



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

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

The [Making a Difference: The 2025 Agenda](#) states that Flinders will ‘proactively engage with business, industry, government and non-government organisations to deliver outcomes that promote economic development and change lives for the better.’ This flows through to both the education and research pillars of the 2025 Agenda highlighting a strong focus on our partnership with industry to achieve our overall mission.

Student and staff safety

Flinders takes the safety of students and staff very seriously and places the highest importance on such. As part of the University’s [Respect.Now.Always](#) follow up the University is finalising its Safety on Campus Action Plan.

Flinders has taken a lead role to develop and launch a new ‘Consent and Respectful Relationships Online Training Module’. The training is included in the Universities Australia Primary Prevention of Sexual Harm in the Good Practice Guide.

Academic freedom/freedom of speech

Flinders recognises that academic freedom and freedom of speech underpin the creation and dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of society. Flinders’ commitment to these principles is supported by its [Academic and Intellectual Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy](#) and legally binding provisions it has negotiated in its Enterprise Agreement. Together these instruments implement the model code for the protection of freedom of speech and academic freedom. The Flinders Enterprise Agreement builds on the Model Code by providing additional protections for professional staff which do not exist in the Model Code.

Countering Foreign Interference

Flinders recognises that foreign interference poses a significant risk to the higher education sector and national interests more broadly. To combat this risk, Flinders has implemented robust systems and processes in line with the *Guidelines to counter foreign interference in the Australian university sector* (UFIT Guidelines). This includes a comprehensive framework to mitigate against the risk of foreign interference per the [Policy](#) and [Foreign Interactions Intranet Website](#) which includes educational information and Due Diligence processes. These ensure the University complies with all relevant legal obligations, a due diligence processes to assess and mitigate the risks associated with all foreign interactions, clear internal accountabilities and responsibilities for managing those risks, and reporting of risks and incidents through to the University's governance bodies. The collective activity positions Flinders with an improving and robust capability for teaching and research activities and supports our pursuit of increasing DISP accreditation levels.

Cyber Security

Flinders has developed an institution Cyber Security Strategy and roadmap of controls uplift over the next 24 months to mitigate and reduce university wide cyber risk. This is inclusive of a leadership and awareness program that will direct focus and improvement towards communication, education and training activities for all university stakeholders.

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

Educational pathways

Flinders is engaging actively with schools in low SES areas including regional, rural and remote South Australia and the Northern Territory to design pathways into higher education that suit the schools' context. For example, in the Riverland region we have worked with high schools on the pathways from their VET in Schools programs, with the schools adding Certificate IIIs in both Allied Health Assistance and Individual Support, enabling students to pathway to local health course offerings.

We have also increased the number of Diploma offerings that articulate into full degrees, for example the Diploma in Sports Management with Port Adelaide Football Club has facilitated students who would not normally have undertaken university studies to participate in higher education.

New models for regional, rural and remote students for health education

Flinders has co-designed courses in high demand allied health professions (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech Pathology) launching in three rural South Australian sites in 2024. The model utilises Regional University Hubs and Flinders' infrastructure in the Riverland, Upper Spencer Gulf and Limestone Coast. We are also launching online offerings in conjunction with Regional Study Hubs, for example the Bachelor of Social Work, enabling regional students to undertake this study with support from the study hub.

Flinders University Scholarships

Flinders has established 20 new scholarships for students flagged for low SES or those suffering financial hardship. These will provide opportunity for students to attend our new City Campus to study business; students to be able to attend Flinders students from interstate to study STEM disciplines; and regional and rural SA and NT students studying undergraduate courses at Flinders. The scholarships are valued at 7,500 – 10,000 per annum and will be awarded to successful applicants for the duration of their course up to a maximum of four years. The scholarship initiative is to increase participation and access to pursue higher education by supporting students that are experiencing financial hardship.

Increase Indigenous student access, participation and completion rates in degree programs.

Flinders University's [Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025](#) and [Indigenous Student Success Targets 2022-2025](#) outline specific strategies, milestones and metrics to enhance Indigenous student access, participation and success in higher education. Targeted initiatives employ innovative approaches to student success and tailored support for all Indigenous students.

Flinders University will harness community partnerships, targeted recruitment efforts, and pathway programs, complementing established recruitment plans and targets. Focussed efforts will concentrate on key areas to maximise greater impact, increased scholarships, access to accommodation and financial aid, individual support to enhance completion rates.

Indigenous student programs align with broader national strategies and funding agreements.

HECG Funding Investment

Flinders continues to invest in equity opportunities:

- New scholarships for low SES and Indigenous students;
- Additional teaching locations on the Limestone coast and Port Augusta;
- Rural and Remote student support and equipment additions to provide remote student with an equal access;
- Development of online diplomas to support pathway access for more students;
- New on campus student accommodation to help secure study for remote people to enable in person study.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

Learner Engagement

Flinders has a strong emphasis on learner engagement as we see this as a key element of student success, retention and wellbeing. Our Student Success and Retention Plan has objectives and a series of measures to assess impact:

- Embed a student "Success Thread" which includes academic skills development, career-learning and development skills, skills for well-being and respect for Indigenous knowledges and cultures into all undergraduate curriculum.
- Roll out Post-enrolment English and Academic Skills Assessments in first year courses with targeted assistance based on class and individual student needs identified.
- Roll out topic (subject) level learning/engagement analytics and structured reaching out to students ('nudges') to support student engagement and encourage help-seeking behaviours by academics and Student Success and Well-being advisors reaching out to students across topics.
- Provide a Responsive and Navigable Learning Environment Online through a LMS shell with embedded support and easily accessible support and course-specific support through course page templates.

Early intervention and high-quality support for students experiencing difficulty to progress

Besides the engagement strategies already listed above, the nudges also trigger early intervention and referral by teaching staff and course coordinators to Student Learning Support Services for academic support, or to other support services for non-academic issues, for students struggling to progress in topics/subjects.

Flinders holistic student support framework is outlined in our [Support for Students Policy](#). It includes references to further intervention strategies such as our [Student Progress Policy](#) and [Procedures](#), which formalise the process for supporting students failing 50% or more of their course. Less formal interventions include student communication strategies to ensure students are aware of support services and other pro-active support outreach activities such as [Flinders Support Network](#). Flinders' Support for Students Policy is underpinned by a number of strategies and plans, such as the [Student Success and Retention Strategy](#), the [Indigenous Engagement and Education Strategy](#), and the [Whole-Of-University Wellbeing Strategic Plan](#).

Increasing Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

Flinders continues to be strongly positioned in relation to WIL, with WIL an option or core offering in all of our new city campus undergraduate courses. Key activity for 2024 is to complete an audit of courses offered at other sites, then curriculum change that ensures WIL becomes an option or core offering in all undergraduate courses.

Co-design of courses

Flinders continues to expand our range of offerings that are co-designed and co-delivered with industry. The Curriculum Accelerator is a series of workshops that enables curriculum design and redesign and this includes industry engagement throughout. Course Quality Advisory Groups are required for each course and include industry representatives, providing an annual opportunity for industry representatives to be engaged in program review and design planning. In addition to our award-winning Diploma of Digital Technologies, co-designed with BAE Systems Australia, we have an expanded range of co-designed and co-delivered courses including the Diploma in Sports Management (with Port Adelaide Football Club) and the Diploma in Sports Business (with Adelaide United Football Club).

International Student Support

Flinders is committed to supporting students with a disability; and for the larger cohorts of international sponsored students, support is sourced to ensure student success.

Flinders University Academy improves equity and opportunities for students by transitioning students through English Language and Academic Preparatory pathways.

Flinders will increase and refresh activities for continued innovation in student support models and initiatives to further enhance student onboarding through a refined service provision, delivering increased in-person activities, workshops, and events on campus. As well as increasing the rollout of in country pre-departure sessions for commencing international students. This can be measured by an increase in international student satisfaction and support in national benchmarking surveys.

Flinders will refresh the student mobility program to ensure we contribute to the national benchmark for outbound student mobility, as well as increase the value proposition of study at Flinders for both domestic and international students seeking learning abroad opportunities.

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

Research Training and Industry Innovation

Flinders University delivers best-practice [higher degree by research training](#) supported by high quality HDR supervisors and resources for [online candidature management](#) and [professional development](#). The HDR Supervisors engage with peer-reviewed evidence-based [professional development](#) supported by Flinders-specific policies and information. HDR students exit with Doctoral Graduate Attributes attained through their professional development in the way that best supports their career aspirations. HDR students and supervisors have [ResearchNow](#) profiles where they can showcase their research outputs, projects, outcomes, contributions and impacts.

The Office of Graduate Research provides information to HDR students about Intellectual Property (IP) management if there is a written agreement that the IP needs to be assigned to the University, supervisor or funding body.

Throughout 2022 and 2023, Flinders implemented numerous strategies to support the new Department of Education legislation for PhD internships. This included information sessions for HDR Students and Supervisors, internally funded schemes matched by industry (PhD Enterprise Scholarship), and support for externally funded schemes.

During 2023 there were 34 eligible co-funded industry PhDs and 3 internships established:

- 19 Enterprise PhDs
- 5 EXCITE IDCT PhDs
- 6 College Industry PhDs
- 3 ARC Training Centre PhDs
- 1 National Industry PhD
- 3 stand-alone internships

Foreign Interactions

Interactions with foreign individuals, groups or organisations are a welcome and important part of university life and integral to the success of Flinders University's teaching, learning and research activities. The University works to maximise staff members' familiarity with the Foreign Interactions policy and its implications. The University has established systems processes for the active monitoring and management of foreign interactions and conducts regular training to keep members of the University informed of the University's obligations in relation to foreign interactions, foreign influence, foreign arrangements and the Defence Trade Control Act.

Strategies for Research Translation and Commercialisation

Flinders focusses on industry demand for research outputs. This involves:

- Targeted provision of funding to support development and early-stage, de-risking of industrially relevant research outputs to a proof-of-concept level that is sufficient for an appropriate industry partner to adopt, license, or otherwise invest in the intellectual property.
- Feedback industry demand for particular solutions to those research groups best positioned to research and develop those solutions for adoption, licensing, or investment in the intellectual property.
- Reducing financial risks for industry partners by leveraging a mix of competitive grants and private investment that makes commercialising a particular piece of intellectual property economically feasible for that industry partner.
- Reducing friction between industry and the University by negotiating commercially-friendly terms for industry partners whilst preserving the rights and interests of the University and its staff and students.

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

The University's NPILF 2023 Touch Point document details three projects focused on industry, the Curriculum Design Accelerator model which supports multi-stakeholder engagement in curriculum design; the Flinders Factory of the Future which addresses barriers to the training in, and uptake and diffusion of, advanced manufacturing and digital technologies; and a project to increase the STEM-skilled capacity of Flinders Law students.

Flinders University emphasis on engaging industry for academic collaboration, to increase innovation in education and research as well as employment pathways for our students and researchers, has had an enthusiastic response resulting in successful establishment of many new curriculum offerings, Industry PhDs, Research Internships and Start Ups.

Flinders New Venture Institute is the home of innovation and entrepreneurship at Flinders University, bringing together industry, government, research, and community to deliver unique learning experiences and bolster economic growth and employment. Our ambitious, industry-savvy community with access to the latest technology and new business models is enabling us to shape the innovative leaders and industries of the future e.g. our [Venture Dorm](#) program offered across the state.

In 2024 Flinders University is the only South Australian provider of the Federal Government's new Startup Year Program. This [intensive program](#) includes three stages for Startup growth and entrepreneurial action working in partnership with industry to focus on the mindset, connections, and skills required to navigate entrepreneurial pathways and ecosystems for social or economic impact in any field.

With our ongoing commitment to enhancing Research Engagement, Translation, and Impact, a second round of internally co-funded with Industry [PhD Enterprise Scholarships](#). Moreover, many HDR students at Flinders are in receipt of scholarships co-funded by Industry.

- In November 2023, Ms Louise Miller-Frost, MP and Federal Member for Boothby formally launched Flinders University's [ARC Training Centre for Biofilm Research and Innovation](#) bringing together multiple industry partners and supporting the recruitment of industry linked research fellows and up to 14 PhD scholarships with industry-based internships.
- In December 2023, the Department of Education confirmed Flinders University had reported 14 eligible internships in response to legislative changes.
- Flinders has had significant success with the National Industry PhD Program receiving 4 **Industry Linked PhD stream** in Round 2, 2023 out of 40 opportunities.
- In 2023, [The National Centre for Groundwater Research and Training](#) at Flinders University won the [ACGR Award for Excellence in Promoting Industry Engagement in Graduate Research](#) (see [video](#)).

Going forward,

- Flinders will continue to incorporate industry-specific content into staff training programs to better equip academic and professional staff with the skills and awareness to meaningfully communicate and engage with industry.
- Flinders will invest in hosting industry representatives matched to specific research and educational capabilities to build and develop closer University-industry relationships, which constitute a foundation for meaningful engagement in the future.

Flinders will take a long-term approach to engaging with industry partners, seeking to establish agreements and structures that facilitate collaboration such as joint academic appointments (i.e., joint professorships), better facilitation of repeated projects, consultancies, and student work integrated learning over many years instead of just once-off agreements.

SIGNED for and on behalf of
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

Madonna Morton

Full name (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

Position

of the Department of Education



Signature

29/05/2024

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of
FLINDERS UNIVERSITY

by

Colin Stirling

Full name (please print)

President and Vice-Chancellor

Position



Signature

In the presence of:

Sally-Louise Mathwin

Witness (please print)

Senior Executive Officer

Position or profession of witness (please print)



Signature