



**2020 Mission Based Compact
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Swinburne University of Technology**

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

Swinburne University of Technology's mission is to be a world class university creating social and economic impact through science, technology and innovation. To achieve our mission, Swinburne has committed to the realisation of outcomes that are broadly categorised into three key result areas:

1. Future-ready learners who are:
 - Confident and enterprising learners who create social and economic impact;
 - Learners prepared to find and solve complex problems;
 - Adaptive learners equipped for careers of the future; and
 - Learners as global citizens.

2. Research with impact that:
 - Transforms industries, shaping lives and communities;
 - Drives innovation built on excellence in science and technology; and
 - Is global in action, presence and reputation

3. An innovative enterprise that is:
 - Agile, resilient and market-responsive;
 - Flexible, with state-of-the-art spaces and infrastructure
 - Connected with business, industry and community;
 - Sustainable, inclusive and diverse; and
 - Globally capable.

Swinburne's Council has considered and agreed the University's response to the Report of the Independent Review of Freedom of Speech in Australian Higher Education Providers by The Hon Robert S French AC.

Following an extensive review by Swinburne's governance unit of the University legislation, Governance Framework, policies, procedures and enterprise agreement, we are pleased to affirm that our current frameworks are appropriate, in line with the sector and our community's expectations. We further found that our frameworks cover similar ground to the French Report's "*Model Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers*"

<https://www.swinburne.edu.au/about/strategy-initiatives/2025-strategic-plan/>

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Swinburne is working towards transforming the future of education and give students the knowledge, adaptability, experience and global outlook they will need to succeed in careers of the future.

A key pillar of our 2025 Strategy is to create Future-Ready Learners who are agile, confident and enterprising; possess advanced knowledge and problem-solving skills; are team players; and are well-equipped for global careers of the future. This Future Ready Learners vision is underpinned by high quality learning and teaching —achieved through systematic, formalised quality assurance processes and policies, and evidenced through key performance indicators at the University.

The student learning experience is central to this Future-Ready Learners pillar and our Transforming Learning program of work seeks to support this through focused activities, including a refreshed curriculum that fosters active learning and supports employability outcomes through the building of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes that equip graduates for the future.

Further to this, Swinburne graduate attributes describe the capability of graduates to use knowledge, skills, and behaviours to contribute to society meaningfully and positively. They are an important strategic lever embedded in all course design, delivery and regular renewal; and assessed to ensure students are equipped for their careers and lives beyond the university. How graduate attributes are applied to individual courses is tested with course advisory boards comprised of employers, to ensure learning outcomes will meet local and national skill needs. The same approach applies in each location in which Swinburne courses are delivered.

<https://www.swinburne.edu.au/media/swinburneeduau/about-swinburne/docs/pdfs/Swinburne-Strategic-Plan-2025.pdf>

UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS TRANSPARENCY

Swinburne has implemented and published admission requirements and processes as set out in the Admissions Transparency Implementation Plan.

We are committed to recruiting students from a diverse range of educational backgrounds. About a third (32%) of commencing domestic undergraduate students are selected on the basis of recent secondary education (i.e. an ATAR). Of the remaining commencing domestic undergraduates, most are selected on the basis of prior study in either higher education (e.g. OUA, a diploma pathway or another HE qualification) or VET. The remainder are selected on a basis other than formal qualifications (16% of total commencing domestic undergraduate students in 2019).

Regardless of admission pathway, all applicants must meet minimum entry requirements and are selected on the basis of prior learning, English language proficiency and whether they meet course prerequisites. For some courses, applicants must also provide evidence of aptitude or personal capabilities (where this is the case, these requirements are specified in the published entry requirements). All selection decisions are evidence based and subject to approved criteria which assures quality, transparency and consistency of decision making.

Where applicants are selected on the basis of prior higher education or VET study, selection officers consider their previous academic achievements against approved selection criteria, as evidenced by academic transcripts issued by registered providers.

For selected courses, applicants may be selected on a basis other than formal qualifications, including:

- Relevant skills and abilities, which are evidenced through tests, interviews, portfolios or auditions (e.g. entry into the Bachelor of Circus Arts is through audition, interview and medical assessment;

mature age applicants may be selected on the basis of results from the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT))

- Experience-based entry, where applicants are selected on the basis of skills and knowledge gained through work experience and/or non-credentialed/non-award training. Factors considered include relevance, nature and duration of work roles and responsibilities, relevance and nature of skills acquired through work experience and non-award training, the currency and authenticity of the evidence provided by the applicant.

The University has several mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of admission requirements:

- Annual report to the Academic Senate that monitors the performance of all students on the basis of admission pathway.
- regular management reports that utilise data analytics to monitor the admissions process
- Annual course monitoring and review processes for each course includes reviewing entry requirements.
- The University's retention strategy, which is informed by analytics and monitors ongoing success of students.

UNIVERSITY RETENTION STRATEGIES

Swinburne's long-standing focus on student retention was further consolidated with the release of our Swinburne Retention Strategy and Action Plan in 2016. The guiding principles of the strategy are a student-centred approach; retention is everybody's business; and data driven evidence-based approach. This has seen continued long-term improvement in retention and reduction in adjusted attrition evidenced in Swinburne's performance-based funding allocation.

Our action plan has six key priority areas, with targeted interventions and activities implemented to support them, which cover: (1) engaging first year students; (2) targeted support for struggling students; (3) reducing loss of Leave-of-Absence students; (4) improving the experience of dissatisfied students; (5) staff engagement in retention; and (6) timely data to drive decisions. Given the diversity of our student cohorts (including on-campus and online delivery) and the importance of having data driven evidence-based decision making, Swinburne has invested in developing data analytics capabilities and predictive modelling to aid implementation and evaluation of actions.

In 2018, a review of our existing retention interventions was conducted, highlighting 6 key factors contributing to student retention: academic preparation, engagement, and progress, plus social engagement, financial burden, and demographic characteristics. These align with global findings (e.g. Hanover Research, 2018). This review demonstrated that retention activities across all stages of the student life cycle fall into three broad areas: (i) supporting commencing students to engage confidently with their studies; (ii) supporting continuing students to persist with their studies and offering enrichment opportunities, and (iii) assisting students to re-engage with their studies after poor performance.

Further examples of Swinburne's support for students and impact, include:

- **Preparing students for success:** Our *Strategies For Success* (SFS) program helps equip students transitioning to tertiary study with the necessary skills and knowledge to tackle the academic demands of University. The program is an integral part of Swinburne's orientation and transition strategy, and is open to all new and current students. It is further targeted towards low SES students or students otherwise at risk of attrition. Our analysis shows that the SFS program has had a demonstrably positive effect on academic performance and retention.
- **Supporting students to complete their studies:** Our *Back On Track* (BoT) program supports students to re-engage after a poor performance in a semester, while our *Study Groups*

support students who want to boost their academic performance in units. Study Groups are either self-organised or run by the Faculty. The pass rates of students who participate in the BoT program shows improvement by up to 35%, while students who engage in the *Study Groups* tend to achieve higher grades than students who do not engage in study groups.

As part of continuous improvement, Swinburne will continue to undertake a systematic review of our 2016 Retention Strategy and Action Plan over the next 6 months, to ensure efficient and effective operationalisation, and most importantly to review the impact of the action plan to determine its continued success in improving retention and the student experience.

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING AND INNOVATION

Through strategic investment in infrastructure and research excellence, we are now internationally recognised as a research-intensive university of world standard and have consistently improved our standing across all ranking systems.

We are committed to encouraging, supporting and investing in research and development that aspires to the highest quality. We move forward with a focus on outcomes and impact through close engagement with industry and the broader community. Our research informs public debate and policy development, and ensures the currency of our teaching.

We aim to attract high quality research students and staff by providing outstanding research infrastructure and we pursue strategic partnerships that increase our capability and impact.

We have a reputation for creativity and excellence in applied research, and our research innovation and collaboration with industry has resulted in growing commercialisation of new ideas, products and services.

Our Swinburne Innovation Precinct brings design, manufacturing and digital innovation together to create a hub of interdisciplinary collaboration involving students.

Our research institutes continue to facilitate collaboration with multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research teams for economic and social impact.

We continue to build long-lasting relationships with businesses and industries to develop programs and activities that focus on research translation and commercialisation.

Joint research centres increase the strength, scale and reach of Swinburne's research endeavours globally and are on a strong growth trajectory.

<http://www.swinburne.edu.au/media/swinburneeduau/research/docs/pdfs/Research-and-innovation-strategy-2020.pdf>

EQUITY

At Swinburne, we take pride in supporting education opportunities to students whatever their circumstances. As Australia's largest university provider of online education, we are creating opportunities which previously did not exist and are overcoming barriers which in part have led to the lower participation rates of rural and regional students that are seen at all levels of education. The provision of online learning opportunities to students who need to study part-time is essential for the economy and society — consistent with our 2025 vision — and this shows that we remain focused on provision of education opportunities that deliver employability and business creation outcomes for all types of students.

In addition to our online opportunities, Swinburne offers Access First Year Undergraduate Scholarships for rural and regional students commencing university studies. These awards are designed to assist with study-related costs and are based on social disadvantage and financial need.

Further, Swinburne's Reconciliation Action Plan builds on our commitment to the education and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities.

At Swinburne, we are all responsible for creating a culture that provides an environment that is safe, flexible and fair. It is also culturally appropriate, friendly and professional—free from discrimination and harassment. We seek to create a culture of acceptance. We cultivate and respect the strength that difference creates. Swinburne celebrates the diversity of its community and recognises the rights and responsibilities of all those within it.

Swinburne was the first university in Australia to launch a Charter of Cultural Diversity. It reaffirms and extends acknowledgement and respect for the many cultures that make up the Swinburne community. The Charter is underpinned by a set of Cultural Objectives, with initiatives in the areas of Culture and Capability, Teaching and Learning, Research and Development, Engagement and International Collaboration.

<http://www.swinburne.edu.au/media/swinburneeduau/about-swinburne/docs/pdfs/Cultural-Diversity-Objectives.pdf>

<https://www.swinburne.edu.au/about/strategy-initiatives/safety-equity/equity-diversity/>

<https://www.swinburne.edu.au/media/swinburneeduau/about-swinburne/docs/pdfs/RAP-2017-2019-Final.pdf>

LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

Swinburne is working to be a global leader in employability and business creation through:

- Authentic professional experiences and career development embedded in our curricula and extending to continuous engagement and upskilling
- Scalable Work Integrated Learning, Learning in the Workplace and business creation skills that extends the Swinburne Advantage to all students
- International experiences and cross-cultural understanding that prepares students to work in a globalised world.

Progress against each element is measured against key performance indicators for the University.

Swinburne's dedicated Product team also provides extensive environmental analysis drawing on domestic and international labour force data. This triangulates labour market data, government indicators through economic projections of employment and skill needs, and analysis of global data on trends in job advertisements, specific skill requirements and position descriptions. The analysis is combined with our marketing data to provide a product pipeline for full business case. Developed products are tested with workshops consisting of a range of employers in relevant and related industries and researchers at the cutting edge of developments in the field, to test the curriculum content and ensure learning outcomes will meet identified workforce needs.

Our annual planning cycle incorporates a review of courses against student and workforce demand.

- Courses are refreshed through allocated workload for academics combined with extensive support mechanisms.
- Courses that no longer meet demand are taught out.
- In some instances, such as Environmental Health, Swinburne works with employers in areas of acute need and limited student demand, to find innovative ways of meeting skills gaps.
- Admissions policies are reviewed and adjusted for each enrolment period based on demand and workforce need.

- Delivery modes and locations are adjusted to cater to workforce need, eg online provision of education and health to meet regional need and demand from those in the workforce looking to upskill; and the provision of construction management and advanced computer science courses in Sydney, as they are areas in which Swinburne is well above world class in its research and there is clear evidence of workforce shortages.

SECURITY MEASURES

Swinburne's Compliance Framework sets out the University's governance arrangements in relation to compliance, its approach to compliance, and responsibilities for managing compliance, in order to support University personnel in managing compliance obligations. The Compliance Framework aligns with the Compliance Management Systems – Guidelines (ISO 19600:2014 and The Compliance Framework has been endorsed by Council and its Audit and Risk Committee. Defence Trade Control and Sanctions obligations are managed in accordance with that that Compliance Framework, including the appointment of Subject Matter Experts, allocation of Executive accountability and reporting obligations and processes (including through to the Audit & Risk Committee). In relation to Countering Foreign Interference (CFI), the University adopts the following approach, which will be reviewed and enhanced in 2020 in accordance with the recently published "Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector":

1. Governance and Risk Framework – existing risk assessments and reporting frameworks incorporate CFI.
2. Due Diligence — the University's standard approach incorporates:
 - a. Know your partner
 - b. Due diligence completed before all partnership arrangements are entered into
 - c. Assessment of CFI risks.
3. Agreements – identify all potential collaborators and include clauses on international and CFI obligations and responsibilities as appropriate.
4. Research – review research projects with a focus on potential possibilities including dual use technology and research, and potentially sensitive technology and IP.
5. Awareness – communications raise awareness of foreign interference risks for researches, professional staff and HDR students.
6. Knowledge Sharing — including with government agencies

CYBER SECURITY

At Swinburne our cyber program mission is to reduce the risk to the digital assets of the university and its diverse group of stakeholders. Swinburne has an ongoing and mature cyber security practice that is continually monitoring and improving our cyber risk exposure. Key elements of our program include:

- Confidentiality
- Integrity
- Availability
- Training and Awareness
- Incident Response

We ensure a comprehensive posture that has the relevant security policies and controls that reduces risk while securely enabling access to information for those who need it. Swinburne works closely with relevant industry groups including the Australian Signals Directorate; is a member of CAUDIT-ISAC as well as being a participant in the CAUDIT Cyber Security in Practice; and is a recipient of all CAUDIT alerts and MISP feeds.

In support of this posture, Swinburne has reviewed and applied the following mitigation strategies in the case of a breach of security as applicable:

Mitigation Strategies to Prevent Delivery and Execution:

- Application whitelisting
- Patch applications
- User application hardening
- Automated dynamic analysis of email and web content run in a sandbox
- Email content filtering
- Web content filtering
- Deny corporate computers direct Internet connectivity
- Server application hardening
- Operating system hardening
- Antivirus software using heuristics and reputation ratings
- Control removable storage media and connected devices
- Block spoofed emails
- User education
- Antivirus software with up-to-date signatures
- TLS encryption between email servers

Mitigation Strategies to Limit the Extent of Cyber Security Incidents:

- Restrict administrative privileges
- Patch operating systems
- Multi-factor authentication
- Disable local administrator accounts
- Network segmentation
- Protect authentication credentials
- Non-persistent virtualised sandboxed environment
- Outbound web and email data loss prevention

Mitigation Strategies to Detect Cyber Security Incidents and Respond:

- Continuous incident detection and response
- Endpoint detection and response
- Hunt to discover incidents
- Network-based intrusion detection/prevention system
- Capture network traffic

Mitigation Strategies to Recover Data and System Availability:

- Daily backups
- Business continuity and disaster recovery plans
- System recovery capabilities

Mitigation Strategy Specific to Preventing Malicious Insiders:

- Personnel management

Further measures are in place to enhance the identification and deterrence of foreign interference activities, including actions to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, by actively monitoring multiple mitigating strategies to provide geotagging connections into the Swinburne environment.

SIGNED for and on behalf of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by Danielle Donegan, Acting First Assistant Secretary,
Higher Education Division of the Department of
Education, Skills and Employment as delegate of the
Minister for Education.

Signed by

Danielle Donegan

Date: 17 December 2020

In the presence of:

Signed by

Sabrina Kim

Position of witness

Policy Officer

**SIGNED for and on behalf of
Swinburne University of Technology**

Signed by

Professor Pascale Quester

Position

Vice-Chancellor and President

In the presence of:

Signed by

Vanessa Griggs

Position or profession of witness

Executive Assistant
