



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

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

University of Canberra (UC) is incorporated under the *University of Canberra Act 1989* of the Australian Capital Territory.

We are committed to serving Canberra and the region through professional education and applied research. Influential disciplines include health and wellbeing, nursing, education, IT, creative industries, communications, architecture, design, sport, science, law, accounting, public administration, and business.

In 2023 University of Canberra launched a [decadal strategy](#), *Connected*, further expanded in 2025 through the [Reconnected 2025-27 Framework](#).

Our ambition is to be a global leader in driving equality of opportunity, the most accessible university in Australia; building an international identity for UC that celebrates, and is built upon, the importance of our place, one of national and international decision making.

To support the objectives of the *Connected* plan and the *Reconnected Framework*, the University has in place a *Campus Master Plan*, a *Sports Strategy*, and a *Research Plan*. The University will soon begin work on a new *Reconciliation Action Plan*.

The University has an [Indigenous Leadership Strategy](#) that aims to position UC as the preferred university for Indigenous students by improving access to opportunities and support, and to study in an environment that promotes Indigenous leadership. We aim to raise our Indigenous Students to be 3.0% of our domestic students by 2027, and to increase our Indigenous Student completion rates year-on-year to be the same as all domestic students.

UC priorities:

Tertiary harmonisation: The University is working closely with VET and industry partners on expanding opportunities for students to enter university study and receive credit. This includes enhanced credit recognition and articulations, development of new microcredentials and learning

pathways, and an expanded scheme for recognition of prior learning for a variety of occupations, for both admissions and credit.

Improving equity outcomes: UC has a primary commitment to reducing barriers for all people from diverse backgrounds to access a university education. Two in five of our students are first-in-family, and in 2021 and 2022 the University was ranked first in the world for SDG10 Reduced Inequalities in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. We are committed to equity, diversity, inclusion, and access, and aim to be a university of choice for underrepresented groups.

Engagement with industry around workforce skills and needs: UC is creating new entry pathways and flexible options for study, including through recognition of experience, and microcredentials. These will increase enrolments from underrepresented groups and strengthening alignment with industry. UC is sector leading for work-integrated learning. Graduates enjoy high employment rates, and we are proud to meet the workforce needs of Canberra and beyond.

Countering foreign interference and ensuring data integrity: UC has a robust cybersecurity strategy and foreign interference policy that promote resilience and a security-first culture. This includes on-going vulnerability management and awareness training program.

Upholding freedom of speech and academic freedom: UC has been actively engaged with the policy matters and reviewed internal policies in relation to academic freedom. In 2021 the University's Council approved an [Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy](#) to align with the Model Code.

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

The University received funding under the Higher Education Continuity Guarantee for 2024 and 2025 and developed an Equity Plan for allocation of this funding. Initiatives under the Equity Plan are in addition to current strategies for improving equality of opportunity in higher education.

Through our [Student Success Framework](#), UC embraces the idea that success should be viewed as a holistic concept, addressing needs before, during, after and outside study. Our Framework is based on a student lifecycle, whole-of-institution approach underpinned by our value Galambany – that together we work to empower, connect and share knowledge. The University runs numerous cohort-specific programs to support students from underrepresented groups access and succeed at their studies. These programs include individual, one-on-one transition appointments at commencement to raise awareness of support available and devising a plan for success, regular checkpoints and follow-up, social events for students to meet other students, scholarships and other forms of financial support. This support includes a dedicated [Inclusion UC](#) service to support students with a disability and/or ongoing health conditions to successfully complete their studies at UC on an equal participation basis.

Our targets are 85.3% retention rate for UC students in 2027 and a success rate (units of study pass rate) of 86.81% in 2027. The University also has KPIs for the proportion of domestic students that are low-SES (target 6.3% by 2027) and First in Family (42.0% by 2027). While UC is aware that we have many students from low SES backgrounds, current measure of participation rate of low SES students does not accurately reflect our student body. We provide high levels of support for these students through the provision of a free food pantry, bulk billing medical and counselling practice on campus, free clinical psychology services for students, and bursaries, financial aid and scholarships.

The University runs a number of [community outreach programs](#) aimed at increasing aspiration to study from typically underrepresented student groups. This includes to schools from Canberra,

the Capital Region and NSW South Coast, many from lower SES, regional or rural areas. These programs help progress towards our student participation KPIs for Indigenous Students (3.0% by 2027), low-SES (6.3% by 2027) and First in Family (42.0% by 2027).

The Equity Plan includes innovative strategies including AI agents to provide personalised access to support services, accessibility for equity students in course design and content delivery and specific teacher training for supporting neurodiverse students. The plan includes new and expanded resources supporting equity students including in scholarships, work-integrated learning, digital tutors, student success and outreach coordinators, and preparation for university courses at Country University Centres.

There are proposals for spaces for support for scholarship students, and review of disability access across the campus.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

Under the *Connected* strategy, the University has significantly expanded its education design capacity to both provide online, flexible options for students, and to provide rich and educative learning experiences. We have undertaken work aligning our course offerings to match the jobs and needs of the future, broadening access and opportunity, and delivering exceptional student experience and success. UC has seen a significant rise in Student Experience Survey outcomes for both Quality of Education Experience and Teaching Quality in the 2024 survey.

Under the *Reconnected Framework* we will continue to build learning that meets students where they are, broadens access, values their life experience in admissions and credit, and delivers career-ready education. The *Framework* commits us to work to broaden Tertiary Harmonisation and to expand our students-first approach.

The University publishes admissions transparency information on an easy to access [website](#). Information on individual courses is available via a search function on this webpage.

The University has a strategic KPI of an 85.3% retention rate for UC students in 2027. In addition to study support and cohort-specific support strategies to assist students to continue and complete their course, the University has recently established a student retention capacity that uses a data-driven and personalised approach to identify students at-risk of not continuing their studies and contact them individually to provide support.

The University has long had an identity as an institution focused on graduate employment and preparing students for the professions. UC aims for 88.8% of our students reporting being employed in the Graduate Outcomes Survey in 2027. We embed work skills throughout our curriculum, give our students multiple work-integrated learning and placement/internship experiences, and expand their employability through our [Careers UC](#) service. Our continuing survey of employers showed nearly 95% satisfaction with our student undertaking WIL activities at surveyed organisations.

The University has a specialist team for support for International Students, including specialised support staff for wellbeing and International Student Advisors. This team provides targeted and specialised support to all UC international students with regards to any changes to their study visa enquiries and processes and provide advice and guidance in alignment with the ESOS Framework to ensure that students are appropriately supported to succeed at UC.

In 2023, the University approved a new [Academic Progress Policy](#). This policy ensures that academic progress is proactively monitored, students at-risk of not completing their studies are identified as early as possible, and that there are academic practices and processes to support and

improve student academic progress. Students are encouraged to work with the University on their individual improvement needs and to establish an improvement plan. A Student Readiness Survey is disseminated to identify issues emerging across the student body and allows students to identify their needs for support.

Under the University's [Support for Students Policy](#), we offer a wide range of support [services](#) to students including Academic Skills and Knowledge (ASK) Advisors, Study Skills Learning Advisors, Peer Assisted Learning Sessions (PALS), Student Mentors, Studiosity online study help, support for online study, and library support.

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

In 2024 the University launched a Research Plan to underpin the next five years of research growth. The University aspires to be recognised both locally and globally for the impact our research has on people and place. UC's research is deliberately focussed towards practical and applied research across key areas of university strength and community need. UC recognises the need to be focussed to ensure quality and impact. Building on this plan, the *Reconnected Framework* drives us to embed impact, expand engagement and promote performance in our research.

Driving impact is an important pillar of the Plan. UC has recently undertaken work to strengthen and identify new areas of research in missions central to UC's identity and values. There are several national priorities to underpin sovereign capability where UC can make major contributions, including tackling disadvantage particularly for Indigenous communities, improving the health and well-being of our population, addressing urgent as well as long-term environmental challenges and lifting literacy and numeracy across the country. UC will develop guidelines for funding of impact-led projects, and a framework to recognise research impact at individual, group, university and community levels.

In 2026 the University will establish two new research centres, the Centre for Advanced Studies in Education (CASE) and the Centre for Intelligent Computing and Systems (CICS).

A key pillar of the research plan is fostering the research environment. This includes ensuring that researchers have time allocated to undertake high quality research, that time is well used, and that appropriate resources, infrastructure and professional support are provided. UC aims to lift its research profile to ensure its place in Australia's national research system is well understood, and support recruitment and retention of high-quality staff and HDR candidates. Measures of success include levels of engagement with partners of choice; increased HDR load, completions and satisfaction; and increased awareness of UC research and its value.

We aim to expand our higher degree by research student load and completions, as well as increasing the satisfaction of our HDR students. We look to expand industry involvement with our HDR students and incorporate more work-integrated learning into our PhD programs.

Enhancing research capacity and capability is vital. A new early career researcher program is underway and a revamped framework for researcher development will lift engagement in development opportunities. The revised programs will better equip our researchers to be competitive in the research funding environment whilst retaining a focus on impact and engagement with our communities. Measures of success will include some traditional measures (publications, citations, international collaborations, awarded income) but UC will also have indicators focussed on increasing the number of Indigenous staff and HDR candidates, ROI on

internal research funding, proportion of research active academics and diversity of funding sources.

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

Engaging with industry at the University of Canberra is multifaceted and core to the mission of the University to be a hub of applied education and research. Below is a sense of strategies that are being deployed to engage industry.

Industry partnering: as part of an expansion of working closely with industry, the University is in discussions with industry and community groups on co-design and certification of learning for their staff or volunteers. This may include recognition of learning provided by these organisations and building on those skills for an industry-relevant qualification.

Collaborative Research Projects: The University of Canberra conducts joint research projects with industry partners that align with both the academic interests of the university and the practical needs of the industry. This fosters a mutually beneficial relationship, allowing for the sharing of resources, expertise, and facilities. For example: <https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/media/newsroom/2023/august/uc-and-partners-launch-open-source-institute>

Internship and Placement Programs: The University of Canberra works with industry to develop structured internship and work placement programs. This not only provides students with valuable real-world experience but also serves as a bridge between academia and industry, fostering relationships and potential employment opportunities. For example: <https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/media/newsroom/2024/january/purdon-placements-lead-to-career-success>

Industry Advisory Boards: The University of Canberra works with industry advisory boards consisting of professionals from relevant sectors to provide input on curriculum development, research priorities, and emerging industry trends. This ensures that academic programs remain relevant and responsive to industry needs. UC is developing bespoke industry co-designed units and courses.

Continuing Education and Executive Training: The University offers continuing education and executive training programs tailored to industry needs. These programs can provide current professionals with advanced skills and knowledge, thereby strengthening ties with the industry and positioning the university as a key provider of professional development. For example: <https://the-riotact.com/university-of-canberra-to-offer-microcredentials-in-pilot-program-to-address-skills-shortages/689811>

Networking Events and Industry Days: The University organises networking events, industry days, and technology showcases that bring together researchers, students, and industry professionals. These events are excellent opportunities for knowledge exchange, identifying research needs, and fostering collaborations. For example: <https://www.canberra.edu.au/events/Home/Event/270734>

Research Consortia and Partnerships: The University participates in or form research consortia that include multiple universities and industry partners. Such consortia can tackle large-scale, interdisciplinary research challenges that are of significant interest to industry, leveraging the diverse expertise and resources of the consortium members. For example: <https://digitalhealthcrc.com/participants/>

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
University of Canberra
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Bill Shorten

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Vice-Chancellor and President

Position

Bill Shorten

Signature

In the presence of:

Rachel Searl

Witness (please print)

Executive Officer

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

In the presence of:

Nicky St.Clair

Witness (please print)

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Position or profession of witness (please print)

Nicky St.Clair

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