



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

Federation University's mission is to deliver the transformative education, training and research that enables regional communities to thrive. Our strategy focuses on:

- (a) a "needs-first" approach that begins with understanding the needs of students and regional employers;
- (b) an innovative Co-operative (Co-op) Education Model that integrates work and study to meet those needs; and
- (c) a deep commitment to equity and regional development.

Our 2040 vision identifies six strategic drivers:

1. **Truly differentiated:** Federation is redefining tertiary education, using co-op as the engine to deliver unique value to learners and employers. By early 2026, all in-scope programs will include co-op learning in the workplace, with success measured by placements, graduate employment and employer satisfaction.
2. **Enabling sustainable and thriving regions:** Co-designing education and research with industry to address regional skill shortages and partnering on innovation and research solutions to local challenges. Measures of success include the number of graduates in areas of demand and our economic and social contribution to the regions.
3. **Empowered learners and expanded opportunity:** Our goal is to lift attainment in our regions and achieve parity in student outcomes by 2040. Our growth aligns with national priorities—skilling regional Australia, boosting equity participation and addressing workforce gaps. Progress is measured by growth, retention, success, completion and satisfaction.
4. **First Peoples' advancement:** We aim to significantly raise First Peoples' learner participation and success, increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners and achieving parity in retention and completion rates by 2040. Our Aboriginal Education Centre and National Centre for Reconciliation, Truth and Justice are driving

change through award-winning language programs, expanded access, prison education and national leadership in reconciliation and truth-telling.

5. **Place-based, globally engaged:** Federation remains proudly regional while pursuing global partnerships. We will focus on international learners who are pursuing our co-operative, model and increase international research collaborations that directly benefit regional learners and communities. KPIs include the proportion of international students participating in co-op placements and global research impact.
6. **Careers with impact in an employer of choice:** We foster a workplace where impactful work, community connection and continuous development define every career. Staff engagement and retention are tracked through surveys and sector benchmarks.

National Priorities

Federation's strategy is strongly aligned with national and sector priorities, including enhancing equity and participation, addressing workforce needs and contributing to regional development.

We maintain robust governance and risk management, including compliance with the Australian [Foreign Arrangements Scheme](#) and [expert controls](#) and cyber and data security requirements through our comprehensive Cyber Security Roadmap. Academic freedom and freedom of speech are protected through [formal policy](#), consistent with national standards. Compliance is monitored and staff surveys assess the environment for open discourse.

The safety, wellbeing and inclusion of our students and staff are paramount. We have a dedicated Student Support and Wellbeing division, conduct regular audits and maintain robust procedures. In preparation for the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence, we have formed an Implementation Advisory Group to plan to implement the Code with the inclusion of students, lived experience and expertise.

Federation is proud of its diverse community and works to actively combat racism, sexism and discrimination. We monitor progress through our Inclusion Committee of Council, ensuring a respectful, safe and inclusive environment for all.

Measures of Success

- Number of co-op placements completed
- Graduate employment outcomes
- Economic and social contribution to regional communities
- Student retention, completion and satisfaction rates
- Progress towards parity for equity and First Peoples' cohorts
- Student and staff survey results

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

Equity is central to Federation's identity as the #1 university in Australia for first generation enrolments and #1 in Victoria for social equity. We are committed to broadening access and improving outcomes for students from underserved communities, with 60% of Federation's students meeting one or more equity criteria, including First Peoples, low SES, regional/remote and students living with disability.

Access and pathways

We leverage our dual-sector status to create seamless TAFE-to-university pathways, enabling students to begin with certificates or diplomas and transition into degrees. The Foundation Access Studies (FAST) program offers an enabling pathway for students who do not meet standard entry requirements or need to refresh their academic skills before starting higher education.

Outreach initiatives target regional and underserved schools through experience days, student ambassadors and “Bring Your Parents to Uni” events. Transition programs such as Ready Set Go in Gippsland support Year 10 students to build confidence and explore post-school pathways, while Advance to Uni allows senior school students to try two first-year university units free of charge. Initiatives are designed to raise aspirations, demystify university and ensure that students from equity backgrounds are supported from early engagement through to enrolment and success.

First Peoples’ Strategy

Lifting First Peoples’ participation is critical for Federation. We are working directly with regional and remote communities and the Victorian Government to co-design targeted programs that reflect local priorities and cultural strengths. Building on the work of our Aboriginal Education Centre and National Centre for Reconciliation, Truth and Justice, we are developing a whole-of-institution First Peoples’ Strategy to expand culturally safe learning, grow First Peoples’ language programs, embed Indigenous knowledges across curricula and strengthen pathways into education, research and leadership.

Experience, success, retention and completion

Federation is ranked #1 in Victoria for undergraduate student support and #6 nationally. Small class sizes and personal attention help students succeed. A Retention and Success Taskforce uses analytics to identify and support at-risk students, which contributed to a significant turnaround in attrition from ~27% to 21% in two years. We project further improvement, with a target to reduce this to 17% by 2030.

Academic support includes writing mentors, innovation in mathematics and statistics support and peer tutoring. Flexible learning options accommodate part-time students and those with family responsibilities. The Disability Liaison Unit provides extensive support, with 18% of Federation students identifying as living with a disability, well above the national average.

Financial barriers are addressed through over 200 scholarships and bursaries, including the KickStart bursary for remote students and emergency funds for those at risk of deferring. Other supports include food banks, free counselling and peer mentoring programs. The co-op model integrates paid placements into degrees, reducing financial stress and improving employment outcomes.

We are committed to ensuring students are directly involved in shaping policies and actions that affect their experience, including through our [Student Equity and Inclusion Network](#), a student-led advisory body comprising 10–12 members from diverse backgrounds, ensuring intersectional representation across equity cohorts.

Federation tracks success, retention, completion rates and graduate outcomes by cohort. Improved retention and success rates will lead to higher completion rates over time, with the goal of achieving parity between equity students and Federation’s broader student cohort. Despite the challenges faced by many equity students, Federation delivers consistently strong graduate employment outcomes and our graduates have the second-highest starting salaries in Victoria, strongly positioning them for successful and rewarding careers.

HECG Funding

Higher Education Continuity Grant funding will be used to expand outreach and enhance student support, experience and outcomes. These initiatives are detailed in Federation’s Equity Plan.

Measures of success

- Participation, retention and completion rates for equity cohorts
- Number of students accessing enabling and pathway programs
- Attainment rates in regional Victoria

- Progress towards parity in outcomes for underserved groups.

Further information

[Students and Support for Students Policy](#)

[Support services - Federation University Australia](#)

[Equity and inclusion - Federation University Australia](#)

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

Our *Learning and Teaching Strategy 2025–2030* (in development) focuses on three priorities: exemplar in co-operative education, outstanding student experience and success and sustainability in delivery.

Exemplar in Co-operative Education

Our co-op model integrates academic learning with structured, meaningful workplace experiences. By 2026, all in-scope programs will embed co-op placements, ensuring students graduate with industry-relevant skills and experience. We are expanding cadetships, paid internships and research placements, supported by a digital marketplace for co-op opportunities. Industry partnerships are deepened through staff exchanges, co-teaching and co-designed programs.

Outstanding Student Experience and Success

Federation ranks #1 in Victoria for undergraduate teaching quality and undergraduate student support (2024 QILT Student Experience Survey).

We place students at the centre of learning. We are committed to delivering high-quality education that meets the needs of regional communities and aligns with national priorities. We cultivate a culture of excellence and innovation in teaching and researcher training, supported by professional development and recognition. We are enhancing feedback systems, embedding GenAI ethically and improving assessment through assurance of learning frameworks.

Sustainability and Resource Optimisation

To ensure long-term viability, Federation is aligning offerings with student demand, workforce need and regional priorities. We will foster cross-campus collaboration and shared resource models.

Student success and retention

Student retention and success are central to our approach. We use analytics to identify at-risk students and provide early intervention through academic skills support, welfare services and personalised learning plans. Flexible delivery models, including online and blended learning, ensure accessibility for all students, particularly those balancing study with work or family commitments. International students receive comprehensive orientation, social programs and tailored support, with outcomes tracked through satisfaction and retention rates.

We are committed to admissions transparency, regularly publishing entry requirements and program information. Our approach to student support is inclusive, with targeted initiatives for equity cohorts. Data insights are used to plan retention and student support activities, as well as improve student experience and retention. Intervention strategies are activated where the student has failed, or deemed not yet competent, in 50% or more of the courses or units studied in any study period.

Measures of Success

- Five-star ratings for teaching quality and student experience
- Growth in co-op placements and graduate employment outcomes

- Retention and completion rates, especially for equity cohorts
- Student satisfaction and engagement metrics
- Staff professional development and recognition

Further information

[Students and Support for Students Policy](#)

[Monitoring Course/Qualification Progression Procedure](#)

[Student Support and Orientation for International Students Procedure](#)

[Partners and Community Engagement Policy](#)

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

Federation's research strategy is focused on practical, applied research that drives regional innovation and contributes to global knowledge. Our vision is to be Australia's leading regional, co-operative university for research, emphasising community impact, industry partnerships and excellence in select fields.

Research priorities and impact

We have identified five interdisciplinary research priorities:

1. First Peoples' and Reconciliation Research
2. Global-Regional Health and Wellbeing
3. Co-operative Industrial Transformation
4. Sustainable Environments and Communities
5. Advancing Society and Education.

These themes align with national priorities and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring our research is both regionally relevant and globally significant.

Research excellence and impact

Federation has improved its research quality, with 80% of disciplines rated at or above world standard in the 2024 ERA. The University continues to climb global rankings, targeting THE World Rankings 301–400 and maintaining Top 100 in Impact Rankings by 2030. Publication quality and citation impact are key metrics. We are working to improve collaboration and success rates across the University and supporting early career researchers through mentoring and seed grants.

Co-operative research degrees

Co-operative research degrees are a hallmark of our approach, offering students industry-linked research experiences with projects co-designed alongside industry, government and community. Over 60% of research scholarships are awarded in partnership with external organisations, ensuring our research delivers real-world impact and prepares graduates for diverse careers.

Innovation and commercialisation

Innovation and commercialisation are accelerated through our technology parks and innovation hubs, which foster translational research, support start-ups and enable R&D partnerships with industry. We have launched accelerator programs to fast-track commercialisation and support emerging entrepreneurs within the university community.

Measures of Success:

- Growth in HDR enrolments and industry-linked research projects
- External research income and commercialisation outcomes
- Proportion of publications in Q1 journals
- Impact rankings and research quality metrics
- Graduate employment outcomes for research students

Further information:[Research Strategy 2025-2030](#)

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

Co-operative education partnerships

Industry engagement is central to Federation's identity as Australia's first co-operative university. Our strategy embeds partnerships with employers across teaching, research and innovation, positioning Federation as a bridge between academia and industry. With over 1,800 active partners—from global firms to local SMEs and government agencies—our goal is to deepen and expand these relationships to meet regional workforce needs and drive economic growth.

The co-op model relies on employer partnerships to deliver paid placements and shape curriculum. Formal agreements outline placement commitments and curriculum input, while Industry Advisory Panels ensure alignment with workforce needs. Our goal is for 100% of undergraduate students to complete at least one co-op experience in industry by graduation. We are expanding our partner base across sectors, including health, education, energy and advanced manufacturing.

Cadetships and employment-based pathways

Federation is pioneering cadetship programs that link study with employment. We are partnering with major health networks to place nursing and allied health students (both HE and VET) in paid cadetships to address hospital workforce needs and with local government and engineering firms to run engineering cadetships that fill municipal infrastructure skill gaps. In response to teacher shortages, we partner with the Victorian Government to deliver part-time education pathways for school staff. Similar models are being developed in aged care and childcare, where students work while studying, supported by scholarships. These programs directly address workforce gaps and improve graduate outcomes.

Technology parks and innovation precincts

Federation hosts Australia's largest regional technology park at Ballarat, home to 64+ companies and over 2,400 employees. The park fosters daily interaction between industry and university, with students interning and academics collaborating on projects. The longstanding IBM partnership exemplifies this model. We have expanded this through the Morwell Innovation Centre in Gippsland and Tech Park Central in Ballarat's CBD. Our model continues to attract large companies to our Tech Park which in turn provides a positive impact to the economic development of our regions (~\$700m in economic activity). This is evidenced through the recent launch of Accenture at our Ballarat Tech Park. By 2040, we aim for our precincts to support over 5,000 jobs and serve as hubs for co-op learning, research and enterprise.

Measures of Success:

- Student co-op placements (target: 100% of undergraduates with co-op experiences)
- Growth in co-op placements, cadetships and industry-linked research projects
- Research income from industry sources
- Employer satisfaction and retention of graduates in regional jobs
- Economic impact of precincts.

Further information:[Engage | Federation University](#)[Co-operative education | Federation University](#)[Apply for a co-op placement | Federation University](#)

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
FEDERATION UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA
by

Professor Duncan Bentley

Full name (please print)

Vice-Chancellor and President

Position

Signature

Date: 12 November 2025

In the presence of:

Rachel Searl

Witness (please print)

Executive Officer

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

In the presence of:

Paula Burton

Witness (please print)

Executive Assistant

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature