



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

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 Wollongong (UOW) is driven by a clear and compelling purpose: “To create and apply knowledge that empowers people, strengthens communities and supports a resilient and sustainable world.”

Our Vision 2035 is bold and ambitious: Empowering student success, delivering world-leading teaching and research, and driving local and global impact, UOW will be recognised among the world’s top 100 universities. This vision captures UOW’s aspiration to stay true to its regional heritage while extending its global reach. The [Strategic Plan 2030](#) provides the framework to achieve this through six strategic themes that guide institutional action over the decade.

Strategic pillars underpinning this vision align strongly with the Australian Government’s priorities through the Universities Accord:

- Student experience and success: Positioning UOW as Australia’s leading university in student equity, experience and employability, nurturing belonging and a passion for lifelong learning.
- Local impact: Ensuring UOW remains a powerhouse for innovation, economic prosperity and social contribution, building on its strong foundations in the Illawarra, Greater Sydney and beyond.
- Global excellence and connection: Recognising UOW’s long-standing international presence and its reputation for teaching, research and societal impact.
- Better together: Fostering a values-driven culture that builds trust, inclusion and respect, strengthening the University community and external partnerships.

Six strategic themes – world-ready education; research and innovation excellence; community and government engagement; global network and reputation; culture of belonging and excellence; and strategic growth and resilience – provide a roadmap for action in a changing higher-education landscape.

During the Compact period, UOW will focus on consolidation and renewal, strengthening financial sustainability and creating the conditions for long-term success. Priorities include embedding trust and inclusion, expanding global reach and delivering future-focused education that prepares graduates for tomorrow's workforce.

Intended outcomes include financial sustainability by 2027, a values-driven culture by 2026, and recognition among the world's top 100 universities by 2035. UOW also aims to lead nationally in student satisfaction, experience and employability. The Strategy is implemented through a planning and reporting framework that integrates accountability across all levels of the organisation. [The Strategic Framework](#) is supported by strong governance and the Plan Act Review Improve (PARI) continuous improvement cycle.

UOW maintains a [Cyber Security Policy](#), which is aimed at ensure a robust digital infrastructure and educates staff and students to mitigate foreign-interference risks through the Foreign Arrangements Risk Management Measures.

The [University of Wollongong Act 1989](#) (NSW), together with the Strategic Plan, [Code of Conduct](#), [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#), [Student Conduct Rules](#) and [Campus Access Rules](#), safeguards academic freedom and freedom of lawful speech as core values.

Student and staff safety is reinforced through the [Anti-Racism and Cultural Safety Policy](#), [Gender Identity and Affirmation Guidelines](#), [Sexual Harassment Prevention](#) and [Sexual Harm Response](#) policies, and the [Student Critical Incident](#) and Support for Students procedures. [The Student Conduct in Residences Policy](#) ensures safe living environments.

The [University Code of Conduct](#) upholds the right to a safe and respectful community. Prevention and response measures include Bullying Prevention, Sexual Harm, Anti-Semitism, and Anti-Racism and Cultural Safety policies. The [Safe and Respectful Communities \(SARC\)](#) initiative reflects UOW's commitment to a supportive and inclusive environment for all.

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

[Equity and inclusion](#) are central to UOW's mission. Our Strategic Plan commits to "champion equity, diversity and inclusion to ensure access, belonging and opportunity for all." This means ensuring that every student, regardless of background, can thrive and succeed in line with the Australian Government's ambitions through the Universities Accord.

UOW specifically recognises its role as a university of choice for Indigenous, regional and equity students, underpinned by its [Healing and Recognition Track \(HART\)](#) approach and its enduring partnerships with local communities. These commitments focus on creating culturally safe, respectful and empowering educational environments.

The University's priorities are:

- Removing barriers to access and participation by offering flexible study options, online and in-person, and supporting students with personalised learning opportunities.
- Providing comprehensive support services, with a focus on mental health, financial wellbeing and academic success, to ensure that all students can fully engage with their studies and succeed at university.
- Embedding belonging and safety, ensuring a respectful learning environment where students feel part of a vibrant and inclusive university community.

UOW's intended future outcomes include being recognised as a university of choice for Indigenous, equity and regional students, growing Indigenous staff representation across all levels by 2027, delivering place-based programs across campuses with a particular focus on South Western Sydney, and expanding co-designed initiatives with communities to improve access, participation and completion for under-represented students.

Our initiatives to attract more students from under-represented groups include pre-access and access programs with over 150 partners schools, [UOW Equity Scholarships](#) to address financial disadvantages, individualised learning success plans and career-readiness programs.

UOW will not be in receipt of a Higher Education Continuity Guarantee (HECG) grant in 2025, as it was above its Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding cap. However, consistent with the Department's requirements, UOW completed the HECG Equity Plan template to demonstrate how potential funding would support underrepresented student cohorts. The plan focuses on expanding access, participation, and success through three initiatives: an Equity Scholarships Program to assist an additional 100 low-SES, regional, First Nations and first-in-family students; Regional Equity Scholarships doubling places for regional students needing to relocate; and a Holistic Student Support Program providing mentoring, academic and wellbeing support. Collectively, these initiatives would reach around 100-150 students, focusing on equity cohorts across the student lifecycle, from access and participation to attainment and transition out.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

In 2025, UOW was publicly recognised as Australia's leading public university for educational experience according to the [latest QILT results](#). This is a validation of our strengths in teaching, resources, support and student engagement. Moreover, UOW's internal reporting highlights that in 2024, the University surpassed national benchmarks across all key QILT indicators, including quality of educational experience, teaching and engagement, learning resources, student support and skills development. We are proud to be Australia's top-rated public university for educational experience and believe this aligns strongly with the Australian Government's priorities through the Universities Accord.

Despite these successes, we recognise the Department's concern about declines in student perceptions. We view UOW's strong comparative performance not as a ceiling but as a foundation from which to double down on improvement, refine underperforming units and ensure consistency across all programs.

UOW is strongly committed to "world-ready education and student success." Teaching and learning will be shaped by innovation, technology and global perspectives, ensuring graduates leave not only with knowledge but with the adaptability, curiosity and confidence to thrive in an evolving world. Through industry placements, internships and collaborative projects, UOW students will gain the tools to transition confidently into the workforce.

Key areas of focus include:

- Future-focused curriculum: Delivering programs built on teaching excellence, enhanced by technology, and aligned with the changing world of work. The integration of AI, augmented reality and flexible modes of study will ensure graduates are prepared for contemporary challenges.
- Career readiness: Expanding work-integrated learning opportunities, international internships, and global experiences so students can apply their knowledge in diverse real-world settings.
- Student support and belonging: Prioritising inclusion and safety, offering personalised learning, mentoring, and targeted programs for underrepresented groups.
- Global opportunities: Strengthening international student mobility, including exchanges and joint degrees, to broaden educational experiences.

Supporting UOW's efforts to improve student retention, satisfaction and graduate outcomes is its [Support for Students Policy](#).

UOW's intended future outcomes include completing a 100% refresh of its future-focused curriculum by 2027, integrating AI and digital tools to ensure graduates are prepared for the changing world of work.

The University will expand work-integrated learning and placement opportunities so that every student has access to a WIL experience, while also improving teaching quality and learning design to lift student outcomes and retention. These outcomes will be supported by strengthened early intervention and support services for at-risk students, a continued focus on inclusion and safety to raise student satisfaction, access and success, and the growth of student mobility programs through exchanges, joint degrees and international internships.

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

UOW has a strong research identity focused on research and innovation excellence and impact. This involves building interdisciplinary research initiatives that respond to global and local challenges, supporting the entire research lifecycle and embedding Indigenous worldviews.

We are committed to strengthening commercialisation pathways and supporting researchers to translate knowledge into practical applications. Through entrepreneurial training, support for IP development, and partnerships with incubators and industry, UOW has strategies in place to accelerate innovation and commercialisation in areas such as AI, health and manufacturing to deliver lasting economic and social impact.

We will strengthen our research partnerships with community, government, industry and philanthropic sectors to grow income from applied and translational research. These partnerships will ensure our research is relevant, innovative and delivers positive benefits. Our research and innovation efforts will also contribute to workforce development in priority sectors, aligning talent pipelines with national economic needs and supporting Australia's future capability.

UOW is developing a Research Plan that will sustain discipline-based excellence while creating new opportunities for large-scale, collaborative programs. The plan will adopt a sustainable funding model, combining university investment with external support to deliver global leadership and local impact.

UOW research agenda highlights include:

- Embedding technology: Harnessing AI and digital transformation to accelerate discovery while maintaining ethical, inclusive practices.
- Sustainability and societal impact: Contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and addressing climate, energy and circular economy challenges.
- Research translation and commercialisation: Strengthening entrepreneurial pathways and supporting the development of intellectual property.
- Indigenous perspectives: Embedding respect for Country and Indigenous knowledge systems within research practices.

UOW's intended future outcomes include strengthening support across the research lifecycle from HDR training to commercialisation, and achieving recognition among Australia's leading universities for research excellence and impact.

These outcomes will be supported by expanding industry HDR programs and completions to meet workforce needs, embedding Indigenous knowledge and respect for Country, and advancing sustainability, technology and societal impact through research translation, commercialisation and new strategic partnerships with industry and community.

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

[Engagement with industry](#), government and community is a central pillar of UOW's strategy. The University is committed to deepening partnerships to deliver innovation, social impact and workforce development.

Our alumni continue to play a vital role in enriching learning and helping students build meaningful industry connections.

We are committed to expanding industry-relevant teaching and research programs that address national priorities. In collaboration with government and industry partners, we will focus on our strengths and align our capabilities to areas of local and national priority, working closely with industry partners to help make our communities healthier, safer and more prosperous. This includes supporting the Illawarra's transition as a designated renewable energy zone, contributing to national clean energy initiatives, and building the skilled workforce required for emerging industries.

Key priorities include:

- Expanding collaboration with alumni, Indigenous and local communities, recognising their importance in shaping research, teaching and graduate outcomes.
- Driving government and industry partnerships to align teaching and research with national priorities, especially in South Western Sydney and internationally.
- Supporting innovation and entrepreneurs through initiatives like iAccelerate, enabling small and medium enterprises to build capacity and resilience.
- Policy and thought leadership: Engaging with government to provide evidence-based insights and advocacy for national priorities.

UOW's intended future outcomes include deepening engagement with alumni, Indigenous and local communities, and broadening collaborations that deliver environmental, social and economic benefits.

The University will expand industry-relevant teaching and research programs in emerging fields and strengthen its role in policy engagement and thought leadership to build trust, advocacy and influence. These outcomes will be supported by launching strategic partnerships with industry and government focused on national and regional workforce needs, embedding industry co-design of curricula to ensure graduates are job-ready, and developing tri-sector collaborations across priority areas such as health and advanced manufacturing.

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
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by

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In the presence of:

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Executive Officer

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

In the presence of:

Stacey Thomas

Witness (please print)

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