**Australian Government**

**Department of Education**

## 2025 Mission-Based Compact Between the Commonwealth of Australia and The University of Adelaide

## 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 University of Adelaide (UoA) is focused on its merger with the University of South Australia to form the new Adelaide University.  That notwithstanding, UoA remains committed to deliver highest performing University possible into the merger.  This will be done through the continued execution of the 2024-2025 UoA strategic plan.  As such this is a lightly updated version of our previous submission with additional content regarding the UoA's efforts to strengthen research protection and security as per the department's feedback on the 2024 Compact.

UoA's vision is to be known as a social, cultural, and academic thought leader—an accessible, responsive, and responsible corporate citizen designing and building a better future for all. UoA's purpose is to be a catalyst for innovation and knowledge creation; an engine of social advancement; and an active participant in the local, national, and global economies.

The next step in UoA's journey is the convergence of two universities, UoA and the University of South Australia, each with its own remarkable history of achievement, to create Adelaide University. Creating Adelaide University is an opportunity to advance UoA's ambitions for tertiary education and innovation further and faster than what can be achieved on its own today. During these transition years, UoA will direct its energy to continuing to strengthen the institution for its students, staff, and community, while simultaneously supporting the transition to Adelaide University.

The UofA Strategic Plan 2024-2025 aims to ensure successful transition to and the establishment of Adelaide University with momentum for long-term success whilst ensuring that delivery of key outcomes in education and research are not compromised in the lead into 2026. This will be achieved through strategic objectives aimed at advancing UoA's mission and addressing national and sector priorities.

Two foundation elements underpin the strategic plan:
- A strong culture that values diverse experiences
- Financial sustainability that supports and delivers UoA's goals

Enabling these elements will allow UoA to deliver on its ambitions through five pillars of excellence:
- Connected to the global world of ideas, creating a globally integrated and culturally diverse community;
- A magnet for talent, attracting leading scholars, learners, partners, and industries;
- Research that shapes the future, developing partnerships and expertise to make a significant positive difference to the world;
- A 21st century education for a growing community of learners, creating an accessible, enriching and satisfying student experience; and
- The beating heart of Adelaide, expanding and enriching life in Adelaide.

For each pillar and foundational element, UoA has identified key metrics which indicate progress toward and achievement of UoA's ambition. In addition, UoA has also identified a series of strategic initiatives it will undertake to implement the strategic plan in 2024 and 2025. A selection of initiatives which reflect UoA's contributions to national and sector priorities in workforce and skill needs, student and staff safety, countering foreign interference, cyber and data security, and upholding academic freedom include:
- Implementing an action plan that creates a diversity of experience and perspective;
- Maintaining an agenda of events, programs and professional development programs that welcome global collaborators to UoA campuses, showcase cultural diversity and raise intercultural experience and skills;
- Focusing on research in breakthrough technologies for new industries and sovereign capability (Digi+);
- Supporting flagship research projects in the Defence Trailblazer and pursuing opportunities from the AUKUS trilateral security partnership;
- Developing a strategic global network that positions UoA as the partner of choice for global institutions, agencies, and industry, for new revenue generation, reputation enhancement and education, research and engagement activities; and
- Stimulating collegiality and a sense of community through an integrated program of internal communications, to ensure staff are informed, heard, connected and valued.

A comprehensive list of strategic initiatives and KPIs can be found in the UoA Strategic Plan 2024-2025 which will be available here.

The University has well developed policies, practices and training around:
- Freedom of Speech/Academic Freedom here.
- Integrity and Accountability including Foreign Interference here.

The University is committed to strengthening our culture, and ensuring that our community is supported to work, study and volunteer in a safe and inclusive environment. More information about the Integrity Unit can be found here.

# Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

UoA has an ambition to increase access and opportunity for disadvantaged students by increasing enrolment and retention rates, narrowing achievement gaps, and enhancing overall academic success and wellbeing for underrepresented students. UoA will support this ambition by delivering programs and initiatives in meaningful partnership with public and private organisations to foster a diverse student cohort.

UoA will measure its progress through targets such as:
- Increasing Indigenous employment rate to 80 by 2024 and 85 by 2025;
- Increasing the number of First Nations student completions to 65; and
- Increasing 1% per annum in student satisfaction scores with overall experience, student support, learning resources and learner engagement.

Environmental factors are foundational in improving student equity and access. Providing a welcoming environment with the feeling of belonging will enhance student experience and performance, increasing equity and access. UoA will continue to ensure it provides welcoming campuses through continuing its program of cultural and campus events to engage its communities. This will enhance student and community outreach and provide greater access and opportunity to under-represented groups. UoA will ensure its Adelaide campuses remain physically and intellectually available to the public, attracting visitors year-round; its North Terrace campus to be a vibrant hub in the city centre, just as Waite and Roseworthy will be in their communities; and ensure its current student and alumni bodies continue to have access to welcoming spaces.

Recognising the importance of supporting students from under-represented backgrounds, UoA will implement a range of initiatives that are designed to ensure access, opportunity, and success across the University, with focus on supporting First Nations students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, rural and remote students, and students with disability. These initiatives include:
- Improving access and entry for students through scholarships and entry pathways for equity groups, new cohorts of learners and First Nations students;
- Implementing our First Nations Strategy that seeks to transform the First Nations experience for all students and staff;
- Supporting mentorship programs, peer assisted study sessions to help students understand and apply key concepts;
- Supporting the Writing Centre to help students in their writing through in person and online via one-on-one consultations; and
- Providing health support such as disability support for personalised advice and assistance to students with disabilities, and working with students to identify relevant reasonable adjustments.

In addition to these core strategic and operational investment UoA welcomes the opportunity to reinforce allocations with funding from the Higher Education Continuity Grant (HECG). Current projections show likely HECG in the order or $1-2m. Detailed planning is underway, but it is likely that this amount will be invested in outreach activities and scholarships. Given the horizon for expending the grant extends beyond the opening of the new Adelaide University these investments will need to be coordinated with the University of South Australia. Details will be provided in the Equity Plan.

## Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

UoA will support its ambition to provide excellent learning experiences across campus, online and blended delivery modes and meet student expectations by building staff capability to design and deliver a contemporary curriculum. UoA's curriculum will remain relevant by adjusting to respond to emerging opportunities, technological and policy changes, and evolving accreditation requirements. This will prepare students for future workforce success and enabling lifelong learning.

UoA will measure its progress through targets such as:
- Achieving an overall employment rate (domestic 3 year aggregate) above the SA average;
- Increasing the number of commencing international coursework students to 2,832 by 2024 and 2,911 by 2025;
- Increasing 1% per annum in student satisfaction scores with overall experience, student support, learning resources and learner engagement; and
- Improving international ranking performance across priority ranking schemes by one position.

As UoA aims to grow and increase the diversity of its international student cohort, UoA will implement initiatives that support these students through:
- Enhancing student recruitment for growth and diversity, through international student recruitment operations with a focus on expanding current and developing new partnerships for recruitment of students in cohorts;
- Supporting staff and students to thrive amongst diversity, by continuing academic, language, induction, intercultural engagement, and career support for international students to contribute to a more successful and thriving international student cohort.

UoA will enhance staff capability, responsiveness to change, and industry relevance, focused on enhancing skills, career readiness and post-graduation outcomes. Through monitoring emerging opportunities, technological and policy changes, and evolving accreditation requirements, this will ensure UoA's curriculum remains relevant and better prepares its students for success in the labour market and improves employability. UoA has identified a series of initiatives to support this ambition. These initiatives have been selected to reflect ambition on curriculum, program structure, student experience and support. These include:
- Developing a learning ambition and roadmap to enhance and transform learning and teaching in a digital world;
- Developing a strong education foundation through enhancements to internships and employability programs, the PACE program, micro credential courses, education transition team, academic integrity program, and transition to in-house online delivery;
- Transitioning to an in-house online program delivery by establishing in-house capabilities to meet opportunities in the evolving digital higher education landscape;
- Providing timely support and assistance to address the needs of struggling students, including targeted interventions such as counselling services;
- Implementing high-quality academic and pastoral support by enabling student success in the context of growth, diversity, and inclusion, including support for international students; student success initiatives; and a focus on student mental health and wellbeing.
- Implementing the student mental health and wellbeing framework;
- Providing continued services to support students through drop in centres and mentoring programs, and services such as Studiosity for afterhours online study help.

In addition the University has well developed policy and procedures to proactively identify and support students at risk of poor performance further information can be found here.

## Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

UoA is dedicated to strengthening research excellence and leveraging its expertise, scale and industry partnerships to make a significant, positive difference to the world. UoA will continue to develop its engagement, business development and commercialisation capabilities in concert with the transition program and further align research to economic and social priorities to play a stronger role in the creation of new technologies, businesses, and sovereign capability.

UoA's 'foci and magnets for excellence' (FAME) research areas are cross-disciplinary and revolve around four 'grand opportunities':
- Sustainability with a focus on energy and environment;
- Agrifood and wine with a focus on ensuring economic value-add and food security;
- Healthy societies integrating health with Indigenous and societal wellbeing; and
- Digi+ with a focus on breakthrough technologies for new industries and sovereign capability.

UoA will measure its progress through targets to increase:
- HERDC income to $275 million by 2025;
- the number of highly cited researchers to 24 by 2025, and
- the number of HDR commencements to 600 by 2025.

UoA can improve research outcomes and contribute to knowledge creation and societal impact through strategically aligning research priorities, training, and innovation activities.

UoA will integrate discovery to translation of commercial outcomes through strategic partnerships, collaboration, and targeted funding initiatives. The University will maintain and steward strategic partnerships through business development and continue to work alongside industry peers, HDR students, and future research users, creating environments that advance its research priorities in FAME areas and enable collaboration and post-graduate student internships.

In parallel, research training is a priority focus for UoA, as the University recognises the importance of developing the skills and capabilities of its students and early career researchers. UoA will support this through initiatives such as:

- Supporting the HDR pathway, to implement activities outlined in the Higher Degree by Research Strategy around the pillars of Research and Innovation Future Makers, Experience Excellence, and Future-making Community, to inspire, develop, and enable the researchers and innovators of the future; and

- Co-investing in research to maintain the University's capacity, including contributions to access national infrastructure.

As Australia's most Defence-engaged university, the UoA is proactive in safeguarding its autonomy and reputation in a global context. In recent years, the Australian Government has recommended that the Australian higher education sector apply additional vigilance to all international engagements and all research involving critical technologies, citing an unprecedented scale of foreign interference they believe is intended to harm Australia's national interests. This vigilance is applied to all University-related activities where the activities involve critical technologies and/or engagements with foreign entities.

## Strategies for Engaging with Industry

UoA will support its ambition to connect South Australia to the world and the world to South Australia, by building a globally integrated and culturally diverse community. UoA will:

- Engage with industry through its strong partnerships with public and private organisations, to establish and strengthen long-term relationships across sectors and geographies with partners that can advance UoA's priorities in research, commercialisation, and education
- Engage with industry on research investments, where University researchers will work alongside industry peers, HDR students, and future research users, creating environments that advance research priorities in FAME areas
- Attract high-quality HDR students working in priority areas
- Focus on building a university city.

UoA will measure its progress through targets such as:

- Finalising six aspirational partnerships within Global Partnership Development Framework (GPDF); and
- Achieving philanthropic revenue of $25m in 2025.

Recognising the importance of industry engagement, UoA will implement a range of initiatives that are designed to engage with industry to position the University as the partner of choice for global institutions, agencies, and industry. These include:

- Implementing a strategic global network strategy to position the University as the partner of choice for global institutions, agencies, and industry, for new revenue generation, reputation enhancement and education, research and engagement activities;
- Continuing a program of cultural and campus events across all three campuses to engage with communities in the social and intellectual fabric of South Australia;
- Maintaining a centrally coordinated approach to attract and bring an increased number of collaborating industry partners on campus, to share infrastructure, social spaces and collaborative opportunities; and
- • Responding to opportunities to co-locate with the government and defence partners on Lot Fourteen to enhance UoA's credentials in information capability within world-class research spaces.

SIGNED for and on behalf of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

In the presence of:

**Jessica Mohr**

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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

01/12/2025

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Date

**Rachel Searl**

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Witness (please print)

**Executive Officer**

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Position or profession of witness (please print)

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Signature

SIGNED for and on behalf of

The University of Adelaide

by

In the presence of:

**Professor Peter Høj AC**

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Full name (please print)

**Vice-Chancellor and President**

Position

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Signature

**Ms Jillian Miller**

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Witness (please print)

**Director: Office of the Vice-Chancellor**

Position or profession of witness (please print)

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Signature