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Australian Government
**Department of Education,
Skills and Employment**

2021-2023 MISSION BASED COMPACT BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA AND UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

PURPOSE

This compact is an agreement between the Commonwealth and the University. Entering into a compact is one of the quality and accountability requirements, which a higher education provider must meet under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA) as a condition of receiving a grant. Specifically, subsection 19-110(1) of HESA requires that Table A and Table B providers must, in respect of each year for which a grant is paid to the provider under HESA, enter into a mission-based compact with the Commonwealth for a period that includes that year.

All strategies should provide qualitative and/or quantitative measures of assessment.

MISSION

The University is incorporated under the *University of Canberra Act 1989* of the Australian Capital Territory.

As the only University created under territory legislation, we have a firm commitment to our community. We are first and foremost Canberra's University.

The University is committed to serving the people of Canberra and the region through professional education and applied research and is influential in a range of disciplines including health and wellbeing, nursing, education, information technology, creative industries, communications, architecture and design, sport, and science.

The University has set an ambitious path for the future and is in the process of developing a new strategic plan that will commence in 2023. This plan will include our commitments as a civic university and a digital transformation of the organisation.

In 2021 the University has launched a Campus Master Plan (2020-2040), a Sports Strategy, and a stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.

The [Campus Master Plan](#) vision, including more than \$5 billion of property investment, will see the Bruce campus develop a series of learning neighbourhoods with a student, working and living population of 45,000, consisting of 12,000 residents, 15,000 students and an enterprise and business population of more than 18,000.

The [Sports Strategy](#) commits us to being the leading university for women's sport, diversity and inclusion in sport and sports integrity and a top three sports science university nationally. The University is actively planning to become Australia's leading university for sport education and research and to be internationally renowned for its collaborations, innovation, and technology.

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The stretch [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) 2021-2024 builds on the good work achieved against our previous plan. It aims to increase the satisfaction of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, to create connections among Indigenous alumni, and to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Network. As we further embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being, and doing into our curriculum and professional development, we will continue to seek feedback and input from Canberra's Indigenous community.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The University of Canberra values freedom of speech and academic freedom and has over the last few years been actively engaged with the matter, including review of internal policies.

In December 2020 the University's Council approved a new *Freedom of Speech Policy* and new *Academic Freedom Policy* in response to the Model Code. These followed months of discussions through our Academic Board.

These policies were reviewed by Professor Sally Walker and were noted in her report *Review of the Adoption of the Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom* (December 2020). The policies were further reviewed by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) in June 2021 and were at that time rated as partly aligned with the with the *Model Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom*.

The University has now considered Professor Walker's comments and the most recent feedback from the Department. In response, the University has written a new policy to fully align with the Model Code. This will replace the policies approved in December 2020.

The draft *Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy* was submitted to the DESE for comment in July 2021. We anticipate the University's Council will approve this new policy in October 2021.

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

The University's key teaching and learning targets by end of 2023 are:

1. Student experience, aiming for top 50% of institutions on the QILT Overall Quality of Educational Experience.
2. Retention, aiming for 81% bachelor degree retention rate.
3. Graduate outcomes, aiming to maintain our top 25% of institutions on the QILT Graduate Employment Rate.

To improve the [student experience](#) at the University we are working to improve the quality of our teaching and our online resources, enhancing the use of analytics and student feedback, implementing a Digital Student Journey project, providing enhanced student activities through [UCx](#) and expanded [Clubs and Societies](#), and working closely with our revitalised [Student Representative Council](#).

We have a number of collaborations with industry, community and professional groups that we leverage to the benefit of our students. Our teaching programs are informed by Course Advisory Groups that include industry representatives. As part of our National Priorities and Industry Linkage Fund (NPILF) plan, we will be expanding the number of Industry Academics providing teaching to our students.

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Full admissions criteria and outcomes are [published](#) in line with requirements of Admissions Transparency.

To improve student retention and success, the University has been implementing a Student Belonging and Success Strategy, resulting in programs such as [UC Thrive](#), transition support, student mentoring, peer support, and outreach to students at risk of discontinuing.

The University's current Student Mental Health Support [Policy](#) and [Guidelines](#) are being updated. We have a number of policies to support the physical and mental health of our staff, including [Workplace Health and Safety](#), [Charter of Conduct and Values](#), and [Respect at Work](#). Our [Medical and Counselling Centre](#) provides extensive mental health support and runs programs for staff and students. We provide a Crisis Line for students and Employee Assistance Program for staff (see [here](#)).

We work to improve the graduate and labour market outcomes of our students through embedding Work-Integrated Learning through our [WIL Framework](#) and Professional Practice Core units. Also, our [Careers UC](#) service provides internship and placement support, careers advice, employment on campus, and graduate employment support. Through our NPILF plan we will be working to improve our Professional Practice Core units, and the graduate employment outcomes of our STEM students.

The University has moved to [activate](#) the Bruce campus and timetable as many teaching activities on-campus as practicable, in line with Federal and ACT Government health advice.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

The University of Canberra [Research & Innovation Plan 2018-2022](#) sets out a number of core goals and associated actions that underpin the University's strategic plan, *Distinctive by Design 2018 - 2022*. The key goals of the [2021 Research and Innovation Strategy](#) are to deliver:

1. Impact and Benefit
2. Distinctive Training
3. Research Excellence
4. Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Recently the University has committed a new focus on entrepreneurship and innovation as well as a stronger integration of the research and training missions and activities of the University. Our Innovation and Industry Engagement Strategy focuses on two areas:

- (1) boosting engagement with public, private and third sector organisations through promoting the University's capabilities, educating and fostering entrepreneurial culture and supporting knowledge exchange and technology transfer.
- (2) integrating innovation into the University's campus to create a vibrant and open innovation ecosystem.

After the successful launch in 2021, the Industry Collaborative Research Seed Grants scheme will continue in 2022. The scheme is designed to strengthen research activities between UC researchers and industry partners, providing joint funding for staged research activities and pilot trials. Our new Industry Co-Funded PhD Scholarships introduced in 2021 provide additional industry-focussed research training opportunities for our PhD candidates.

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In 2021, we introduced an extended range of development and support activities for Higher Degree by Research candidates and supervisors. The PhD Plus program has been enhanced with the development of industry-relevant transferable skills and the provision of industry engagement opportunities for our PhD candidates.

Cyber security

The University has a robust cybersecurity strategy that promotes resilience and a security-first culture. This includes on-going vulnerability management and awareness training program.

The University has a defined cybersecurity incidence response plan that feeds into the university-wide Critical Incident Management Team.

The University complies with the Australian Cyber Security Centre's "Strategies to mitigate cyber security incidents" document (<https://www.cyber.gov.au/acsc/view-all-content/publications/strategies-mitigate-cyber-security-incidents>).

The University has mapped its mitigation strategy against ACSC Essential Eight maturity model. The University is actively making investment to improve our maturity level across the Essential Eight maturity model.

The University's *Digital, Information and Technology Management Cyber Security Strategy* is an internal document only and not publicly available.

Foreign Relations and Countering Foreign Interference

The University has compliance obligations under the following legislation and guidelines:

- *Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020 (Cth)(AFRA)*
- *Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018 (Cth) (FITS)*
- *Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector (Guidelines)*

A Foreign Relations Legislation Decision Tree has been developed by the University which enables staff to identify what issues they need to consider in a proposed arrangement with a foreign entity, and what next steps they may need to take to ensure compliance and meet best practice with the above regulations.

The University has fulfilled its obligations under AFRA by notifying DFAT of all current and pre-existing foreign arrangements.

The University's procedures and staff resources on compliance with foreign relations legislation are internal documents only and not publicly available.

IMPROVING STUDENT EQUALITY AND OUTCOMES

The University's three key priorities for supporting students from under-represented backgrounds are:

1. Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student educational attainment through raising recruitment, retention, progression and completion rates.
2. Increase representation of students from diverse backgrounds to sector averages.
3. Changing the narrative of diverse student success.

Our strategies, targets and measurement methodologies for achieving these goals are outlined in our new [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) (priority 1) and our [Student Access and Equity Plan](#) (priorities 2 and 3), which is currently being updated.

We ensure students in equity groups are linked to our [Student Equity, Participation and Wellbeing](#) program and to any [Study Skills](#) support services they may need to enhance their chances of success, including Studiosity academic support. The [UC Thrive](#) program offers mentoring and other supports for student success. Our [Inclusion and Engagement](#) program provides support and accessibility services to students with a disability or ongoing health conditions. We are embedding Work-Integrated Learning opportunities in all our bachelor courses and ensuring students from all backgrounds can access these activities for improved graduate outcomes.

Our [Ngunnawal Centre](#) provides extensive tailored support and programs for our Indigenous Students, and we have partnered with the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Program. We are also undertaking work to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and pedagogies through our Indigenisation of the Curriculum Framework.

We run a number of outreach programs to the ACT and Capitol Region to increase aspiration for tertiary study such as our [UC Aspire](#) program and [Aspiration Agents](#). Our [Student Access and Equity Plan](#) also includes discipline-based outreach to disadvantaged partner schools.

Each year we run a Student Readiness Survey across our student body to identify emerging issues for support and action.

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SIGNED for and on behalf of
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

In the presence of:

by

Dom English

Ryan Kinder

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

A/g Director

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)

of the Department of Education, Skills and
Employment as delegate of the Minister for
Education and Youth

Signature

Signature

28/12/2021

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of
the University of Canberra

In the presence of:

ABN 81 633 873 422

by

Professor Paddy Nixon

Sharon da Silva

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

Vice-Chancellor & President

Executive Support Officer

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)



Sharon Da Silva

Signature

Signature