



## 2024 Mission-Based Compact Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Federation University Australia

### 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 and Strategic Planning

#### Strategic priorities

Federation University's *Strategic Plan 2021-2025* outlines our commitment to delivering quality, industry-informed and job-relevant education, delivered locally and featuring wrap-around support, as key to engaging cohorts of hard-to-reach students.

At the heart of our strategic priorities is a recognition that highly relevant, placed-based, skills enriching programs are critical to serving our regional communities, enabling the intergenerational change that only education can deliver, and meeting the skilled workforce needs of industries that are critical to sustaining and growing regional economies.

Building on our strengths in graduate employment and skills development, our focus to 2025 is on establishing the co-operative (co-op) education model as part of every course. This model provides experiential learning, co-designed with industry, alongside excellent student support. Co-op involves a minimum 60 days' placement – paid, wherever possible – and contributing directly to course credits. Co-op degrees will be offered in 2024 in Science, Engineering, Business and IT. Between now and the end of 2025 we will embed co-op across our entire suite of courses.

***We are focused on ensuring regional communities can play their part in achieving the national economic priorities and meet the challenges of the future.***

We work with government and industry to ensure that our largest offerings are meeting critical areas of workforce demand, including teaching, nursing, allied health and engineering. We have partnered with the Victorian Government to offer a hybrid accelerated secondary teacher education program, fast-tracking pre-service teachers into classrooms to boost the teaching workforce. We are introducing new offerings for future regional workforce needs, e.g. partnering with major global renewable energy companies Vestas, Acciona, Global Power Group and Tilt Renewables through our Australian first [Asia Pacific Renewable Energy Training Centre](#).

Our research similarly focuses on the development need of our regional and rural communities, delivering practical outcomes for our industry partners.

### **Governance and risk**

Federation University has a robust governance framework that ensures we adhere to statutory and regulatory compliance obligations. Areas of focus include:

- ensuring the University acts in accordance with the Australian Foreign Arrangements Scheme and export control laws ([Foreign Arrangements Notification Procedure](#); [Research Export Controls Procedure](#)).
- upholding freedom of speech and academic freedom as paramount values ([Academic Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Speech Policy and Procedure](#)).
- safeguarding the University's systems and data through our dedicated Cyber Security Team. Federation's Cyber Security Roadmap outlines current and future cyber security works, along with industry accepted controls and assessments. Roadmap initiatives include enhanced employee awareness, technical controls, external independent assurance such as security testing, incident response exercises and mobile device management.

### **Safer campuses**

Federation creates a culture that values health, safety and wellbeing as fundamental. We are strongly committed to providing equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual harm, racial or religious vilification for all members of the University community.

Practical changes introduced to improve student safety include:

- Equal Rights are Your Rights training for all students.
- Respectful behaviours training at all on-campus residential accommodation, international students, and student leaders and clubs.
- First responder training for staff and student leaders.
- Introduction of a Respectful Communities Coordinator and Safer Campuses webpage as dedicated resources for students and staff.

### **Further information:**

[Corporate Brochure](#)

[Corporate Governance Policy](#)

[Safer campuses](#)

[Discriminatory and Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedure](#)

[Student Sexual Harm Procedure](#)

## Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

Federation University is ranked #1 in Australia for first generation enrolments<sup>1</sup> and #1 for access and equity<sup>2</sup>. Our strategic objectives include:

- world-class multi-sector education available to all
- positive career and life impact
- broad access, diversity and inclusion, acknowledging our Indigenous heritage.

Our success in achieving these outcomes is measured through student experience metrics, retention and completions, progress and GPA, along with graduate outcomes.

### **Building regional capacity**

We work closely with industry, schools, vocational education and governments of all levels to address regional provision issues, develop industry relevant courses, smooth out education-to-employment pipelines, address both the cost and logistics of students accessing university education in the regions, and provide extra support for students in need. Our co-operative model is designed to enhance employability, work skills and social capital. Under-represented student cohorts will have opportunities to build long-lasting relationships with employers, industry, and communities.

### **Tailored, focused and timely support based on data analytics**

Support will be digitally enabled across the student lifecycle, utilising learner profiles including background demographics and experiences to drive targeted support and communications. Student feedback and QILT surveys will inform interventions to support under-represented groups. Students as partners co-design student engagement, support and retention initiatives.

The Aboriginal Education Centre (AEC) supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Initiatives include identifying culturally safe spaces outside each campus, the Student Recruitment and Retention Taskforce, and development of a Cultural Inclusion, Safety and Immersion Strategy.

The University Specialist Employment partnership offers a free program to support students with a disability to attain employment relevant to their qualification.

We are in the process of releasing our 'Respectful and Inclusive Communities Action Plan 2024 - 2026' (RICAP) which embodies and exemplifies the principles of respect, inclusion, belonging, equality, and responsibility.

### **Equity Funding Plan**

As a university with one of the highest proportions of social equity students in the country, we will ensure that we increase our capability to attract, support and retain students from identified under-represented backgrounds through the Higher Education Continuity Guarantee.

This funding will support Federation University to achieve the following:

- Increased outreach and engagement activities, specifically for regional, low SES and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Additional and tailored supports for students studying in our co-op courses to ensure graduates from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds have the appropriate skills to immediately enter their chosen career path.

<sup>1</sup> 2023 Good Universities Guide

<sup>2</sup> 2023 [Australian Financial Review Best Universities Rankings](#).

- Improved website functionality to enhance the prospective and current student experience.
- Enhanced onboarding supports to ensure students are set up for success before they commence their studies, as well as strengthened, ongoing, personalised support throughout their study journey.

**Further information:**

[Students and Support for Students Policy](#)

[Support services](#)

## Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

### Learning and teaching plan

The 2024-2025 Learning and Teaching Plan, currently under consultation prior to release, focuses on two priority domains, aligned to our strategic priorities and the Higher Education Standards Framework:

*Domain 1 - Alignment with the Minimum Cooperative Standards (MiCS) to support Co-operative Model Rollout.* MiCS are a set of criteria devised by Federation University to determine how courses align with the University's co-operative education model. This includes:

1. Co-design with industry and students
2. Co-develop with industry and students
3. Co-deliver with industry
4. FedTASK – Federation Transferable Attributes Skills and Knowledge
5. Workplace and Career Preparation
6. Authentic Assessment
7. Industry facing experiences.

*Domain 2 - Continuous Quality Assurance (Sector Expectations).* This includes:

1. Learning and Teaching Delivery Principles and Definitions
2. Inclusive and Diverse Practices
3. Scholarship of Learning and Teaching
4. Quality Renewal Schedule.

The plan outlines clear objectives, evaluation metrics and timelines for each focus area.

The 2023-2025 Learning and Teaching Quality Assurance Framework also highlights how the University supports learning and teaching quality assurance from the unit to course level.

### Student success and retention

Students often require additional support throughout their learning journey. For coursework students, intervention strategies are activated where the student has failed, or deemed not yet competent, in 50% or more of the courses or units studied in any study period. Data insights are used to plan retention and student support activities, as well as improve student experience and retention.

Intervention strategies can cover, but are not limited to:

- transition support
- English language support
- study skills support
- welfare support
- reduction in unit load
- increased contact.

Where a student identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, the Aboriginal Education Centre is involved in developing the support strategy.

The University is committed to the development and integration of internationalisation in the University's strategy, organisation, diversity, culture and governance. This includes a commitment to access and equity to international students studying and researching with the University on-campus, off-campus and off-shore. International student support includes comprehensive orientation, social programs, peer and personal support.

### **Graduate employability**

As outlined above, our co-op model involves strong industry collaboration through extended work experience opportunities, where students are employed whilst learning. The model supports learners to enhance employability, work skills and social capital. Key measurables for labour market outcomes include improved employability and graduate salaries, measured through the Graduate Outcomes Survey, QILT, Good Universities Guide.

### **Student retention and experience**

Our approach to student retention focuses on fostering a growth mindset among learners, scaffolded academic skills development, personalised student interventions and targeted support. The 2024 – 2025 Student Retention and Experience Strategy is under development and will leverage the success of current initiatives developed during the transition to online learning, adapt to the changing demands for different modes of service delivery and develop contemporary and agile approaches to improve student outcomes. It will adopt an institutional approach, cascading core themes to align all areas of Federation University and complementing existing strategic plans for TAFE, partner providers, and outreach support.

The University also continues to ensure that we meet the admissions transparency requirements and regularly publishes admissions information for its programs and cohorts.

### **Further information:**

[Learning and teaching plan](#)

[Learning and Teaching Quality Assurance Framework \(LTQAF\)](#)

[Monitoring Course/Qualification Progression Procedure](#)

[International Student Advisory](#)

[Global Partners and Community Engagement Policy](#)

## Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

Our approach to research, research training and innovation is informed by our commitment to delivering economic and social transformation for regional Australia and beyond. Our objectives include embedding a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship to support research and research commercialisation.

Federation University's research centres are preferred research partners for industry, community and government in digital agriculture, environmental and resource management, renewable energy, chronic disease management and the evaluation of social policy. Federation researchers are also setting international standards in data discovery and interoperability.

Research at Federation University is organised into three broad, cross-disciplinary research priority areas:

- *Health and Wellbeing*: Developing the best prevention, treatment and care for bodies and minds. Our research tests scalable and transferable models of cost-effective healthcare delivery in regional and rural settings.
- *Society and Environment*: Understanding and managing the world we live in, from the constructed to the natural. Our research supports sustainable regional economic and social development that enhances and protects Australia's unique landscapes and ecosystems.
- *Virtual, Digital and Computational Environments*: Exploring, analysing and creating our new reality through innovative technologies. Our research supports businesses and communities through secure integrated data systems, optimised process modelling and realising the power of artificial intelligence and robotics.

### Higher degrees by research

In higher degrees by research (HDR), we engage students with real-world research projects which are co-designed, co-supervised and in many cases co-funded by industry – students are supported with a living allowance scholarship. We also provide opportunities for HDR students to undertake internships during their PhD program so that they can apply their developing research skills in the workplace. We are #1 in Victoria and #5 in Australia for HDR engagement with industry. 15.2% of all HDR students are engaged with industry via internships, co-supervision or co-funding, compared to a national average of 5.1%.

### Research commercialisation

Our approach to research commercialisation is as follows:

- We are collaborating with Deakin University through the [ManuFutures Ignite Program](#) to drive industry innovation and assist product-based start-ups to realise ideas and solutions with a focus on sustainability. As part of the program, we will provide training in the skills to start an SME based on the translation of research in AI, robotics, and advanced manufacturing. The skills will include protecting intellectual property, developing a business case to raise capital, and managing and marketing your business.
- Once we have supported participants to develop these skills, we will determine how we can best support them to protect their IP and connect with investors so that our entrepreneurs have access to start-up funding.

- We have the infrastructure, including through our IBM Emerging Technologies Hub to enable start-ups to access co-working spaces, equipment, and know-how to ensure an ecosystem for the businesses to succeed.

Our research success measures include % of Q1 publications, HDR training opportunities, external rankings and total and reportable HERDC research income.

Further information:

[Research and Research Training Policy](#)

[Research Centres](#)

## Strategies for Engaging with Industry

Federation University is a leader in industry collaboration. Building on this reputation, we aspire to become Australia's first co-op university, to strengthen our work with industry, making our teaching and research adaptable to the rapidly changing needs of the workforce and providing our partners with more opportunities to get the most out of our research expertise.

### Co-operative model

The most important element of our co-op learning model has been working with industry and involving them in the education and employment of our students. The model aims to address skill shortages, utilising Jobs and Skills Australia and Victorian Skills Authority data to inform our educational offerings and inviting our industry partners to collaborate on our courses, identifying the real skills that our students need to succeed in their chosen industry. For our communities, Federation co-op will drive the growth of our regional economies by developing talented local graduates who understand exactly what our regional businesses need.

Engagement with industry to date has included:

- working closely with industry to understand their skill needs and inform our course provision
- involving them as much as possible in classroom instruction
- providing as much blended learning – a mix of learning on campus and in workplaces via internships, placements and other experiential offerings – as possible
- working to ensure our graduates are 'first picked' for available local jobs.

Our approach has the support of the Australian Industry Group, with whom we are partnering to provide cross-sector pathways in industry.

### Technology Parks

Our technology parks are specifically designed to encourage the development of technology-oriented enterprises. These innovation precincts foster collaborations, employment placements for students, partnerships and research opportunities.

We have one of the largest technology parks of any Australian university, with established operations in Ballarat and Gippsland, as well as a new jobs and technology precinct at Ararat.

Federation's technology parks have grown to now host 64 enterprises that collectively employ more than 2,100 full-time staff. This includes national and international companies including IBM, Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority, Concentrix, Kyndryl and Ernst & Young.

SIGNED for and on behalf of  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

Madonna Morton

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Full name (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

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Position

of the Department of Education



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Signature

29/05/2024

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Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of

Federation University

by

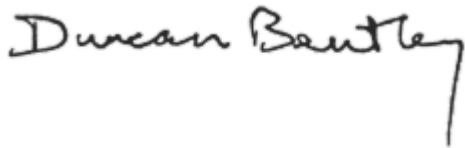
Professor Duncan Bentley

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Vice-Chancellor & President

Position

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Signature

In the presence of:

Paula Burton

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Witness (please print)

Executive Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor &  
President

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Position or profession of witness (please print)

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Signature

Date: 18 April 2024