



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

The purpose, vision, strategic goals and strategic priorities of Edith Cowan University (ECU) are set down in the [ECU Strategic Plan, 2022-2026 – Towards the University of the Future](#), approved by the University’s governing Council in October 2021. In addition, eight supporting plans describe more detailed strategic objectives (publicly available), and their associated actions (internal only).

ECU’s purpose is to transform lives and enrich society.

ECU’s vision is to lead the sector in educational experience, research with impact, and in positive contributions to industry and communities.

Key outcomes for 2025 and 2026, the final two years of ECU’s current five-year Strategic Plan, include:

- maintaining a top 10 national ranking for student satisfaction with the overall educational experience (measured via the Student Experience Survey)
- maintaining research publication outputs per researcher and field weighted citation impact scores that are at or above national averages (as defined by the Strategic Plan)
- maintaining staff satisfaction at rates above national averages (measured via the biennial XRef “Voice” Survey, Passion/Engagement item)
- maintaining a top 400 ranking in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

ECU reviews all its courses on a five-yearly basis as part of the [Major Course Review \(MCR\) process](#) to ensure courses continue to meet the workforce and skills needs of industry and professional accreditation requirements. MCRs result in course curriculum changes, and the archiving and replacement of courses.

Student and staff safety is addressed through a range of support services, including health services, psychological counselling support and an out-of-hours crisis line for students, and an employee assistance program and a health and wellness program for staff, outlined in the [ECU Wellbeing Framework](#). Physical safety is supported through the [Work, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2026](#), WHS Committees, and the University's policies and processes for emergency first responses, ergonomics, incident reporting and investigation, risk management, injury management, and management of radiation, biosafety and hazardous substances. Implementation of [ECU's Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan](#) is guided by a Respect at ECU Advisory Group and reported to Council.

ECU's robust [International Compliance Review](#) process ensures all foreign activities comply with international obligations, sanctions, defence trade controls, foreign interference and relevant reporting requirements. ECU's [Conflict of Interest policy](#) requires staff to disclose secondary employment, including foreign interests and associations. An Integrity Training Program for all staff includes foreign interference content.

ECU's cyber and data security approach is defined by its [Compliance, Acceptable Use of Information Systems](#), and [Critical Incident and Business Continuity Management](#) policies and procedures, consistent with Australian Cyber Security Centre guidelines. ECU participates in the [Australasian Higher Education Cybersecurity Service](#) initiative, through the Council of Australasian University Directors of Information Technology and the [Cybersecurity Community of Practice](#).

In March 2020, ECU adopted a [Statement on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech](#) outlining the University's commitment to promoting and protecting academic freedom and freedom of speech. Concerns related to academic freedom and reported to Council are disclosed in ECU's Annual Report, along with student and staff ratings of freedom of expression and academic freedom.

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

The [ECU Strategic Plan, 2022-2026 – Towards the University of the Future](#), defines three Strategic Priorities relating to support for students from under-represented backgrounds and their communities. These are:

- **Promoting equity, diversity and excellence.** ECU will provide sector leadership in contemporary equity, diversity and inclusive practices, to widen participation and success in higher education.
- **Success for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.** ECU will lead the sector in education that supports the success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- **Strong regional communities.** ECU will drive improved outcomes for regional communities in Western Australia, through enhanced education and research opportunities at the South West Campus and its study hubs, and through capacity building for the workforce in the South West Region.

These Strategic Priorities are further detailed in four supporting plans, defining ECU's strategic objectives in relation to equity in higher education. These are: the [ECU Educational Experience Plan 2022-2026](#), the [ECU Equity and Inclusion Plan, 2022-2026](#), the [ECU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan, 2022-2026](#), and the [ECU Regional Plan, 2022-2026](#).

Key targets for 2025-2026 are:

- achieving success rates for ECU's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander first year students that are on par with the overall student average (as defined by the Strategic Plan)
- growing regional student enrolments through ECU South West (Bunbury) to 1,900 by 2026 (1,430 in 2025)

From 2025 ECU has increased its focus on support services for students with disability. Increased staff resourcing and service provision through the [Access and Inclusion team](#) has resulted in improved outcomes in Success, Retention and 4-year Completion for students with disability. Increased Disability Support Funding will allow further investment and increased capacity for Access and Equity team services.

ECU has recently established a Student Retention Strategic Leadership Group which will oversee initiatives to improve retention overall and for students from equity groups specifically. Initiatives will be co-designed with students to address their varied needs and challenges.

Success and transition rates of students in ECU's flagship Enabling program - [UniPrep](#) - have improved in recent years due to dedicated student support and peer assistance, and the proactive use of learning analytics to contact non-participating students.

ECU's South West Campus at Bunbury and two ECU-funded study hubs at Collie and Busselton continue to provide student support facilities and services to ECU students in the South West Region.

ECU leads a range of engagement activities and initiatives to address barriers and grow participation in higher education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The [Kurongkurl Katitjin student success team](#) provides individual support to current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and manages a range of education, accommodation and merit scholarships.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

ECU's teaching and learning goals are articulated in the [ECU Strategic Plan, 2022-2026 – Towards the University of the Future](#) and in ECU's [Educational Experience Plan, 2022-2026](#).

Key performance targets for 2025/2026 are:

- maintaining a top 10 national ranking for student satisfaction with the overall educational experience (measured via the Student Experience Survey)
- improving commencing bachelor retention rates (as defined by the Strategic Plan)
- achieving graduate employment rates at or above WA average (measured via the Graduate Outcomes Survey)
- achieving success rates for ECU's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander first year students that are on par with the overall student average (as defined by the Strategic Plan).

Curriculum transformation, through the Curriculum Transformation Program is an ECU strategic objective and a major focus for 2025/2026. A new [Course Design Policy suite](#) will implement TEQSA's advice for assessment reform in response to Artificial Intelligence, and includes a range of other curriculum enhancements to address student retention, employability, and equity, diversity and inclusion.

ECU's [Admissions Policy](#) and [Admission, Enrolment and Academic Progress Rules](#) provide comprehensive and clear information on admissions criteria, including pathways, English proficiency and preparation courses, as part of its **admissions transparency** obligations.

ECU's high proportion of mature-age domestic students is a significant factor impacting institutional retention performance, although the shortfall against the largely static national average has narrowed in recent years, driven by a range of **early intervention** and proactive services to support **at-risk students**. ECU's [Support for Students](#) policy and guidelines are available from the [ECU student intranet](#), providing a single access point for information on all academic support options, non-academic support options, and University Rules.

ECU has expanded support for academic integrity, including updated training and support for students and staff. All new students are required to complete ECU's Academic Integrity Module. In addition, self-access resources have been expanded for staff and students on the use of artificial intelligence in learning and assessment.

Student labour market outcomes are monitored closely, and workforce demand data informs intake decisions and course and unit reviews, as required under ECU's [Curriculum Design Policy](#). A new Centre for Employability continues to embed career development learning in the curriculum and increase internship and placement opportunities with industry partners, for improved employment outcomes for graduates.

International student support is mainstreamed to provide consistency with student support for domestic student cohorts, although ECU also monitors and supports international student transitions to help mitigate the particular external challenges faced by these students, such as accommodation shortages, connections to peers and developing a sense of belonging. In addition, ECU undertakes detailed monitoring of the academic performance of students by cohort group, including international students by country and international agent, to ensure that students are capable of succeeding in their studies.

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

ECU's research, research training, and innovation goals are articulated in the [ECU Strategic Plan, 2022-2026 – Towards the University of the Future](#) and in [ECU's Research Plan, 2022-2026](#). These documents set research excellence and research engagement goals and key performance targets. For 2025/2026, these targets are:

- maintaining research publication outputs per researcher that are above national averages (as defined by the Strategic Plan)
- maintaining a Field Weighted Citation Impact Score for ECU publications that is above the national average (as defined by the Strategic Plan)
- continuing to exceed the national average annual growth rate for research grant income (as defined by the Strategic Plan)
- achieving higher degree by research completions at a rate equal to or higher than the national average (as defined by the Strategic Plan)

ECU will continue to produce high-quality research by supporting its researchers and HDR candidates. Early-Mid Career Researchers are supported by a targeted internal grant scheme designed to assist in applying for grant funding, managing research projects and developing their track record. Distinguished Visiting Fellowships facilitate research collaboration and attract

international research leaders to ECU. All HDR courses have recently been revised and restructured to enhance candidate progression and success.

In 2025/2026, ECU will continue to focus its research to build scale in specific areas of research excellence including through support of ECU's Strategic Research Institutes and Centres – [Nutrition & Health Innovation Research Institute](#), [Exercise Medicine Research Institute](#), [Centre for Precision Health](#) and [Centre for People, Place and Planet](#).

ECU aims to significantly grow its number of HDR candidates and academic supervisors over the next few years. This will be informed by a review of current doctoral programs and consideration of the development of innovative and sector-leading HDR offerings to attract high-calibre domestic and international candidates to ECU.

Research commercialisation is underpinned by ECU's [Intellectual Property](#) policy and is supported by ECU's Commercial and Investment Services team, which provides commercial and financial analysis on commercial new investments and research, assistance in the preparation of tender applications, evaluation and set up of alternative corporate structures, including joint ventures, and manages the establishment of and financial process requirements of subsidiary entities. The applied nature of much of ECU's research means there is expected to be limited activity in research commercialisation in 2025/2026.

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

ECU teaching and learning staff engage with business representatives for the purposes of developing and reviewing courses. [Course Consultative Committees](#) and Advisory Boards include representatives from industry and the professions who advise on course design and assessment. The [Work Integrated Learning policy](#) ensures industry-relevant learning experiences are embedded in all teaching programs.

ECU's current [industry collaborations](#) connect ECU's diverse and talented students with businesses for the purposes of work placements, employment, entrepreneurship, and a range of community support activities. Innovative approaches to work-integrated learning and employability include the [IBM paid internship program](#), a partnership with IBM established in 2022 and focusing on current and emerging high-demand skill areas key to WA's digital economy, including user experience designers, software engineers, data scientists, mobile application developers, and project managers. ECU has also partnered with Apple to deliver WA's first [Apple Foundation Program](#) at the new City Campus from 2026.

ECU continues to build partnerships with government, community and industry organisations to increase the impact of its research. ECU is a major partner of several Joint Venture Partnerships for research across all WA universities, WA government and industry groups– these include the Pawsey Supercomputing Facility, RAINE study, WA Health Translation Network (WAHTN), WA Biodiversity Science Institute (WABSI), WA Marine Science Institute (WAMSI) and the WA Defence Science Centre (WADSC). Through Board membership ECU contributes to governance, strategy and oversight of such partnerships.

ECU also leads its own partnerships and a recent example of some significance is the [MARS Centre](#), a research collaboration with the mining industry funded by the WA Government. From 2025, ECU is partnering with the Fraunhofer Institute for Ceramic Technologies and Systems (IKTS) to establish the region's first research and innovation lab. This Lab, hosted within ECU's School of Engineering, will drive industry growth, provide practical business solutions, and offer students hands-on experience with cutting-edge technologies. In 2025/2026, ECU researchers will receive

additional targeted central support to develop and apply for grants with industry, government, and community bodies.

Defence Research and Engagement will be a continuing focus in 2025/2026. ECU is a member of the Team WA group of universities that co-ordinate and collaborate on activities to support and grow the defence research in WA. ECU's research expertise contributes to the Australian Defence Force capabilities in Cyber Security, Human Performance, Engineering and Science, and Information Warfare. The appointment of a Director of Defence Engagement in 2025 has already strengthened our relationships with defence and defence industry, as well as aligned areas including AUKUS Pillar 2 (developing a platform for advanced technology cooperation).

SIGNED for and on behalf of

In the presence of:

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

Jessica Mohr

Rachel Searl

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

Executive Officer

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)

of the Department of Education

Signature

Signature

01/12/2025

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of

In the presence of:

EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY

by

Professor Clare Pollock

Karen D'costa

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

Vice-Chancellor

Executive Officer

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

Signature