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

Deakin University's Strategic Plan, _Deakin 2030: Ideas to Impact_ communicates Deakin's approach to serving communities and addressing national challenges. Across the priorities of Education and Employability, Research and Innovation, our approach is:

1. **Workforce and skills needs**

Reflecting our industry integration and alignment, with a focus on meaningful student outcomes and the national need, workforce and skills needs are a priority. From work-integrated learning to ensure real world experience in degrees, to targeting workforce shortages in health, education, and various sectors, Deakin is committed to this national priority. See Deakin Career Planning

2. **Student and Staff Safety**

Deakin is committed to student and staff safety, having prioritised collaboration with the Federal and State Governments in the ongoing work to ensure best practice. It is a priority issue for the University, from Council and Executive, down. Our innovative programmes continue to lead the sector, while we engage both internally and externally to ensure consistent learning and improvement. More details can be found in **Appendix A**.

3. **Freedom of speech and academic freedom**

Deakin university prioritises free, open enquiry and debate across our community. Deakin, like all universities, cannot fulfil its role in society without placing freedom of speech, even concerning controversial and difficult issues, at the centre of its operations. Likewise, academic freedom is the bedrock upon which academia functions at Deakin, and we will continue to stand firm in this regard. More information can be found at _Code for Upholding Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom_.

4. **Relevant, flexible, and accessible education**

Deakin was founded to be Victoria's most "progressive" university, and we continue to live this ambition. From lifelong learning and integrated work experience to co-design of courses and learning with industry, as well as pathways and varied delivery modes. All while ensuring the highest of standards, and meaningful measures of outcomes performance. As well as internal measures, our success is demonstrated through external benchmarking such as the Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS), Student Experience Survey (SES) and Employer Satisfaction Survey (ESS).

5. **Approach to National and Sector Priorities**

Deakin is committed to sectoral leadership across national priorities, as described above, and beyond. This reflects an externally focussed, national institution.

6. **Continued research growth and performance improvement**

Deakin continues to grow and improve its research performance, as targeted against our industry alignment and areas of world class skills and depth. Varied strategies are utilised including: expansion and leveraging of industry partnerships and linkages; HDR pathways in academia and industry; improved career pathways between academia, industry, and vice versa; and tailored strategies across discovery, innovation, and commercialisation.

7. **Cyber security, and foreign interference**

Deakin is fully compliant with government foreign interference regulations, taking a proactive management approach. Working in sensitive industries, we prioritise security systems. These include university-wide dual-factor authentication, dedicated cyber security resources, as well as security clearance and monitoring resources. For those areas of the university engaged in particularly sensitive projects, further systems are in place.

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

Deakin is committed to supporting students from under-represented backgrounds. We systematically apply, and measure effectiveness of, strategies for pre-access, access, retention and success using a suite of sophisticated mechanisms traversing academic, financial, cultural, wellbeing and ancillary needs.

Continue to improve First Nations participation and success

Deakin's Indigenous Strategy 2023-2028 places Indigenous matters as a whole-of-University responsibility.

Advancing the aspirations of First Nations students by providing access to education through inclusive pathways is at the heart of our strategy. NIKERI delivers tailored educational programs and culturally responsive support for Indigenous students across our campuses. The university is committed to embedding Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum and provides cultural intelligence training to staff.

Supporting students from under-represented backgrounds

Deakin 2030: Ideas to Impact is designed to enable greater access to higher education for aspiring, talented students from all backgrounds. We prioritise a student experience that optimises entry and participation for diverse learners and provide tailored support to promote student success. Our admissions framework enables holistic consideration of applicants from under-represented cohorts. Targeted, cohort focused equity pathways and outreach programs improve access for aspiring and talented students regardless of background. The Deakin Guaranteed ATAR (DGA) provides clarity and opportunity for under-represented students seeking to study at Deakin. In the DGA's inaugural year, first-preference applications from under-represented schools, regional and remote applicants, and First Nations applicants rose by 7% overall.

Our equity initiatives build on Deakin's inclusive culture, promote equality of opportunity to widen aspiration and promote higher education to students from under-represented backgrounds. Scholarships continue as a strong foundation for our support program as detailed in our HECG Equity Plan. The Plan includes $174,000 for scholarships commencing in 2026 (in addition to $304,000 allocated in 2025), to enhance access and participation for under-represented groups. Deakin subsidises on campus accommodation ($481,000 to date in 2025, including $220,000 from HEPPP) and works with our student association to respond to food insecurity in our cohort. Equitable access to learning resources continues as a priority for Deakin with more than 85% of all resources available digitally and free to learners. Deakin's Strategic Plan guides our tailored approach to disability. We

have expanded neurodiversity programs and will continue creating inclusive spaces for students with disability. Embedded universal design and inclusive pedagogies improve the experience for students with lived experience of disability.

Deakin has applied for FEE-FREE Uni Ready places. An enabling program would strengthen our non-traditional entry pathways by providing a structured bridge into higher education and build students' essential academic skills.

Targets, measurement and efficacy of our programs

Strategic enrolment priorities are a pillar in Deakin's Student Load Strategy and align with the Universities Accord. We have implemented the Student Equity in Higher Education Evaluation Framework (SEHEEF) to evaluate the impact of our equity-focused initiatives. Enrolment targets are measured alongside access, participation, success and retention rates as a percentage of overall student outcomes for students:

- identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or both
- with a declared disability
- from a low-SES background
- from a regional or rural home location.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

Deakin education is designed to meet the needs of contemporary learners and a future-oriented workforce. We welcome diverse learners starting in higher education and those returning to study. Deakin builds lifelong education partnerships with graduates, industry and communities. Deakin is delighted to be judged by our students in the 2024 QILT surveys as top in Victoria for overall satisfaction.

Teaching and learning

DeakinDesign, our curriculum framework, integrates on-site and online delivery. Evidence-based practice draws on the latest educational research, student feedback, unit performance (attrition, success, satisfaction) from every teaching period and national survey results in a cycle of continuous improvement. We are an innovative educator, encouraging staff and students to develop awareness, knowledge and skills as contemporary, ethical and digitally capable citizens. We disseminated guidance on using generative artificial intelligence to students and teaching teams early in 2023 with a university-level steering committee and a Gen AI Framework that guides Deakin's approach. We have established a project which will ensure the academic integrity of Deakin's degrees and AI tools will be embedded into all Deakin courses commencing 2026.

Admissions

Deakin is committed to admissions transparency and publishes annual reports on Trimester 1 admissions, our largest intake. For further detail about admissions at Deakin, please see the previous section.

Success and retention

Deakin's Education and Employability Guiding Plan (internal document) focuses on student success as a key indicator of retention and progression. Our unit (subject) leads access dashboards providing student demographics, trends on use of learning resources, participation and assessment to enable timely intervention. We use student-centred approaches for continuous improvement including a robust Equity Students-as-Partners program.

Early intervention and support

Deakin's comprehensive approach is articulated in our *Support for Students policy*. Deakin monitors students' engagement from pre-commencement to census; contacting students who appear disengaged to offer academic or personal support, adjustment of study load or facilitating intermission

or withdrawal. Students who neither engage in their units nor respond to contact are unenrolled so no debt is incurred.

Support is tailored to cohorts: First Nations students have access to the Indigenous Tutorial Network; international students commence orientation early, supported by a guide to enrolling, travelling to Australia and studying.

Orientation runs for several weeks before and after teaching periods start. All students can use free study tools and support services. These include peer-assisted study sessions, maths support, writing assistance (24/7), study skills support, peer mentoring and wellbeing support.

Students failing or at risk of failure

Deakin's revised *Academic Progress policy* guides actions supporting all students at risk of making unsatisfactory progress, including students who have failed more than 50 per cent of their units in the study period under review.

Work integrated learning and career education commitments

All Deakin's highest enrolling, generalist undergraduate courses include career education and work-integrated learning in the core curriculum. (Career education at Deakin is covered in detail in Deakin's NPILF reports.) Labour market outcomes are considered in course approval and review, linking closely to the strategic plan and the guiding plans that support it.

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

Deakin undertakes innovative and discovery-driven research that addresses national, regional, and global priorities that align with our institutional capabilities. Our research and creative endeavours are strongly linked to applied research, translation and commercialisation through a focus on industry engagement—a portfolio which has grown in scale and quality faster than most other providers.

Excellence in Research, Research Training, and Innovation

Our strategy includes expanding and enriching our Graduate Researcher training programs led through our Researcher Development Academy to ensure that Graduate Research candidates receive professional development, ethics, integrity, open science, digital/data fluency, leadership, and industry-oriented skills. We also provide industry-focussed precincts to host leading research facilities, platforms and collaborative laboratories, including access to advanced technology hubs.

Measures:

- Growth in research quality as illustrated via key metrics (e.g., citations, journal quartiles), including those in the State of the Research Environment Reports being developed by the ARC.

- Increased research income from all sources (government, industry, philanthropic) and growth in income share from industry/public sector.

- Graduate Researcher metrics: cohort size, completion rate, time to completion, satisfaction surveys; ratio of HDR students to supervisors.

Strengthen and Expand Industry & Strategic Partnerships to Deliver Genuine Impact

Deakin will grow and deepen industry, government and community partnerships that co-design and co-deliver research outcomes, including pilot or scale-up projects. We will use precincts and shared R&D platforms to provide joint facilities and co-investment opportunities. For example, the Geelong Future Economy Precinct serves as a locus for advanced manufacturing, clean energy and sustainability projects. We will continue to focus on building translation pathways from idea to policy, product, service or process, simplifying licensing, technology transfer, and contract research. Dedicated commercialisation support units to assist researchers in intellectual property, proof-of-concept and market validation.

Measures:

- Number and total value of industry and government partnerships; number of joint projects, pilot/scale-ups undertaken.

- Number of industry-supported Graduate Researchers students; number of Graduate Researchers candidates with placements/engagement with industry.

- External investment attracted for collaborative R&D, co-funded projects.

Supporting and Realising Research Talent and Commercialisation Outcomes

Deakin will continue to invest in transforming research support systems: improving internal commercialisation pathways, seed funding for proof-of-concept, prototyping and spin-outs; strengthen technology transfer offices and licensing functions. Deakin will ensure that training for researchers includes commercial awareness, entrepreneurship, regulatory, business modelling, IP management and market validation. We are embedding these into Graduate Researcher training and researcher development programs.

Measures:

- Growth in commercialisation income, including licensing revenues and royalties;

- Number of active patents filed/granted.

Governance, Monitoring, and Continuous Improvement

Deakin has robust metrics and reporting dashboards (tracking publications, impact, commercialisation, training outcomes, external income, partnerships, etc.). We regularly review our research priorities to ensure alignment with emerging challenges and reallocate resources as needed. We incentivise innovation and entrepreneurship through institutional recognition, promotion and reward systems; integrate commercialisation outcomes into performance evaluation for relevant staff.

Measures:

- Annual reporting on key performance indicators for research quality, innovation/commercialisation, HDR outcomes and external partnerships.

- Scheduled policy and procedure reviews, including post-implementation

- Internal audits of supervision, research integrity, ethical compliance, and commercialisation process efficiency.

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

Deakin continues its mission to be Australia's most progressive university. Recognising the importance of industry engagement, Deakin formed a new Partnerships Portfolio in late 2023 to bring strategic focus to its external engagement. In 2025, Deakin launched *Partnerships by Design*, a new strategic approach to creating high-value, mutually beneficial collaborations with industry, government, academic institutions and the communities we serve.

The benefits of *Partnerships by Design*, makes partnering with Deakin simpler, clearer and more rewarding by turning collaboration into a strategic advantage through:
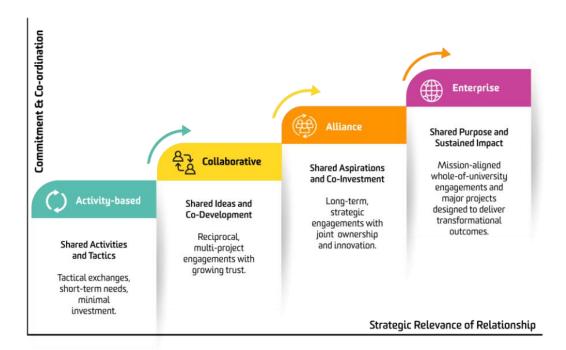
- A shared language to manage partnerships by scale and significance
- A structured model for formation, management and evaluation
- Capability building for staff to create partnerships with clarity and confidence
- Better decision making through real-time CRM data (Deakin's new enterprise CRM went live in 2025)
- A seamless partner experience underpinned by strong governance.

Partnerships by Design creates a common language, integrated with Deakin's new partnership lifecycle management and due diligence processes. This ensures all partnerships are mutually beneficial and managed with consistency, accountability and strategic intent. The model also provides guidance and

consistency in approach depending on the strategic relevance of the relationship as represented in the diagram below.

Partnerships by Design is built on the MUAS framework, a proven model originally developed by Muenster University of Applied Sciences (MAUS). Adopted by leading institutions including Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge, MUAS has enabled universities worldwide to form long-term partnerships, generate new income streams and deliver measurable impact.

Deakin's adoption of this model ensures our approach reflects international best-practice while adapting a proven framework to meet our priorities and the needs of our partners.

Partnerships by Design is implemented through a Partnerships Community of Practice (CoP), formed in 2023. The CoP's purpose is to:

- Increase the sophistication of Deakin partnership management
- Cross-promote partners and opportunities, and
- Develop a collaborative, decision-making ecosystem across Deakin.

The CoP unites 80 partnership experts across education, employment, research and innovation. With representatives from all faculties, portfolios and campuses, this CoP creates an unprecedented breadth of cross-unit collaboration both domestically and internationally.

The CoP works to breakdown silos, align partnership processes, and develop consistent best-practice pathways, tools and risk-mitigation processes to simplify workflows across Deakin.

By uplifting the maturity of enterprise-wide partnership management, we aim to provide a seamless experience for all high-value, high-impact partners - no matter which Deakin door an external partner may enter.

Building on the *Partnerships by Design* strategy, Deakin has decided to bring scale to four strategic initiatives with relevance across all Deakin Faculties, including, (i) sport, (ii) mobility, (iii) sustainability and the clean economy, and (iv) defence and national security. University wide strategies have been developed for two of these strategic initiatives, with the remaining two under construction. Each strategy is developed through significant internal and external engagement to ensure robust, relevant and impactful focus for each theme.

Deakins *Partnerships by Design* strategy brings intentionality to our external engagement. At the heart of this approach is a simple idea: strong partnerships don't happen by chance; they happen by design.

Appendix A - Student and Staff Safety

Deakin University is committed to prioritising health, safety and wellbeing, ensuring that students, staff, and our communities are safe, and feel safe – both physically and psychologically.

The University has no appetite for actions or activities that jeopardise a safe working and learning environment, and we apply best practice safety systems and contemporary approaches to control risks.

Our campus environments are thoughtfully designed, operated and maintained to positively impact health, safety and wellbeing outcomes, and Deakin has a robust health and safety management system managed in line with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, Safe Work Australia and WorkSafe Victoria.

In addition, Deakin University has implemented a robust, best-practice critical incident management process to safeguard the health and safety of staff, students, and campus stakeholders. This strategic, intelligence-led approach ensures preparedness and resilience in responding to complex risks and high-impact incidents beyond routine operations.

Our systems are regularly reviewed and enhanced in alignment with the ISO45001 standard, and we have a range of proactive initiatives to advance our health, safety and wellbeing goals, meet our compliance obligations and continue to provide a safe University environment for the Deakin community.

Beyond broader student and staff safety, Deakin University, in line with the new National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence, has adopted a comprehensive and proactive approach to preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

Central to Deakin's efforts is the 2025 Respect and Gender-based Violence Action Plan, which outlines our whole of organisation approach to preventing and responding to gender-based violence, as well as aligning our policy and practice to ensure compliance with the Code, including requirements related to training and awareness, response, data and reporting.

The Vice-Chancellor's Respect and Gender-based Violence Advisory Committee (and VC Respect and Gender-based Violence Working Group) serves as the governance mechanism to support and enable this work.

Our comprehensive suite of policies and procedures outlines Deakin's approach to creating safe, respectful and inclusive University environments. Procedures also detail support available for students and staff who experience harmful behaviours, and how complaints and conduct matters will be managed.

SIGNED for and on behalf of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

Jessica Mohr

Full name (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

Position

of the Department of Education

Signature

01/12/2025

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

By

Full name (please print)

IAIN MARTIN

Position

VICE-CHANCELLOR

Signature

In the presence of:

Rachel Searl

Witness (please print)

Executive Officer

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

In the presence of:

Witness (please print)

DANIELLE FARRELL

Position or profession of witness (please print)

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Signature