OFFICIAL

Australian Government

Department of Education, Skills and Employment

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

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
In 2021, the University of New England launched Future Fit, its first decadal strategic plan, which will guide our delivery of transformative learning opportunities, partnerships, and knowledge creation. Over the 2021-2023 period UNE seeks to achieve the following three outcomes toward its Mission as captured in Future Fit:

Priority 1: Improved outcomes for our student profile.

UNE will deliver personalised learning journeys, enabling students to develop their skills and education goals, and secure graduate outcomes in an accessible, personalised, and meaningful way. Over the duration of the Compact, UNE will deliver a suite of initiatives focused on providing high quality, digital-first teaching, and learning experiences to ensure that we deliver job ready graduates. UNE will increase engagement with industry and businesses to align graduate ready jobs with our education goals. **We will measure our success by improving or maintaining our rank in in the Student Experience Survey, Graduate Outcomes and Employer Satisfaction Survey.**

Priority 2: Excellent research

UNE will deliver outstanding research with impact through a series of initiatives designed to empower our communities, by developing our key priority areas of high impact research against criteria aligned to local, national, and international need. These thematic research priorities align UNE's efforts with regional industry and community needs and are underpinned by our innovative, industry embedded PhD Innovation program, and our ongoing and emerging industry, government and community partnerships. **We will measure our success by maintaining our share of industry funded research and positive HDR outcomes which align with relevant national and international benchmarks.**

Priority 3: Building Resilience.
By engaging with our staff, students, community, and industry partners, we will build a resilient future for the regions that we live and work in. Our course profile and our approach to research will be fiscally sustainable, aligned to market demand and need, and will balance opportunity and risk. We will foster the economic and social resilience of our regions through collaborative initiatives such as the NENW regional precinct, STEM Q. **We will measure our success by improvement in our net asset ratio and proportion of income from non-government sources.**

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM
UNE has engaged with the recommendations of the Walker Review on the adoption of the Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom and will continue to appropriately implement the Code and Framework as requested by the Department in correspondence from 3 June 2021. UNE is currently reviewing its Code of Conduct to ensure that this is consistent with the Model Code. Following further consultation and the application of key governance processes this will be available in late 2021. *Freedom of Speech Principles and Academic Freedom Statement:* *https://policies.une.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=283* *Freedom of Speech an Academic Freedom Guidelines:* *https://policies.une.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=468*

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

Priority: Student retention and completion

UNE is committed to providing students with the opportunity to access a quality higher education regardless of place or circumstance. This has resulted in a unique student cohort, with above-average participation of students facing obstacles to success in higher education, such as first in family, students with disability, rural, regional, and remote students, and those studying part time in online, distance mode. Our Retention and Engagement Plan articulates a multi-year strategy to improve outcomes, with a series of specific projects organised within three themes of supporting students' transition to higher education, creating a sense of connection and belonging, and improving curriculum and assessment to support retention. **Recognising that retention and completion are lagging metrics, we have identified student engagement as a strong proxy lead indicator of future retention outcomes. We aim to set an ambitious student engagement target each year from 2021 to 2023.**

Priority: Industry engaged teaching and learning

UNE has a proven record of successful and impactful industry engagement across our teaching and research enterprises and in providing placements and situated learning opportunities for our students. Our place-based model articulates a more mature approach to engagement with industry and community in the places we operate to provide relevant education offerings that will support current and future students, employer needs and contributions to regional economic development. This is evident in our UNE Tamworth expansion strategy, where eight new qualifications have been co-designed specifically to meet the future workforce needs of local industry while being appropriate to the requirements of the local population.

We will measure our performance by the number of courses co-developed with industry, the proportion of students undertaking work integrated learning opportunities and the participation of 'industry' tutors in programme delivery

Priority: Excellence in graduate employment

UNE's Future Fit strategy articulates our commitment to providing an education that will ensure the readiness of our students for the future of work. We will accomplish this through industry co-creation of educational offerings, curriculum and learning outcomes designed to prepare students for their future careers, providing opportunities for students to engage in work integrated learning, and for industry practitioners to support elements of delivery. **Our target is to remain among the top tier of Table A providers in the proportion of graduates in full-time employment measured each year in the Graduate Outcomes Survey.**

Key Student Policies and Strategies

UNE ensures that our student admission practices are open and equitable, as outlined in our [Admission, Credit and Enrolment Guidelines](#).

As a regional university, our students often have to travel long distances to attend onsite classes, intensive and residential experiences at UNE's regional and metropolitan sites. Providing up to date information on our COVID [Return to Campus Protocols](#) ensures that we can respond quickly to the needs of each region according to relevant guidelines.

UNE is undertaking the development of a suite of student-facing Mental Health support provisions, including a revision of its mental health strategy to incorporate better practice from the [Universities UK Stepchange framework](#). UNE has also signed on to the [Australian University Mental Health Framework](#). These global standard will support UNE's existing [wellbeing programs](#).

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Priority: High quality research outcomes.

UNE will continue to achieve excellence in relation to high quality research outcomes that have real impact on our communities at a regional, national, and international level. Over the duration of the Compact UNE will focus on enhancing our research publication quality framework to ensure success through the dissemination of research and promoting engagement with research outcomes. **We will measure our success in relation to high quality research outcomes by achieving a ranking of 'Above Word Standard' (or equivalent) in at least 70% of assessed Field of Research (FoR) codes as part of the 2023 ARC ERA process.**

Priority: HDR excellence

UNE is committed to producing HDR graduates with real world skills and connections across our communities and industry partners to support the delivery of meaningful outcomes from collaborative research. The implementation of new UNE's graduate research school, and the expansion of our PhD Innovation model will ensure that we achieve this. **We will measure our success by the proportion of HDR candidates (a) who achieve confirmation within the required timeframe, and (b) with industry co-supervision.**

Priority: Commercialisation/Research income

UNE has been a champion for industry embedded research with strong commercial outcomes and has developed key research strengths to support this goal. We will continue to pursue excellence and drive impactful and beneficial research through initiatives outlined in the Strategic Plan designed to increase the number of competitive industry co-funded projects across the range of our priority themes. **We will measure our success in relation to this through an increase in the proportion of industry research income (as defined by and measured through the ARC E&I activity).**

UNE recognises the need to address issues relating to potential adverse Foreign Interference and Cybersecurity. UNE is contributing to a sector-based approach to address these matters and formulate good practice; we have implemented various operational controls, invested in new cybersecurity resources and developed protocols within our governance processes to address adverse foreign interference without compromising the benefits of international collaboration. UNE has commenced a portfolio of work to address emerging cyber threats and will invest significant time and resources in ensuring that the organisation is vigilant. These will be monitored, reviewed, and continually nuanced over the duration of the Compact.

The UNE Cybersecurity strategy and governance is achieved through implementation of an Information Security Management System (ISMS), which is one of the compliance requirements under the NSW Cyber Security Policy. Additionally, UNE 's adoption and use of globally recognized standards such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology – Cyber Security Framework (NIST CSF) satisfies the compliance obligation under the NSW Cyber Security Policy and the ACSC Essential 8 mitigation strategies. The Cyber and Information Security Rule has been established within UNE to maintain a state of security to manage the integrity, confidentiality and availability of its information resources and assets. This rule requires that information system owners conduct information security risk assessments and, where appropriate, develop and implement controls and monitor and perform regular review of control effectiveness.

In relation to these cyber security resources, please see the following links:
NSW Cyber Security Policy

ACSC Essential 8

NIST CSF

Cyber and Information Security Rule

IMPROVING STUDENT EQUALITY AND OUTCOMES

Priority: Success and engagement rates for under-represented student cohorts

UNE ranks amongst the top tier of Table A providers for participation by students with disability, those from diverse cultural and social backgrounds (e.g. Aboriginal students, rural, regional, remote, and low SES students) and by gender (70% of UNE students self-identify as female). A key element of our Future Fit strategy is the recognition that each of our students has a unique background, varying reasons to participate in higher education, and individual circumstances that determine how they will engage. We will design our curriculum, assessment, and delivery to provide greater flexibility and choice for UNE students, and to allow them to pursue their individual ambitions whilst also promoting employability and graduate outcomes. Our Course Design Framework provides the overarching structure for achieving this. This flexibility will support diversity in student access and participation with a focus on success through their individual higher education journeys. **We will measure success by our national rank among Table A providers in participation and success by under-represented student cohorts.**

Priority: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation, success, and retention.

UNE understands that all areas of the University have a critical role in our success in encouraging and supporting participation, success, and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We have consistently been among the top five institutions for proportion of ATSI students. Our focus on providing a culturally safe learning and social environment, ensuring First Nations cultures, knowledges and stories are respected and embedded in our teaching and learning, research and engagement activities remains at the forefront of our commitment and practice. Equally important is providing meaningful opportunities to access entry to pathways and supporting mentoring and preparation programs for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Consistent with our Reconciliation Action Plan UNE will continue to raise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation, promote Indigenous staff employment opportunities and support success. A comprehensive overview of UNE's strategies in relation to support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can be found in our Indigenous Student Support Program (ISSP) reports. **We will measure success by growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student numbers and corresponding outcome metrics.**

Priority: Participation by rural, regional, and remote students in the New England and Northwest NSW (NENW).

Participation rates in Tamworth, Moree, Taree, and other key areas of the NENW are in some cases half those of metropolitan areas. Raising aspiration and participation in higher education in regional, rural, and remote (RRR) areas are critical priorities for UNE if we are to support improved economic and social outcomes. This aspiration sits at the heart of our goal to deliver personalised learning journeys in Future Fit, our decadal strategic plan. Success requires deep engagement with local communities and industry in the development of our UNE Tamworth expansion, engagement with the Moree Special Activation Precinct, support for the new Taree Universities Centre and through our STEM Q initiative which brings together a portfolio of investment opportunities and initiatives to enable the economic, environmental and social transformation of the NENW. Broader participation by RRR students is also supported by Regional Study Centres and our partnership with Country Universities Centres to provide place-based learning opportunities across a broad span of regional areas. **We will measure success by increased participation rates in the NENW region.**

SIGNED for and on behalf of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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)

In the presence of:

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

University of New England

by

Professor Brigid Heywood	Lisa Burr
Full name (please print)	Witness (please print)
Vice-Chancellor & CEO, UNE	Executive Assistant
Position	Position or profession of witness (please print)

In the presence of:

Signature

Signature