approach that integrates human-centred design with emerging technologies. Our Learning and Teaching Strategy, underpinned by Education 5.0 and Industry 5.0 principles, outlines initiatives to enhance teaching quality and student outcomes. These key initiatives include:

Strengthening transition and retention:
As Queensland's only dual-sector university, CQUniversity offers a unique pathway from secondary school through to Vocational Education and Training (VET), undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees. The University supports student transition through integrated pre-arrival, orientation and induction programs tailored to diverse cohorts, including First Nations, international, VET, HE and mature-age students. First-year units embed early formative assessments, language, literacy and numeracy diagnostics and transition pedagogies to build academic confidence and a sense of belonging.

Success is measured through increased engagement with support services and improved satisfaction with the following Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) Student Experience Survey (SES) targets in place:

- Satisfaction with Learning support ≥71 %
- Satisfaction with enrolment processes ≥74%
- Satisfaction with orientation activities ≥66%.

Personalised adaptive learning:
CQUniversity is moving toward adaptive learning environments that respond to individual learner needs. AI-powered analytics are used to tailor content, pace and support, while educators are supported to design multimodal content using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.

Success is tracked through Student Unit and Teaching Evaluations (SUTE) and QILT indicators, with the following targets in place

- ≥77% satisfaction for online units
- ≥81% for on-campus units
- ≥79% satisfaction with digital platforms.

Early intervention for at-risk students

CQUniversity is introducing the Student Service SPOT, an integrated support model that brings together academic and professional services to deliver timely, targeted assistance across the student lifecycle. Using real-time learning analytics and continuous feedback loops, the SPOT Hub identifies students at risk of disengagement and provides proactive outreach and personalised support, including academic referrals, peer mentoring and tailored resources.

Key indicators include student satisfaction with study or learning support services (QILT SES), increased engagement with referred services, improved retention and SPOT Hub utilisation data.

Authentic and industry-connected learning

Authentic learning is embedded across curriculum and training packages through project-based assessments, industry mentorships, placements, apprenticeships and work-integrated learning. These approaches are designed to enhance career readiness by connecting learners with real-world professional challenges. Initiatives such as 'Discipline Connect' and capstone projects strengthen ties between students, industry and alumni.

Employability is measured via QILT Graduate Outcome Survey results with a target of ≥70% of graduates feeling work-ready and internal tracking of WIL placements and projects.

Educator development and praxis

Educator capability is central to teaching quality and learner success at CQUniversity. Key initiatives include GenAI literacy training, Learning Lab Sandboxes, EdTech tools, hybrid learning environments, Communities of Practice, scholarly practice pathways and recognition through Advance HE/LIFT Fellowships.

Success is measured through educator engagement and feedback, scholarly outputs, industry collaborations and fellowship applications.

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

CQUniversity's research strategy is focused on delivering regionally relevant, globally impactful research that addresses real-world challenges and drives innovation across Central Queensland and beyond. Our priorities for the 2025–2026 period are centred on expanding research capacity, strengthening research training, enhancing commercialisation pathways and deepening collaboration with health, industry and community partners. Key priorities and strategies include:

Growing Regional Research Capacity

CQUniversity is committed to building research capability in areas of strategic importance to regional Australia, including health, agriculture, renewable energy, education and social innovation. We will continue to invest in targeted recruitment of research-active staff, support emerging researchers through mentoring and development programs, and expand infrastructure to support high-quality research outputs.

Strengthening Research Training

We aim to enhance the experience and outcomes of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates through improved supervision quality, structured career development, and increased opportunities for industry and community engagement. CQUniversity will continue to offer embedded research internships, industry aligned thesis offerings and co-funded scholarships with external partners to ensure HDR training is aligned with workforce needs and innovation priorities.

Enhancing Research Commercialisation

CQUniversity is expanding its research commercialisation efforts through the development of translational pathways, Intellectual Property management support and industry co-investment models. We are actively pursuing opportunities under the Australian Government's University Research Commercialisation Action Plan, including participation in Trailblazer programs and regional innovation hubs. Our focus is on converting research into tangible products, services and policy outcomes that benefit regional communities.

Establishing Clinical Trials Capability

In partnership with local health services, CQUniversity is working to establish a clinical trials unit that will enable pharmaceutical and investigator-led trials in regional Queensland. This initiative will leverage the University's HERDC-eligible income streams to reinvest in medical research and support the development of sustainable, ongoing health research partnerships, ultimately improving health outcomes for regional Australians.

Driving Impact Through Collaboration

CQUniversity will continue to prioritise collaborative research with industry, government and community organisations. Our approach includes co-designed projects, shared infrastructure and long-term partnerships that ensure research is responsive to regional needs and delivers measurable impact. We will also strengthen our engagement with national research priorities, including sustainability, health equity and digital transformation.

Measuring Success

Progress will be tracked through key performance indicators including HERDC income growth, HDR completion rates, review of outcomes post RHD completion, research engagement metrics, commercialisation outcomes and impact case studies. CQUniversity will also monitor alignment with national frameworks such as the Engagement and Impact Assessment.

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

CQUniversity's industry engagement strategy is underpinned by a commitment to delivering research and training that create measurable impact in the regions we serve. Our key priorities are to deepen collaboration with industries that are central to regional economies, to co-design training and workforce solutions that respond to emerging needs and to ensure knowledge is translated into outcomes that drive growth, resilience and sustainability.

This approach is guided by CQUniversity's *Engagement Blueprint,* which provides the overarching framework for how the University builds, sustains and measures meaningful relationships with stakeholders such as industry. It ensures that every partnership is authentic, outcome-driven and aligned with our values of engagement, openness and leadership.

We prioritise building long-term partnerships by opening our campuses as hubs for co-location and collaboration. This approach embeds industry within the University's daily environment and creates pathways for joint projects, shared infrastructure and direct talent pipelines for students and graduates. Another priority is providing bespoke workforce solutions through the Corporate Training Solutions team, which works with employers to develop customised programs and vocational skillsets. These initiatives respond directly to industry demand in areas such as hydrogen and renewable energy while supporting the ongoing upskilling and reskilling of local workforces.

CQUniversity also prioritises partnerships that address regional and community challenges alongside industry and government. Initiatives focused on social procurement, workforce participation and youth employment highlight how industry engagement extends beyond technical training to encompass broader economic and social outcomes. These efforts reflect the University's role as a driver of regional sustainability and as a partner of choice for industry seeking to work strategically on community issues.

Embedding industry within curriculum remains a central priority, particularly through Work Integrated Learning. Thousands of placements are delivered each year, providing students with

authentic professional experience and employers with access to emerging talent. New cadetship programs, such as those in engineering, also demonstrate how partnerships with industry directly address workforce shortages while producing graduates who are confident and job-ready.

Finally, CQUniversity has formalised Memoranda of Understanding with key industry partners that provide a framework for deeper collaboration. These agreements open pathways for new opportunities in research, training and workforce development, ensuring that partnerships are not only well-structured but also flexible and responsive to emerging industry needs.

Through the alignment of its training, research and community partnerships, CQUniversity ensures its industry engagement remains comprehensive and transformative, delivering value for students, industry partners and regional communities while advancing national higher education and workforce objectives.

SIGNED for and on behalf of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

Jessica Mohr
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Full name (please print)

First Assistant Secretary
_____

Position

of the Department of Education

_____

Signature

01/12/2025
_____

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of

CQUniversity Australia

by

Professor Nick Klomp
_____

Full name (please print)

Vice-Chancellor and President
_____

Position

_____

Signature

In the presence of:

Rachel Searl
_____

Witness (please print)

Executive Officer
_____

Position or profession of witness (please print)

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Signature

In the presence of:

Melissa Misztal
_____

Witness (please print)

Chief of Staff
_____

Position or profession of witness (please print)

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Signature