

1. Background

The Curtin University Student Equity Strategy 2014-17 provides a strategic and operational framework to proactively address issues of student equity, inclusion and diversity. It acknowledges and supports other plans and strategies within Curtin University that promote social inclusion including: the *Reconciliation Action Plan*; the *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan*; and the *Diverse Sexuality and Gender Identity Inclusion Strategy*. The Student Equity Strategy is underpinned by: Curtin's *Strategic Plan 2013-2017*; Curtin's *Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Plan 2013-2017*; and Curtin's *Ethics and Social Justice Commitment Statement* and its underlying values. In addition, the Student Equity Strategy articulates how Curtin will meet its obligations in regard to State and Federal equity legislation.

2. Equity outcomes and strategies

The long-term aim of the Student Equity Strategy 2014 to 2017 is:

To facilitate and grow a higher education environment at Curtin University that is inclusive and supportive of students from all backgrounds.

The Student Equity Strategy aims to achieve the following objectives.

1. *Recruit (Outreach and Access)* students from identified equity target groups to Higher Education, by:
 1. Increasing Indigenous, regional, and school and mature age Low Socio-Economic Status (LSES) community awareness and understanding of HE as a viable post-school option;
 2. Developing positive attitudes towards HE and inspirational leadership in Indigenous, regional and school and mature age LSES communities;
 3. Supporting capability development of Indigenous, regional, and school and mature age LSES communities pre-university, where this relates to undergraduate course eligibility requirements; and
 4. Increasing Curtin applications from Indigenous, regional, and school and mature age LSES people.
2. *Retain (Support)* students from identified equity target groups, by:
 1. Facilitating a HE environment that is inclusive and supportive of Indigenous, external (online) and LSES students;
 2. Supporting Indigenous, external (online) and LSES students to succeed in their studies; and
 3. Facilitating a positive student experience for Indigenous, external (online) and LSES students.
3. *Place (Support)* graduates from identified equity target groups, by:
 1. Supporting Indigenous, external (online) and LSES students to identify and develop realistic but aspirational goals for their studies and career;
 2. Providing opportunities for Indigenous, external (online) and LSES students to gain practical experience related to their studies and career goals,

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2015-2017

Curtin University

through work integrated learning, volunteering and employment opportunities; and

3. Supporting Indigenous, external (online) and LSES students to gain skills and experience that will position them as attractive to employers.

The specific Key Performance Indicators for the Student Equity Strategy 2014-2017 are to increase:

- Number of domestic undergraduate students from nominated equity target groups as a percentage of total domestic undergraduate students
- Retention rate of domestic undergraduate students from nominated equity target groups
- Number of domestic undergraduate completions from nominated equity target groups

3. Strategies for achieving outcomes

Outreach	AHEAD (in Schools and Communities - School, Adult Learning & Community programs)
	Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)
	Future Student Services
	Faculty-based Outreach
	Community Support Projects
Access	AHEAD (into University)
	Entry pathways and ATAR bonus schemes
	Bridging/Enabling Program Support Services
	Financial support
Support	Student Equity Support
	Indigenous Student Support
	Staff Professional Development
	Student Career Development
	Leadership & Volunteering programs
	Student Equity Management & Administration

4. Evaluation Plan

All initiatives implemented through this strategy (regardless of their source of funding) will be required to report to the DVC Education (or nominee) on the demonstrable impact for equity target groups of that initiative, and achievement/progress towards proposed outcomes. Evaluation and reporting will occur on an annual basis and be co-ordinated by Ethics, Equity and Social Justice, with information collected to be used to compile Curtin University's Institutional Performance Portfolio and HEPPP reports to the Commonwealth government, as required. The HEPPP report will be submitted to Planning and Management Committee and Council for noting each year.

5. Partnerships and collaboration

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2015-2017

Curtin University

The approach taken in developing and implementing the Student Equity Strategy will be informed by the following principles:

- Partnership and community-based programs must be developed in collaboration with partners and the community through a deep understanding of the particular needs and opportunities relating to equity target groups within that region.
- Wherever possible, existing mainstream University programs/services should be built upon to meet the needs of equity target groups, rather than new programs established specifically for equity target groups (i.e. Universal access and support principles are integrated wherever possible into core business).
- All programs should focus on adding value through diversity rather than adding-on distinct deficit-focused equity programs.
- All programs must have clear, measurable objectives (which relate to the objectives of the Student Equity Strategy) and be based on sound rationale gleaned through research and/or best practice.
- Community-based programs should focus on regions in which Curtin has an existing positive and strong relationship.
- Where possible, HEPPP funding should be directed to support operational expenses/material costs rather than discrete salaries to maximise job security and assist in moving towards embedded delivery of equity programs.
- All programs must be consistent with and (wherever possible) strategically aligned to the Curtin Strategic Plan 2013-17, the Transforming Learning at Curtin (TL@C), and the Reconciliation Action Plan