



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

Macquarie’s purpose is to serve and engage students and staff through transformative learning and life experiences, and through the discovery and dissemination of knowledge and ideas, innovations and deep partnerships. Under the strategic framework, [Our University: A Framing of Futures](#), Macquarie University has set key outcomes and metrics, aligned with the [Macquarie University Operating Plan 2020-24](#).

As a response to a changing operating environment—in 2024, the University is:

- Evolving its strategic framework
- Developing a new Operating Plan (2024-2028) with aligned metrics
- Launching a new Education Strategy – *The Macquarie Advantage*
- Refreshing and extending the lifespan of its Research Strategic Framework and MQ Health Strategic Plan, respectively.

Macquarie University is committed to developing the skills and knowledge required to meet emerging needs. Our course offerings focus on high-demand fields such as health, engineering, cyber security, security studies, information technology, and teaching. Through the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Student Pathways Program, we have secured over \$10 million in funding from 2024-2030. This investment will support continued excellence in education and allow us to expand programs that prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow.

The University is a founding partner in the Institute of Applied Technology Digital, an exemplar of innovation that continues to promote innovative and agile forms of learning and industry collaboration to deliver a pipeline of highly sought-after, skilled graduates.

The University takes a proactive approach to supporting positive campus culture, foreign interference due diligence and research risk management. The University’s Deputy-Vice Chancellor (Academic) oversees the flourishing of a safe and vibrant campus environment in which debate and understanding are positively encouraged. The University’s Deputy Vice-

Chancellor (Research), chairs a cross-institutional Countering Foreign Interference Working Group. On matters of foreign interference, the University closely consults with Home Affairs, the Department of Education's National Security Branch, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Defence, and other Commonwealth Government agencies.

The University has dedicated long-term investment to enhance cyber security. In 2022, the University embarked on a broad 5-year cyber security uplift program. In 2023, the University commenced implementation of the Australian Cyber Security Centre's strategies to mitigate Cyber Security Incidents, known as the essential eight – the University will attain maturity level 1 in early 2024. The University continues to invest in cyber security with ongoing cyber security works.

The main university policy governing freedom of speech and academic freedom is the [Freedom of Speech Policy and Academic Freedom Policy](#) approved by Council on 9 September 2021.

Macquarie ensures that all other University policies are aligned with the *Model Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers*. To continuously reinforce the importance of freedom of speech and academic freedom, the University includes induction modules for new students and staff as well as new members of Academic Senate and University Council.

## Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

Macquarie University's new education strategy, The Macquarie Advantage, has a strong focus on educational equity. The strategy affirms our ongoing commitment to supporting Indigenous and disadvantaged students.

The key strategies we are pursuing throughout 2024 to increase educational outcomes for students from underrepresented groups include:

- **Pre-Access:** Pre-tertiary personal and academic capacity building programs to build aspiration and facilitate access to Macquarie for students from low-SES families, regional and remote areas, and Indigenous backgrounds.
- **Access:** Delivery of targeted admission pathway programs including early entry schemes, pathway programs via Macquarie University College, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Entry Pathway (ATSIEP). Entry schemes and pathways will be revised this year following a comprehensive review in 2023. Macquarie is also developing a new university-wide scholarship strategy this year focused on access and success to strategically maximise impact for students transitioning to and succeeding at the University.
- **Participation:** The Widening Participation Unit work collaboratively with the Faculties to meet the University's commitment to the national widening participation agenda by providing tailored support programs that directly address the challenges faced by equity student cohorts. Initiatives focused on transition, retention and engagement aim to decrease early attrition while actively promoting positive learning experiences and an enhanced sense of belonging.
- **Flexible delivery:** Working with Faculties, Macquarie University College and other key stakeholders to continue to build a flexible coursework suite that enables participation in courses in a way that best suits students.
- **Progress and attainment:** Macquarie enables equity students to successfully complete degrees and transition to employment. This includes analysing student experiences and graduate outcomes, as well as tailored career development initiatives.

Macquarie's Framework for Whole of University Approach to Indigenous Higher Education identifies and outlines each strategy, policy and plan - with embedded key performance indicators - initiated by the University to continue to increase participation and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and expand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement across the University. The Framework is grouped around three pillars 'Aspire', 'Discover' and 'Evolve' in alignment with the [Macquarie University Indigenous Strategy 2016-2025](#).

Our Accessibility Service team helps to ensure that students with diverse needs thrive at Macquarie by working to ensure that university systems, teaching practices, learning materials, assessments and research environments are accessible and inclusive for students with a disability. Students with a disability can also access wellbeing and welfare support from the [Student Wellbeing](#) team that can assist with financial hardship, food security and safety advice. Students can also access academic support services from our [Learning Connect centre](#).

Macquarie University has an established focus on institutional research related to underrepresented groups and continuously monitors and evaluates its equity strategies and initiatives. The University aims to further improve student retention, access, and outcomes for low SES and other equity groups by deeply examining patterns and reasons affecting attrition and retention.

## Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

Through a process of reflection, planning and extensive consultations with students and staff throughout 2023, the University developed *The Macquarie Advantage*, a strategic framework that leverages and builds on our strengths to enable us to deliver flexible, forward-thinking education amid increasing competition and change in global higher education. The strategy has six strategic priorities: Wellbeing and Belonging; Academic Excellence; Assessment and Feedback; Employability; Technology and Environments; and Service Experience.

Our 2024 focus will be on releasing the strategy and developing a rigorous governance and operational planning model underpinned by a suite of regularly reported key performance indicators. Implementation will be monitored regularly by the Executive Group and Education Strategy Committee at both Faculty and University levels. Key performance indicators and targets will be defined this year and will include student satisfaction (QILT), course completion rates, student success rates, graduate outcomes, access and participation, and the retention and success rates of designated equity groups.

As we operationalise our new education strategy throughout 2024, our core commitment remains centred on supporting the success of our diverse student community.

### **Supporting students to succeed**

Supporting students to succeed throughout their time at Macquarie is a core part of our commitment to the Academic Excellence priority area within *The Macquarie Advantage*. In 2023, Macquarie achieved the highest student success rates across the past seven years (87%), except for a peak in 2020. In 2024, a key priority will be sustaining this high rate of success. To do this, Macquarie will release and implement a new 'Support for Students Policy' to ensure students at risk of not successfully completing their studies receive the appropriate support, resources, and assistance to continue their academic journey. The University's Academic Progression policies, which outline how at-risk students are identified, will also undergo review and updates this year to further strengthen Macquarie's student success initiatives.

### Enhancing learning analytics

In 2023, Macquarie University initiated a data-driven project using a diverse range of university-wide student data to develop statistical models that investigate profiles of student success and attrition. This project aims to better identify individual students who may be at risk of discontinuing their studies. The work will continue in 2024, with an emphasis on translating data insights into targeted intervention programs. Once results are available, they will inform strategic decisions about resource allocation and retention initiatives tailored to students' needs.

### Improving student retention

Retention remains a key priority for Macquarie University. The University established the Retention Taskforce in 2023, a university-wide initiative that focuses on the early identification of students at-risk of disengaging from their studies. This is followed by proactive, direct interventions which provide information, advice and referrals to existing support services for contacted students. The project delivered positive outcomes in 2023, including increased retention rates among targeted student cohorts. Building on this momentum, the Retention Taskforce will continue in 2024 with plans to expand the use of data analytics, enhance communications, and track longitudinal impacts.

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

During 2024 Macquarie will deliver research strategies in support of our Key Objectives: accelerating world-leading research performance, preparing world-ready graduate research candidates, engaging as a collaborator of choice, and producing research with impact. We will simultaneously adhere to the principles of [responsible research](#), diversity, integrity, safety, equity, Countering Foreign Interference, and compliance with external frameworks, guidelines, and legislation. During 2024 the University will develop a new Research Strategy and associated KPIs looking to 2035.

Macquarie revised its research collectives scheme and launched 10 University Research Centres in 2023 that offer strength at scale, strong team leadership, competitive advantage, new external opportunities, and collaboration to solve real-world problems. During 2024, these Centres will be supported to unlock cross-disciplinary research collaboration and outputs with each Centre having KPIs specific to their area of focus and stage of maturity.

The following policy documents include mechanisms to assure research quality:

1. **Research Quality Assurance Policy** enables researchers to meet external and internal research quality standards and requirements. It encompasses strategic documents, governance structures, internal and external standards, data collection, analysis, and a research quality assurance cycle.
2. **Macquarie Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research** supports the principles and responsibilities for an honest and ethical research culture. The Code is supported by the Macquarie University Research Code Complaints, Breaches and Investigation Procedure that specifies processes for managing breaches.
3. **Graduate Research Policy** specifies internal standards for graduate research admission, supervision, and examination, aligning with HESF requirements and other external

standards (e.g., ESOS National Code, Australian Council of Graduate Research Good Practice Framework).

### **Research Training**

Macquarie delivers sector-leading graduate research training experiences and distinctive programs supporting academic and professional skills development. During 2024 we will develop distinctive, connected and career-focused training to meet individual graduate researcher needs and support employability through enhanced opportunities for internships and innovative industry linked graduate research programs. Our objective is to build doctoral training that delivers an exceptional candidate experience aligned with world standards to optimally prepare our graduate researchers as future leaders in the professions and the academy.

The Graduate Researcher Development Framework, released in 2024, enables graduate researchers to recognise key competencies valued in both academic and non-academic careers to better appreciate, develop and articulate these to potential employers.

Also, during 2024 the University will: finalise the redesign of its MRes program; introduce its Global Research Training Strategy; and build on its new Graduate Research Peer Mentor Program.

### **Innovation and Commercialisation**

To achieve success in commercialisation, innovation and impact beyond the Academy, the University's Research, Innovation and Enterprise team provides increased support for research entrepreneurship and spin out companies. This focus has been remarkably successful with 2023 achieving: a record high of 72 IP innovation disclosures (up from an average of 40 in prior two years); 3 spin-out companies with a 2024 pipeline of 12 additional spin-out companies; and equity holding in spin-out companies and related ventures growing from \$0.604m (Dec 2022) to \$6.735m (Dec 2023). This focus on supporting entrepreneurship and commercialisation will continue during 2024.

## **Strategies for Engaging with Industry**

The University's Research, Innovation and Enterprise team was established to build a profile with external partners as a sought-after collaborator, to provide easier navigation points for external research partners; support researchers in their efforts to form meaningful research collaborations with industry, government and the community; and facilitate the commercialisation and real-world adoption by end-users of knowledge and IP arising from our research programs.

In 2024 Macquarie's key priorities for engaging with industry will be to: continue to enhance strategic partnerships with industry partners such as Cochlear, Tata, Fujitsu, Optus, Phonak, NextSense, Snowy Hydro and Google; implement the University's IP Policy that was recently revised to make collaboration more accessible and rewarding for industry partners; and continue the MQ Incubator's goal to incubate Macquarie and community starts ups (with 133 companies involved since 2017).

In 2024 Macquarie will launch its Deep Tech Incubator, a cutting-edge space comprised of laboratories, equipment, secure offices and co-working areas that has been established with the aim of supporting innovators in BioTech through the 'valley of death', with access to specialised laboratory space and relevant equipment.

Macquarie will continue to increase its involvement, as either a lead or node organisation, in a wide array CRCs and will actively participate in multiple bids in the 2024 CRC round.

In 2023 Macquarie established a new approach for Corporate Engagement across MQU with the aim of harnessing a whole of institution mindset toward the myriad corporate engagement relationships and opportunities spanning all areas of the University (e.g.: research, teaching and learning, philanthropy, procurement, property etc). This new concept for Corporate Engagement will be further pursued during 2024 to enable an internally coordinated, transparent way of working that presents a unified, professional approach to partners with a view to increasing the proportion of partners who engage with Macquarie sustainably, over time, and on more than one dimension (research, education, procurement etc). This effort will be overseen by a newly established Corporate Engagement Committee which is providing holistic leadership and coordination of Macquarie's corporate engagement activities.

As part of this holistic effort, the Graduate Research Academy (GRA) is also leading Macquarie's engagement with industry. In 2024 the GRA will be focussed on building on Macquarie's early success in competitive co-funded schemes, including the National Industry PhD Program, CSIRO Industry PhD Programs, and CSIRO Next Generation Graduates Program to strengthen Macquarie's relationships with participating industries and provide graduate research students with valuable industry experience.

The GRA will also develop an industry strategy for graduate research, including expansion of industry PhDs and the development of an industry-ready bootcamp program for students undertaking an internship. Macquarie supports graduate research students wishing to undertake an internship within industry with internship leave, amended candidature load to account for the time on the internship, top-up scholarships, and additional training in areas such as partnerships, commercialisation, career management and pitching.

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



Signature

29/05/2024

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Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

by

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Full name (please print)

S BRUCE DOWTON

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Position

VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT

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Signature



In the presence of:

Witness (please print)

JENNIFER EVANS

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Position or profession of witness (please print)

SENIOR EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

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Signature

