



## 2025-2026 Mission-Based Compact Between the Commonwealth of Australia and The University of Western 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

Established in 1911 on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar, UWA's mission is to provide world-class education, research, and community engagement for the advancement of the prosperity and welfare of our communities. ***Seek Wisdom*** guides the ethos of our comprehensive university.

Through 2025, as our current strategic plan ends, we continue to review our environment and direction and confirm the focus for our new Strategic Plan for 2026-2030. Strategic Pillars of Empowering Education, Enriching Experience and Impactful Research provide the guiding evolution, outlined below.

### UWA 2025 and 2026 key outcomes

- *Increasing student enrolment*: in domestic and international student cohorts, with balanced diversity
- *Increased research income*: with a priority on diversification
- *Improved student participation*: of First Nations students, students from low SES backgrounds and students from a regional or remote area
- *Higher student satisfaction*: reported on QILT survey results, with an eye across all contributing metrics
- *Growing EBITDA margin*: to ensure continual sufficient investment in our strategy, facilities, staff and students

**Workforce and skills requirements** – UWA will continue to address changing workforce needs by launching a new Bachelor of Nursing (Hons) in 2026 (accreditation pending) with a regional focus, along with targeted upskilling courses that address the expanding scope of practice of healthcare professionals. Innovative curriculum that integrates more significant experiential learning will be developed and launched for 2026, underpinned by greater engagement with industry which will inform the next direction of lifelong learning.

**Student and staff safety** – Continued prioritisation of health and wellbeing through proactive implementation of the [Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework](#), and the [Safe, Respectful and Inclusive Communities Framework](#)

**Countering Foreign Interference** – [UWA's Foreign Interference Policy](#) is updated annually and governed by an Executive led accountable authority, the Foreign Interference Advisory Committee, that reports bi-annually to UWA Executive. In addition, the Foreign Interference Due Diligence Group provides a gateway for advice, identification of risk thresholds, and tailored risk mitigation strategy development. All Academic, HDR and Professional Staff above Level 7 must complete the International Activities Declaration annually to raise awareness of risks and ensure accountability. Screening for employees through mandatory police checks, visa checks and work history are being introduced based on potential exposure risk. UWA is a member of the Defence Industry Security Program (DISP). We regularly consult with DFAT, Home Affairs and other sector stakeholders to ensure risks are identified early and managed effectively.

**Cyber-Security** – Our focus is on strengthening cyber resilience across the University by:

- Enhancing staff and students with the knowledge and capability to protect information and systems, fostering a strong culture of shared cyber responsibility.
- Uplifting our cyber security capabilities to align with the WA State Cyber Security Policy, including achieving compliance with the Australian Cyber Security Centre's Essential Eight maturity requirements.

**Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom** – UWA values Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom, represented in the [Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom](#) which also outlines the guidelines that uphold our duty to foster the wellbeing of staff and students.

## Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

UWA understands the importance of creating an environment that provides opportunity to a diverse staff and student population across Western Australia, and beyond. [UWA's 2022-2025 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\) Strategy](#) expresses the University's commitment to supporting its diverse staff and student communities, removing systemic barriers and fostering an inclusive environment. Student equity is guided by the Student Access and Participation Working Group, a collaboration in delivering the [Student Access Equity Plan](#). The strategies supporting improved learning and teaching are outlined below.

UWA is prioritising activity:

1. To reinforce the UWA position within the community to be a truly supportive partner in higher education for all students,
2. To remove barriers to participation and success, particularly financial and ongoing support via dedicated scholarships,
3. To open pathways into UWA to increase the opportunity for more students to participate, including improved transparency for admissions, and
4. To ensure our courses are highly relevant to our broader community providing students more options to decide what, where, and how they learn.

UWA launched the new [UWA Connect Scholarship](#) for 2025 to lower the financial barriers of studying at UWA for students who are Indigenous, from low socio-economic background, from regional/remote/rural area, experience disability or a medical condition, the first in family to attend university or experiencing financial hardship. Commitments in the HECG Equity Plan extend the opportunity of this scholarship to more students with an ACSES supported trial assessing the impact of the packaged-scholarship program. To support and attract Indigenous HDR students, premium scholarships are provided to Indigenous students who meets requirements to study a PhD.

To complement existing programs – [Aspire](#) raising aspiration for higher education, [Fairway](#) supporting year 11 and 12 students experiencing disadvantage, [Broadway](#) offering an ATAR adjustment to students studying in a regional/remote or lower ICSEA school, and [Children's University](#) encouraging a love of learning in younger children in Albany, Peel and Perth – UWA is extending engagement in regional WA and outer suburban Perth, with the University Study Hubs. Initiatives are monitored in alignment with the SEHEEF. As a result of this engagement, more courses are being offered flexibly to extend access to more people and more opportunities to study are being created in Albany and regional WA. The Bachelor of Education is an example where this aligns with high workforce need and student demand, and is now offered at UWA Albany. Expanded partnerships with health providers are creating more regional student placement opportunities.

To build on Experience-based Entry, which recognises academic achievements and life experiences as an alternative to ATAR, a new pathway program is being developed for 2026 which further opens admission to UWA, whilst providing the scaffolding and core skills to be successful in university studies.

Targets reflect growth in access rate for students from a low SES background, and small growth for Indigenous students and regional/remote students. The Student Access and Participation Framework also monitors cohort performance: a positive sense of belonging, retention rates and completion rates.

## Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

UWA seeks to empower students to be master learners and embrace lifelong learning, responding to the changing demands of the workforce. This is underpinned by a stimulating curriculum, enriched with experiential learning opportunities, including access to innovative research. A renewed focus on improving integration with industry, community, and alumni will enhance employability and connection, while investment in learning and teaching capabilities improves teacher and student experience.

UWA has a persistent focus on initiatives that improve teaching and learning quality, which have improved students' score of UWA's Teaching Quality since 2020:

- Fostering an environment of teaching excellence through programs such as Communities of Practice and the Academy Fellowships Scheme
- Investing in a tailored pathways support program to provide specialised academic and social support to entry-based pathway students, and students at risk of not progressing in their studies
- UWA's Student Experience of Learning and Teaching (SELT) survey promotes continual improvement in teaching and learning and informs professional development for educators, using digital and performance dashboard tools to monitor success rates and at-risk students for early intervention
- Transitioning to an upgraded Learning Management System that improves the student digital experience, including the implementation of universal design for learning principles, aimed at increasing access, participation, and success for all students.

Significant consideration has been given to support educators to meet the changing higher education landscape as the evolution of digital and Gen AI tools progresses at pace. Support for staff includes the development of a dedicated Assessment and Integrity team of Learning Designers. Support for students includes a dedicated course in Digital and AI Literacy (for 2026), as well as [guides and resources](#) to help students navigate these new tools.

Greater connection with industry and alumni continues to guide curriculum and programs and richer experience-based learning will remain a focus. This is being enabled by strengthened industry and community engagement to expand on current work-integrated learning and service-learning opportunities to create opportunities for distinct learner cohorts. Establishing the [UWA Centre for Employability](#) will be the centralising place for partners and students to access opportunities. New Integrated Professional degrees will provide deep workplace learning to build job readiness.

Students are supported in success and progression through early identification and active engagement: timely support that uses data to predict student's success; simplifying referral to a range of academic, wellbeing and financial support services; and the probation journey to identify the needs of students identified by results from the previous teaching period to support their success. These extend the [holistic program of support](#), including mentoring, international student transition, personal and wellbeing support and employability skills. There has also been a dedicated focus on delivering a coordinated and intentional First Year Experience. This support is enhanced through strong partnership with the [UWA Guild](#) (and its clubs and services) and the dedicated Indigenous support through the [School of Indigenous Studies](#).

Success will be improvement in Student Satisfaction overall (QILT), and monitored through improvement on the Teaching Quality metric.

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

As one of the world's leading research-intensive universities, we will be known for our transformative research, advancing knowledge in all our academic endeavours to resolve real-world challenges critical to the planet and its people. Continued growth in research income has been fuelled by high growth in non-government funding sources, demonstrating success of focused activity. This connection to our community allows us to invest in research that improves lives and our environment, embracing the unique advantages of our location.

Our research is anchored in five broad cross- and inter-disciplinary themes of impact that reflect our context and the priorities of WA and the nation:

1. Frontier technologies
2. Resilient environment and climate change
3. Clean energy transition and sustainable resources
4. Health and Biotechnology
5. Our Place – Culture, Heritage and Society

UWA has an embedded and evolving set of Research priorities that secure our position as one of Australia's leading research institutes and maintain our top 100 (QS) ranking. Through 2025 and 2026, these priorities are:

- Attracting and retaining research talent and capacity, which will include developing internal research and research support leaders, with dedicated focus on developing and supporting Indigenous researchers
- Increasing the number of Endowed Chairs, particularly in areas that are of importance to our nation and our state
- Growing and diversifying research income, including growing industry sponsored research and building a strong base for philanthropy through sharing powerful research stories
- Enhancing our impact and translation by building deeper and broader partnerships with industry, government, research institutes, health systems and not-for-profits
- Fostering respectful and collaborative partnerships between researchers working in Indigenous-relevant fields and the School of Indigenous Studies, Indigenous people and traditional owners
- Building on our strengths in Health and Medical research to support a healthy community, including pursuing a bio-innovation hub
- Establishing an active commercialisation culture and exploring opportunities to develop an early seed fund to support innovation in emerging areas of economic and strategic importance
- Ensuring our infrastructure enables the needs of our areas of strategic importance

Research training is a core focus of our research endeavour and renewed focus is being applied to grow HDR student enrolments and the proportion of timely completions. New systems allow for more active candidate management, which is complemented by supervisor development and support. Appeal of HDR programmes, to attract excellent students, is being addressed by contemporising the HDR offering aligned to student, industry and employer needs. By growing the HDR scholarship pool we seek to further the appeal and support of HDR students in their studies. HDR students are actively supported in their health and wellbeing to support persistence to completion.

Our success will be measured by growth in our research income, improvement in PhD completions, publications (with a view to field weighted citations) and the proportion of revenue from non-governmental sources.

## Strategies for Engaging with Industry

Engagement with industry occurs across our institution in research collaborations, education partnerships and importantly, alumni connections. UWA has over 4,500 industry partnerships across both education and research, including research collaborations, experiential learning, licensing opportunities, alumni engagement and career support.

Enduring relationships, such as supporting parents overcoming breastfeeding challenges with Medela and restoring kelp forests with Canopy Blue, are being complemented with new impactful initiatives. Among others:

- UWA (via The Language Lab) is [partnering with Google](#) to build a high-quality speech data set of Aboriginal English to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' interaction with automated speech recognition technology.
- A [research partnership with VitalTrace](#) and the University of Sydney developed DelivAssure™ to detect when a baby isn't receiving enough oxygen during labour, with potential to prevent major problems.
- UWA's [Centre for Engineering Innovation](#) provides engineering solutions and methodologies to support agricultural prosperity and ecological restoration for our industry community.
- A formal mechanism has been created for follow-on investment in UWA spin-outs, increasing support for research translation and new venture creation, and with the [first commitment to OncoRes](#).

Heightened focus on engagement with industry to support growth in diversified research revenue, PhD internship opportunities and research translation is a focus in 2025 and 2026. This will see more opportunities for knowledge exchange and translation between our academic community and industry through a new program of roundtables, site visits, conferences and thematic networking event from 2026. These will also involve guidance on the different ways we can work together, Government support and how to shape opportunities.

New Integrated Professional degrees with a significant internship model allow our industry partners to benefit from regular and repeat placement of students allowing for continuity and greater project support throughout the entire year. Industry is linked with students through two careers fairs annually and extended via casual job fairs which support students to work while studying. Industry is invited to do pop-up 'mini fairs' and networking in a number of Schools each year, providing more targeted engagement opportunities. Recognising the flexibility needs of students and the workforce, e-internship fairs will be implemented, providing short interview-style opportunities for industry and students to explore work-integrated learning and internships. Focus on building industry links internationally has seen a partnership established with Singtel, with new partners in development.

[The McCusker Centre for Citizenship](#) provides links for not-for-profits, community, government and business organisations – many regional – to engage with students through internships. Demand and completions have high annual growth, with 1,000 students participating in 2025. To date, 500,000 hours from almost 5,000 students across 650 individual partners.

Focused attention on building partnerships with health providers is providing new opportunities for UWA to connect for research, research training and student placements. This is being pursued with particular focus on extending connection to industry and the community in regional WA.

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  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
by

**Professor Amit Chakma**

Full name (please print)

**Vice Chancellor**

Position

*Amit Chakma*

Signature

In the presence of:

**Rachel Searl**

Witness (please print)

**Executive Officer**

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

In the presence of:

**Sonya Redmond**

Witness (please print)

**Chief of Staff**

Position or profession of witness (please print)

*Sonya Redmond*

Signature