Australian Government

Department of Education

2019 Mission Based Compact
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and University of Southern Queensland

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

PRIMARY FOCUS

The University of Southern Queensland (the University) has evolved through a number of phases over its 50-plus year history to become a University that delivers quality programs worldwide from three physical locations – Toowoomba, Springfield and Ipswich - has an extensive online education presence, and offers national and international education partners. Possessing an enviable and robust research profile, the University is engaged with the communities it serves and contributes to the development of industry through research and innovation. Many of USQ's students are the first in their family to attend university, and most do not come to university straight from school - in fact, around three-quarters of USQ students are mature age. Most of these mature age students study part-time, with 69% of our current students balancing the demands of work and family commitments with their study in this mode. 67% of our student body choose to study online.

USQ's strategic priorities for 2020 are:
- Quality and excellence in our program portfolio, innovative learning and teaching, and the student experience.
- Building increased capacity and support for our people to engage with digital technologies and drive continuous improvement.
- Continuing to build and deepen research culture, capability, performance and impact.
- Continuing to build on existing industry and community stakeholder partnerships to enhance the university mission in education and research.
- Strategic alignment of USQ's resources to achieve growth and financial sustainability.

VALUES AND ASPIRATIONS

USQ's values are: respect, integrity and excellence. The University fosters a values driven culture - one that is built around relationships and community, mutual respect, diversity and inclusion, and a strong commitment to ethics and integrity, collaboration, creativity and innovation, and quality and excellence in academic and research endeavours.

The recently developed USQ Academic Plan sets out the University's aspirations for quality and excellence in academic endeavours across the University with the three core pillars of the plan focused on quality and excellence in:
   a) USQ's program portfolio including traditional undergraduate and postgraduate programs, innovative education offerings, and structured pathways to USQ for domestic and international students at all levels.

b) Innovative learning and teaching policy and practice which is designed to maximise learning, emphasise employability outcomes, and to develop students to be global citizens in a challenging and rapidly changing world.

c) Student experiences of USQ that are positive, productive and rewarding and intentionally designed to provide all students with curricular and co-curricular opportunities to enhance and strengthen their learning.

With regard to research, the University's aspiration is to broaden the base of its excellent research, and to deliver impact to its stakeholder communities and partners. While there is a particular focus on impact in its local communities, USQ partners with industry, and government partners from around the world to ensure that we can generate new cutting edge knowledge across all of our disciplines and translate this into practice for the benefit of local, national and international communities.

The University is strongly focused on engagement with stakeholders. USQ's community-centred values are grounded in our regional heritage. As a regional university, the University is a major employer in our regions. The University develops human capital and skills through our graduates, contributes to development of industry through research and innovation, and facilitates the social, cultural and community development of our region through the creation and sharing of knowledge, skills, capability, technology and infrastructure. Specific stakeholder engagement strategies include the establishment in 2019 of the Engagement Portfolio within the University, which has direct responsibility for various aspects of stakeholder engagement, and includes the following positions:

- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Engagement);
- Director (Communications and Media)
- Director (Stakeholder Engagement);
- Director (Alumni); and
- Director (Advancement).

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan is under development, and will include strategies for reviewing and building on existing stakeholder partnerships and creating new partnerships through the development of greater community awareness of the role and capacities of USQ and opportunities for community members to be engaged with the University. In 2019, the position of Elder in Residence was also established within the Vice-Chancellor's Office, to enhance and facilitate engagement with stakeholders from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

RESPONSE TO FRENCH REVIEW
The French Review recommendations to adopt the Model Code on free speech and academic freedom are currently being considered by a Working Party of the Academic Board. The Working Party is reviewing the University's existing approach to academic freedom to assess the effectiveness of university policies and practices to promote and protect freedom of expression and intellectual inquiry on Australian campuses. Informed by the Model Code, a set of principles on academic freedom is being developed and, once endorsed, are expected to become the key to developing a more formal policy and subsequently informing more broadly-based implementation across a range of policies which intersect with this area.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The University's overarching goal for teaching and learning is that it successfully blends access with excellence and is a leading university for student experience and graduate outcomes. USQ's teaching and learning achievement lies not just in providing wide access to enrolment into university awards, but in enabling students with the capability and commitment to successfully complete academic awards that are relevant to their study objectives and future graduate goals. Excellence and enablement depend on quality in the academic (learning and teaching) and the non-academic (general student support and services) experience of students.

As set out in the previously mentioned Academic Plan, USQ's objectives and priorities in teaching and learning focus on quality and excellence in its:
- program portfolio;
- innovative learning and teaching; and
- student experience.

Each initiative in the Academic Plan and its underlying activities are designed to transform, enhance, and strengthen USQ's teaching and learning culture, policy and practice; and to develop a distinctive educational experience at USQ, while ensuring that USQ becomes more competitive in a rapidly evolving higher education context. The three areas of focus for 2020 emerging from the Academic Plan are:
  a) Transform and diversify our academic products through: a review and revision of curriculum models and program structures; renewal of the Academic Calendar; offering different products for different cohorts.
  b) Re-engineer our academic systems with a focus on: data and information reporting systems; academic quality systems; and course and program information and systems.
  c) Optimise the student experience by: creating a centre-led, integrated and consolidated suite of student support services aligned with the stages of student transitions; proactive academic advising aligned with students' academic activities; and building a philosophy and culture based on engaging students as partners to develop a comprehensive University-wide approach to students as partners in decision making and University governance.

STRATEGIES TO ENSURE QUALITY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

USQ's strategies to ensure quality in learning and teaching include the development of an Academic Quality Framework, which commenced in July 2019. The framework consists of five key elements:
  1. Course Survey Reports (student evaluations of subjects) and reporting dashboards;
  2. Semester Course Level Reports and reporting dashboards (for consideration by Faculty and Academic Board committees);
  3. Annual Program Level Reports and reporting dashboards;
  4. Annual University Level Program Reports (for Faculty and Academic Board committees); and
  5. continuation of the five-year Curriculum Accreditation Cycle for external/or internal accreditation.

Implementation of the Framework (pilot underway) provides a university-wide systematic schedule of formal curriculum conversations at student survey, course, program, faculty and University levels, with curriculum quality and performance reports being made available to Academic Board and Council. When fully implemented, the Academic Quality Framework will provide comprehensive diagnostic updates on data and cohort tracking to Academic Board as a critical component of addressing the TEQSA re-registration condition.

To further strengthen its role as the peak academic body of the University, responsible to Council for assuring the quality of teaching, scholarship and research, Academic Board established a new standing committee structure and revised its Terms of Reference to ensure the Board's functions are aligned with the Higher Education Standards relating to academic governance.

Additional strategies for 2020, which underpin achievement of quality and excellence in innovative learning and teaching include:

- Refreshing the Educational Experience Plan to distinguish and communicate USQ's signature approach to learning and teaching and our mission for providing quality educational opportunities for diverse cohorts on USQ's physical and virtual campuses. Key to this priority is the development of personalised learning strategies, where students are empowered to take control of their own learning pathway through a bespoke suite of courses and supports tailored to individual needs, abilities and interests.
- Implementing a holistic model to deliver a supportive and meaningful first year experience by focusing on first year students, first year curriculum and the transition experience of various different cohorts.
- Building on existing work to develop and implement a research-informed employability strategy and framework, policy and procedure for work-integrated learning.
- Comprehensively reviewing and reforming Assessment Policy and practices.

ADMISSIONS TRANSPARENCY

The University accepts applications from prospective students from diverse cohorts and various mechanisms are used as the basis for admission, recognising that preparation for tertiary study is not restricted to formal educational attainment. USQ's Admissions Policy and Procedures provide a range of alternative entry criteria which are supported by general admissions principles including the perceived probability of success. In addition, USQ has a number of Enabling Program options for students who do not have or do not meet the ATAR or other subject-based entry requirements. These Enabling Programs assist students develop the tertiary skills and knowledge needed to be admitted into a sub-degree or undergraduate degree. USQ's Credit and Exemption Procedure also provides admissions pathways through recognition of prior learning and outlines eligibility requirements, maximum allowances and the application process. This process is supported by an online Credit Calculator to assist students to determine the credits for which they may be eligible, and online application forms to assess credit/exemption and work experience equivalency.

Students may also utilise VET qualifications to gain admission into certain USQ degrees and receive recognition of prior learning, subject to meeting the requirements of relevant policies. The online Credit Calculator assists students in determining what credit their TAFE or VET qualifications may provide for certain degrees and support is provided to prospective students in assessing their eligibility for direct entry, including through various partner arrangements in place with Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia TAFEs and some private providers.

In preparation for the transition from Queensland OP to ATAR, QTAC has liaised with Institutions statewide and various Tertiary Admission Centres (TACs) in other states to assess the soundness of the current qualification schedules and their comparability to the Year 12 ATAR. Evidence provided in longitudinal and cohort studies revealed the rank associated with the various qualification schedules is comparable, based on the student outcomes. Other QTAC services utilised by USQ include the assessment of qualifications, work experience and special admissions tests, such as the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) or Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

From 2020, the progress of all commencing students (including students entering without an ATAR) from application to offer, enrolment to orientation and orientation through the whole of the first year of study, will be tracked through an Assistive Intervention Monitoring System (AIMS) that uses an analytics engine to predict students' readiness for and achievements in academic study. One of the attributes used by the analytics engine is basis of entry including ATAR. Students admitted without an ATAR will initially receive a higher priority status and will be provided with personalised contact during their first semester of study to provide timely advice and support and referrals where necessary to resources, where needed. From that point onwards, students will be able to access a wide range of support services and resources as required. In addition, in 2020 USQ will commence a whole-of-University project to enhance the first year learning experience, which will involve

implementing a transition pedagogy in first year courses and integrating support for commencing cohorts in core learning activities.

Evaluation of various student cohorts including students entering without an ATAR forms part of the Academic Quality Framework and reporting system described earlier. This system includes implementing and refining the use of Learning Analytics, that: unifies and clarifies the University's data needs; identifies priorities and articulates how the data will be collected and deployed; and includes the development of specific measures and targets related to student success and retention. Course performance reporting will include the outcomes for various identifiable cohorts. Schools and faculties will be required to describe the actions they are taking to address performance of courses or cohorts that do not meet performance targets and this information will be provided to the Academic Board through its Education Quality Committee, who quality assure processes associated with learning and teaching performance at a University level before providing Academic Performance reports to Council.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

USQ has a long history in educating students admitted without an ATAR (or equivalent), and as noted earlier in this document, the majority of the University's student body falls into this category. As such, USQ is committed to providing support throughout the series of transitions from future student, potential applicant through to novice and then experienced student ready to graduate. The University's focus on retention aims to help students to reach their full academic potential, succeed in their education goals, and contribute to an enriching and holistic university experience.

USQ has recently approved an evidence-based and scholarly Student Success and Retention Strategy which is designed to promote retention across the three major phases of a student's relationship with the institution: transition in, transition through and transition out. This three-year Strategy recognises the University's regional context and the profile of USQ students who are largely mature-aged, online and part-time. The Student Success and Retention Committee (chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)) is responsible for the implementation of the Strategy along with the provision of expert information, recommendations and advice.

Priorities for increasing student retention and success and the quality of their experience at USQ include:

- Adopting a digital first approach to designing USQ curriculum and student experience initiatives through innovative learning opportunities and a graduate attribute expressed as a component of program learning outcomes.
- The AIMS system of integrated intervention and academic advising using a systematic, proactive, data-driven and timely series of outbound contacts with students to offer information, advice, support and mentoring. The aim of this system is to increase persistence with learning, assessment/course completion, grade achievement and progression into subsequent courses.
- Engaging students as partners to encourage students to become actively involved in creating their learning environment through a dynamic partnership with USQ.

The evaluation of the impact of the various learning, teaching and student success strategies will initially be at an initiative level to assess immediate impact. For example, comparing the success and progress rates, grades and GPA for students and subjects participating in the initiative, with non-participating cohorts or subjects. At a meso-level, evaluation will include progression of cohorts from one semester into the next and program level annual retention rates. At a macro-level evaluation will include analysis of the data in the QILT surveys drilling down to program specific data where possible, commencing and continuing attrition (internal and external data) and longitudinal completion patterns and rates.

The University has also set up a cohort analysis working group to conduct 'deep dives' for particular at-risk cohorts identified in the reports arising from the Academic Quality Framework reporting system, for example, part-time and external students. These 'deep dives' will reveal new information

and actionable insights so the University can examine its current strategies for fitness-for-purpose and address particular challenges for the cohorts being analysed.

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING AND INNOVATION

The strategies below build on the success achieved to date under USQ's Research Plan 2016 – 2020, and opportunities that have emerged in recent years.

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AND STRENGTHENING CAPABILITY
Strategies to ensure excellence in research and the strengthening of research capability include:
- Continued focus on research quality, by improving quality of research, publications and research training. Key goals are to continue increasing outputs published in quality journals (targeting 77% of research publications in the top 25% most highly cited papers, as determined by global research group Scimago in 2020), and to increase externally funded competitive fellowships (targeting five by 2020).
- Build capacity among researchers to secure research income, through building broader and more focussed communities of practice, and through focussed engagement with end-user partners to identify critical research needs, and engagement with international partners in key areas of research. In 2018 USQ's external research income totalled $20.4 million. The target for 2020 is $22 million.
- Strategic investment in state-of-the-art research infrastructure, including upgrades to the Engineering building at USQ's Springfield Campus, which will further enhance USQ's hypersonic, space science and materials engineering capabilities.
- Involvement with the Queensland Major Research Infrastructure Alliance (currently being negotiated between universities and the Queensland State Government) to enhance access for researchers from all Queensland universities to large-scale research equipment and infrastructure, and to provide potential collaborative opportunities for the procurement of major research equipment and infrastructure.

PROVISION OF HIGH QUALITY RESEARCH TRAINING
Strategies for the provision of high quality research training, including measures to encourage PhD industry placements, including the expected number of industry placements, are as follows:
- Grow the recently established Graduate Research School to build USQ's cohort of HDR students to 940 students in 2020.
- Targeted engagement with international students through the Australian Government's Destination Australia Program to attract international and domestic students to USQ's Toowoomba campus.
- Grow the partnership with Australian Postgraduate Research Intern Program to connect HDR students with industry and boost their skills and employability. In 2019 USQ's Industry Internship Coordinator successfully placed four PhD students within this program, and this is targeted to grow to 8-10 placements in 2020. In 2019 seven HDR students are receiving industry-funded stipends.
- Linking HDR students to the USQ Careers and Employability team's Industry Experience Program to engage students in mentoring and paid work experience opportunities.
- Refocus USQ's Researcher Development and Training Program to provide support and rewards to USQ researchers to build our funding base to support quality research training.

ENCOURAGING RESEARCH TRANSLATION AND COMMERCIALISATION
Strategies to encourage research translation and commercialisation, including collaboration and engagement with industry and other end-users, and the measures of success that the university monitors in this area, include:
- The University is currently reviewing and updating its Intellectual Property policy and procedure suite to ensure appropriate controls are in place to safeguard the University's IP.
- The University will undertake proactive steps to commercialise Intellectual Property developed at USQ, and to use a variety of means to protect and utilise Intellectual Property,

including patenting, licensing of patents, formation of partnerships with end-users and spin-out companies.

- Build on previous engagement with industry and government to translate research outcomes directly to end-users. This is being achieved through co-funded collaborations with industry, such as USQ's $10 million partnership with Wagners Composite Fibre Technologies and Allnex, the renewal of the highly successful Broad-acre Cropping Initiative with the state Government for another five years, to enable continued engagement with growers to enhance knowledge of diseases processes in farming systems.
- Investment in research capacity to align with areas of strength in teaching to attract quality researchers.
- Ensure investments deliver positive impacts to key end-user groups by ensuring alignment with state, national and international and government priorities and by working with key Government and Industry groups to design research programs, for example the Northern Australia Climate Program (NCAP) which will help farmers manage drought and climate variability.

PROMOTING OPEN ACCESS
Strategies to promote open access to research publications and data include:
- Continued support for and promotion of Open Research through the USQ Library.
- Working with the Australian Research Data Commons to develop strategies for enhanced open access data repositories incorporating appropriate USQ research data.

EQUITY

The University is committed to proactively providing accessible and equitable higher education opportunities to the diverse University student constituency, in particular to target groups identified as disadvantaged in their access to and participation in, higher education. The University has an Equity in Education Policy and Procedure which applies to all students and prospective students of the University, in particular those who are recognised as being disadvantaged in their access to higher education, who may be engaged in University-related activity either on University property or off-campus.

The University runs an annual calendar of on-campus diversity and inclusion events designed to enable employees, students and community members to feel valued and respected and have access to opportunities and resources. Events are aligned to the national social justice agenda, and include celebrations such as NAIDOC Week, Disability Action week, International Women's Day, and International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia Day. The University offers a range of inclusive training and development programs for staff to ensure they are creating inclusive and supportive environments for students from diverse equity groups, including inclusive language, respectful behaviours, cultural protocols and cultural diversity.

IMPROVING INDIGENOUS OUTCOMES AND RELATED TARGETS
Specific strategies for improving Indigenous outcomes and related targets are described in:

- USQ Indigenous Education Strategy;
- USQ Reconciliation Action Plan;
- USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Strategy;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Workforce Strategy; and
- USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competency Framework.

The College for Indigenous Studies Education and Research (CISER) manages a wide range of student programs including the Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program. The Deadly Ways Program is a targeted program for Indigenous high school students from years 7 to 12, designed to develop self-confidence as young Indigenous people through cultural programs and build post-secondary aspirations by providing the opportunity to experience university life and study. Each year, the University runs the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeship program, providing an

opportunity for four Indigenous trainees to complete a Certificate III in Business whilst gaining valuable employment experience with the University over 12 months. School-based traineeship programs also provide an opportunity for Indigenous students in Years 10 and 11 to complete a Certificate level qualification and work one day per week at the University whilst still studying at high school.

An example of support provided to Indigenous Nursing students at USQ is the Helping Hands Support to Success Program. This initiative is an Indigenised student support model for student nurses and midwives, which aims to orientate, retain and graduate students. The model was developed by Indigenous nursing academics specifically for Indigenous students to provide the necessary cultural and academic support to successfully navigate the university environment. Helping Hands is a national leading initiative with USQ graduating the most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses in the country. Pivotal to this success is the employment of four Indigenous academic staff in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, three of whom teach the compulsory course in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health within the Bachelor of Nursing.

EQUITY FOR REGIONAL AND REMOTE STUDENTS, LOW SES and OTHER EQUITY GROUPS
USQ has amongst the highest proportion in the country of low SES, regional or first in family students; and a high proportion of First Australian students. The University has a strong commitment to equity with these groups, and has a range of strategies in place to support student success and student equity:

- outreach and pathway programs;
- online study options;
- coordinated University-wide efforts to improve retention and success;
- extensive student support services;
- career mentoring and support;
- Access and Participation Plan;
- USQ Social Justice Strategic Plan;
- USQ Disability Action Plan;
- USQ Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- USQ Multicultural Action Plan; and
- Incarcerated Students Program.

The University offers equity scholarships, jointly funded by HEPPP and USQ funding, with the scholarships designed to assist students in accessing and maintaining their tertiary studies.

REDUCING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE REGIONS
USQ's commitment to offering educational opportunities for students from a range of equity groups means that the University is taking an active role in efforts to reduce youth unemployment by offering educational opportunities to disadvantaged youth with diverse backgrounds, including those without an ATAR. Once these students are enrolled in our programs, USQ has a range of strategies to increase employment rates including a suite of self-access resources designed to help students develop resumes, prepare for interviews, establish LinkedIn accounts, understand options for gaining work experience, and develop their professional networks. Each resource includes the ability for students to receive one-to-one feedback and support from USQ Careers and Employability staff. In addition, specific resources have been developed to meet the specific needs of HDR students and international students.

STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING STUDENT SUPPORT FOR RELOCATING STUDENTS
USQ is committed to providing support throughout the series of transitions from future student, potential applicant through to novice and then experienced student ready to graduate, helping students: reach their full academic potential; succeed in their education goals; and contribute to an enriching and holistic university experience.

All students, including relocating students, are supported by:

- Orientation sessions including virtual orientation and re-orientation toolkits for ongoing transition support.
- Study/learning support from liaison librarians and learning advisors.
- Career guidance and counselling prior to commencement and throughout students' studies; support for work experience, professional mentoring, employability programs, industry visits and mentoring.
- Access to a Student Relationship Officer for enrolment support, advice and information.
- 24/7 online study support for mathematics & writing including proofreading, editing and writing support.
- Peer learning groups facilitated by fellow students to provide an outlook on academic and socioeconomic factors encountered by students.
- Academic Intervention Monitoring System.
- Student professional development opportunities e.g. leadership skills development, and Mental Health First Aid Training.
- USQ Residential College scholarships for on-campus accommodation.
- A range of health and wellbeing, career development and student life activities including: bulk-billed medical services; wellness services including counselling and psychoeducation; disability resources; Headstrong: free self-directed online resilience building program based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy; welfare support for crisis situations such as no interest loans, appropriate referrals, accommodation support; multi-faith services and multicultural program and events; sporting and social events, clubs and societies.

Additional support for international students includes:

- Tailored sessions to assist with the adjustment to Australian culture and USQ campus and the region.
- First semester enrolment support.
- Proactive transition to USQ support provided by dedicated Student Relationships Officers.
- Enrolment health checks and nurture communications.
- Multicultural events including the 'Chat with the Locals' program designed to facilitate English speaking practice.

For international HDR students/domestic students with English as a second language, USQ offers individual and face-to-face language support based around the development of language ability, leading to long term self-correction, for different aspects of academic writing.

COMMUNITY ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY FACILITIES
Facilities of the University are primarily used for educational and research purposes of the University including conferences and seminars which may be open to the public. To the extent that facilities such as theatres, seminar rooms and external areas are not fully utilised for University purposes, these facilities are available for use by community groups and individuals. The University also has a range of sporting fields, courts and facilities which are widely used by the community. The Toowoomba campus is the site for a three hectare Japanese garden, and the Gumbi Gumbi Gardens, which form part of the University's commitment to developing a better understanding of local Indigenous heritage, and acknowledging the culture and contribution they have continued to make to their region. Both gardens are open daily and free for community use. Additionally, USQ Library spaces and facilities are open to all members of the community and are designated safe places for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or queer (LGBTIQ) identifying Students and Employees to work and study, free from Harassment or Discrimination based on sexuality, gender identity or gender expression. In terms of linking the community with the University's campuses, both the Toowoomba and Ipswich campuses include commercial premises such as banks, post offices and coffee shops which are open to the public. The Springfield Campus is located within Springfield Education City, which includes a number of public and private education providers.

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE ASPIRATIONS AND ADVICE TO SCHOOL STUDENTS ON STUDY OPTIONS
USQ has strong links with schools in our regions. Our Schools Engagement Team is focussed solely on working with schools to develop aspirations and provide advice to school students. This is achieved by a range of events throughout each year, including:

- tours of USQ campuses and facilities;
- open days at each campus, and online open events;
- school visits;
- discipline-specific information sessions for school staff including teachers and careers counsellors; and
- special events such as USQ Astronomy Week and the Regional Science and Engineering Challenge.

USQ Head Start is an academic extension program enabling high-achieving Year 10, 11 or 12 school students to study one university subject during a semester, allowing them to get a head start on their university studies. The program assist students to develop university-level study skills and discover more about potential degrees before they graduate Year 12. Students receive two credits towards their Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) for each USQ Head Start course successfully completed (up to a maximum of eight credits). Upon successful completion of a USQ Head Start course, students gain entry (dependent on meeting any degree pre-requisites) into a related USQ degree and receive credit for the courses they completed via USQ Head Start.

LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

IDENTIFYING SKILLS GAPS AND MEETING LABOUR MARKET PRIORITIES
The University develops human capital and skills through its graduates, helps industry develop through research, and facilitates the social, cultural and community development of our regions. USQ is ranked no.1 in Australia for graduate starting salary and no.1 in Queensland for graduates in full-time work (Good Universities Guide 2020). Whether to educate school leavers, provide degree programs to those already in the workforce or the creation of basic or applied research, USQ is an essential resource to the community.

In terms of meeting labour market priorities, the University is in the process of developing an Employability Strategy designed to:
- Increase graduate employment outcomes for all graduates, regardless of location.
- Increase opportunities for students to develop their employability and entrepreneurship capabilities throughout their learning journey.
- Embed employability into the curriculum and assessment, and expand Work Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities for students.
- Establish institutional provisions to foster a culture of employability at USQ.
- Focus on producing work-ready graduates in identified areas of need such as education and nursing.

Recognising USQ's distinctive context and predominant student cohort characteristics, the Strategy will:
- Identify the nuances of advancing employability with students from regional, remote and rural communities.
- Acknowledge USQ's mature-aged students who will be supported to draw from previous work and life experiences to enhance their employability.
- Identify the career and employability readiness of USQ students from point of enrolment to measure growth at point of graduation (e.g. how many graduates stay to work in the regions and how many students who are employed while studying stay to work with their same employers and are promoted upon graduation).

EMPLOYABILITY AND GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

The USQ Careers and Employability team is responsive to the diverse needs of individuals and empowers them to make informed career choices that optimise their life opportunities, through the provision of current, relevant and professional career and employment services. The team has a strong focus on connecting students with industry and host the Industry Experience Program, a non-assessable, non-compulsory placement program for students. The program enables students to engage in work experience in their discipline and develop their professional networks. Use is made of an online mentoring platform specifically designed to connect students with industry, irrespective of geographical location and a suite of self-access resources designed to help students develop resumes, prepare for interviews, establish LinkedIn accounts, understand options for gaining work experience, and develop their professional networks is also available.

The University offers dedicated careers and employability courses including *EMP2020 Career Success* and *EMP2030 Employability and Professional Skills* and offers an *Employability and Entrepreneurship* minor of the Bachelor of Commerce. In addition, the USQ Careers and Employability team have delivered career education activities into the curricula of a number of courses, including Sports and Exercise Science, Accounting, Education, Nursing, Management, Science, Human Services, and Urban Planning.

In 2019 the Academic Board approved a revised and renamed Graduate Attributes Policy, which articulates the attributes all students will demonstrate upon the completion of all degrees involving coursework courses. The revised policy replaces the previous Attributes of a Graduate Policy. Through their participation in curricular learning activities, enriched by co-curricular learning experiences, USQ graduates of coursework programs are enabled to be employable, enterprising professionals who can integrate and apply knowledge and relevant skills to offer innovative approaches and solutions. The policy informs curriculum development and whole of curriculum program design. Graduate attributes are referenced explicitly within program and course objectives, assessment criteria and relevant course materials, and practised and assessed across program curricula.

University program accreditation and re-accreditation processes are governed by the Program Accreditation Procedure and associated schedules. The Procedure mandates consultation, at a minimum, with current students, alumni, potential employers, and professional and registration bodies as part of the program development process, prior to progression through committee endorsement and approval pathways. Program performance is monitored annually through the University's quality assurance framework and is informed by data from a range of surveys, such as the Graduate Outcome Survey and the Graduate Destinations Survey.

A key strategy for ensuring the University meet skills gaps within the relevant student and employer catchments is the expert advice from our Industry Advisory Boards which informs development of high quality academic courses and programs with input from professional bodies and employers to meet existing and future job needs and an emphasis on producing job-ready career-empowered graduates. USQ is ranked in the top three universities in Australia for graduates in full-time work. Each major discipline area within the Academic Division has an Industry Advisory Board which advises on matters relating to:

- the development of future programs and specialisations, taking into account emerging developments in industry and community;
- current program content and design, where applicable, giving consideration to future employment opportunities for graduates of the program;
- the extent to which current programs meet their stated learning objectives;
- research and development opportunities and relevant consultation with external bodies; and
- major reports, reviews and industry trends.

LABOUR MARKET STRATEGIES AND COURSE AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Examples of how labour market strategies are taken into account in developing course and program offerings include:

- The expansion of USQ's Aviation programs at USQ with the planned provision of an Aviation program offering at USQ Toowoomba, in response to the forecast international pilot shortage and to achieve synergies with the West Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport and the newly established Qantas Group Pilot Academy. This is supported by the work of the University Load Forecasting and Review Committee, established in May 2019, a primary function of which is to manage action plans and strategies relating to priority program development and marketing through the use of comprehensive data sets and forecast trends.

- USQ active involvement and collaboration with the Southern Queensland Rural Health (SQRH) to build a sustainable rural health workforce across Southern Queensland. SQRH is a collaboration between USQ, the University of Queensland, Darling Downs Health, and South West Hospital and Health Service. The newly unveiled facilities at Baillie Henderson Hospital in Toowoomba opened on 24 September 2019, includes training rooms, tutorial and meetings rooms and telehealth studios that will support rural placements for students across a range of health disciplines.

- An example of initiatives aimed at strengthening partnerships with education organisations, communities, schools and preservice teachers to address teacher shortages in rural and remote area, is the recent pilot program for the establishment of a preservice alternate context placement program which attracted $40,500 in funding support from the Department of Education Beyond the Range – Professional Experience Grants. The grant enabled 12 USQ students to undertake their professional experience placements in Roma and Charleville in earlier this year. USQ paid for an academic staff member to travel with each group of six students to guide and support the students, as well as to mentor the supervising practicum teachers in the schools.

- Toowoomba is at the epicentre of the Darling Downs' agriculture and farming industries. USQ provides students with the advantage of industry knowledge and understanding to give the students the expertise of industry expertise that opens up a range of challenging careers. Students have access to USQ's Centre for Agricultural Engineering (CAE) established to specialise in developing solutions for a sustainable and profitable rural sector. The CAE is focused on delivering applied, practical and profitable research solutions that strengthen agricultural productivity and address environmental management challenges in Australia and overseas.

- In partnership with University of Southern Queensland, Stanthorpe State High School and 47 other Gateway Schools, the Queensland College of Wine Tourism provides training from secondary to tertiary levels in viticulture, oenology, tourism, hospitality and business. The education and training programs are developed in partnership with the wine tourism industry.

SECURITY MEASURES

ENSURING DATA SAFETY

The University has internal cyber security governance and reporting mechanisms in place, and a strong emphasis on data security. Cyber incident response and data breach response plans have been developed, and are consistently monitored. USQ maintains internal capability in a dedicated cyber security team to mitigate, detect, respond and recover from cyber-attacks.

The University has been tracking and monitoring alignment with the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) "Top 35" and "Essential 8" since the initial creation of these recommendations in 2010. Of the currently listed ASD 37 *Strategies to Mitigate Cyber Security Incidents,* USQ currently has 26 of these in place with the control gap being where relative security effectiveness is rated as 'Good to Limited'

due to limitations on University wide compliance owing to the negative impact on key University activities.

USQ is an active participant in sector wide initiatives with CAUDIT, AusCERT and AARNet, including the Australasian Higher Education Cybersecurity Service (AHECS). AHECS will provide a number of services including fast access to appropriate services, negotiated pre-breach, along with good practice guides, templates and talent pool available to assist in the mitigation strategies and a community of practice across the sector with expertise in cybersecurity. USQ ICT staff are in constant contact with other universities and agencies in relation to sector best practice.

IDENTIFICATION AND DETERRENCE OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE
USQ partners with a number of external bodies, agencies and commercial threat intelligence providers in the sharing of industry specific Indicators of Compromise (IOCs) to provide early warning and capability to identify and deter cyber interference from foreign threat actors.

The University will continue to work through Universities Australia (as represented on the University Foreign Interference Taskforce) to focus on the identified four strategic areas– cybersecurity, research and intellectual property, foreign collaboration, and culture and communication.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES AND COMPLIANCE
The University continues to refine and reinforce its policies and procedures in all areas of its operations, including information security and physical security. The Policy Implementation Team supports the ongoing process of continuous improvement to ensure security measures are in place to protect the University's information and physical assets.

The University is committed to managing and minimising risk by identifying, analysing, evaluating and treating exposures that may impact on the University achieving its objectives, or the continued efficiency and effectiveness of its operations. USQ continues to strengthen and incorporate risk management into its institutional planning and decision-making processes. USQ's 2020 priority in this area is to streamline business processes in order to optimise the balance between risk and doing business. The Vice-Chancellor's Executive, as the University's prime management committee, and Council, as the prime governance committee, both have within their terms of reference responsibility for risk management and assurance across all areas of operation, and take a strong interest in mitigation strategies and compliance.

SIGNED for and on behalf of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

Dom Grehlish

Full name (please print)

Group Manager
Position

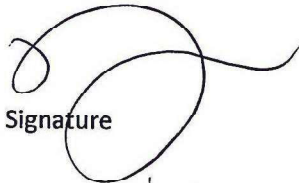of the Department of Education as delegate of
the Minister for Education.

Signature

Date 23/12/19

In the presence of:

Drew Menzies-McVey

Witness (please print)

Branch Manager

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

SIGNED for and on behalf of

UNIVERSITY

Geraldine Mackenzie

Full name (please print)

Vice-Chancellor
Position

Signature

In the presence of:

Julie Shinners

Witness (please print)

Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature