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

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

Overall mission, strategic planning and key outcomes
QUT has recently released its new strategic plan - Connections - covering the period 2023 – 2027. Significant internal and external stakeholder consultation and benchmarking was undertaken as part of its development. A key feature of the new strategy was the explicit inclusion of student experience as one of the three pillars of QUT focus, alongside transformative education and research relevant to our communities, reflecting our intensified attention to meeting the needs of our increasingly diverse student body. Five key focus areas have been identified to support our mission: Connecting aspiration to opportunity; Connecting knowledge and discovery; Connecting with the real world; Connecting people and purpose; and Connecting through technology. KPIs for each of the key outcomes have been developed with progress reported to QUT Council each quarter. As The University for the Real World, real world connections underpin all activities. https://cms.qut.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1190247/qut-connections.pdf

Student and staff safety
QUT is committed to preventing all forms of sexual harassment and sexual assault, providing a safe environment for work and study, supporting individuals who are affected by sexual harassment or sexual assault, and responding promptly and effectively when such behaviours are identified or reported. We promote access to a centralised point of contact for the QUT community to specialist staff who have the knowledge and expertise to make trauma-informed, timely responses and who can coordinate responses to ensure those who are disclosing or making a complaint do not have to report to multiple parts of the organisation. We understand that action on this issue is an opportunity to drive real cultural change in our institution and across society, well beyond mere regulatory compliance.

Following the 2021 National Student Safety Survey, in 2022 QUT engaged Diversity Australia to undertake a comprehensive review of current policies and processes pertaining to Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment (SASH) incidents and provide benchmarking against other leading Australian Universities. A range of recommendations were identified that are informing the development of SASH and Domestic Family Violence (DFV) support frameworks and awareness-raising activities in 2023 and beyond.

In 2024, QUT will invest in a centralised case management system connecting HSE, Equity, HR and other areas, while clarifying and separating accountability for prevention and awareness

initiatives from the case management, care, support and investigation accountabilities. The Student SASH Action Plan 2021-2023 will be reviewed to develop a whole of university approach in the context of the National Student Safety Survey, the Diversity Australia report and its strategic action plan, the Draft Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education and Universities Australia's Primary Prevention of Sexual Harm in the University Sector – Good Practice Guide and the Sexual Harm Response Guidelines (2023). Additionally, QUT is investing in further improvements to initiatives such after-hours transport, security systems, monitoring of student accommodation providers and training for staff and students.
https://www.qut.edu.au/about/campuses-and-facilities/safety-on-campus

Foreign Interference
The university has convened a Foreign Interference and Influence Group to promote awareness of the offences and ensure adequate processes are in place to identify and raise foreign interference risks. Controls have been put in place to assist areas responsible for academics and research programs, and our conflict of interest policy now specifically includes a new category of interest, 'relationship with a foreign entity'.

Cyber and data security
QUT's information security strategy outlines the direction of information security for QUT and provides a roadmap of key initiatives that will deliver practical solutions for an increasingly complex environment. Significant investments in digital transformation are being made and monitored by QUT Council.

Freedom of speech and academic freedom
QUT's policy, ***Protection of academic freedom and freedom of speech***, was adopted by Council at its meeting of 25 February 2021 and academic freedom was adopted as a QUT value in the Connections strategy, highlighting the centrality of this principle to everything we do. Any issues raised under the policy are monitored each year and reported to QUT Council.

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

The new Connections Strategy reinforces our history of connecting aspiration to opportunity, with support for students from under-represented backgrounds, pathways for Indigenous Australians, opportunities for entrepreneurial and professional experiences, and the creation of supportive research environments. By 2027, our goal is to have 30% of our student body drawn from targeted equity groups and 4% being Indigenous Australians.

Indigenous Australian and Torres Strait Islander students
- QUT's Oodgeroo Unit supports Indigenous Australians by providing admission pathways, orientation programs, academic support, pastoral care, and facilities that are culturally supportive and responsive to their needs.
  - Measured via improvements in Indigenous Australian students' participation, retention, success, and completion rates.
- QUT provides 44 beds in student accommodation and various 12-month accommodation scholarships available to eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students relocating to QUT. These scholarships cover the fees associated with accommodation at Student One Elizabeth Street and are valued at up to $32,100. Additionally, the scholarship ensures participants have access to pastoral care, social, cultural, and life skills opportunities aimed at strengthening their academic, cultural, and personal develop while building connections within the QUT community.

Equity and regional and remote students
- QUT runs a large Equity Scholarships Scheme with approximately 2,500 scholarships awarded annually to students with financial hardship and complex life circumstances. This is supported in part by staff and donors through the Learning Potential Fund.

- Disadvantage based on relocating from a regional/remote location is taken into consideration. Other forms of [financial support](#) include emergency bursaries, work integrated learning bursaries (which the University sees as a priority given the increasing challenge of placement poverty which is yet to be addressed systematically by national or state schemes), and a loans scheme.
  - These retention strategies are measured via recipient numbers, retention levels, and through an annual student survey.
- QUT's Priority Schools Adjustment Scheme (PSAS) enhances access and opportunity to students from more than 150 schools in Queensland and 1,000 schools nationally by increasing the number of QUT offers to quality applicants from disadvantaged secondary schools. A modified scheme was announced in 2023 so we are expecting to see more demand in 2024 and beyond.

Widening Participation
- [Widening participation](#) is a program of outreach to school students and potential adult learners from low SES, Indigenous Australian, and/or regional/remote backgrounds.
- It comprises a comprehensive program of activities aims to build awareness of available tertiary education and career opportunities; build aspiration for tertiary study; increase motivation, engagement and achievement; and build awareness of available financial assistance.
- QUT particularly partners with schools in the under-represented Moreton Bay region and is collaborating with regional universities to develop partnerships with regional school communities.
- This program engages with more than 20,000 students each year and is measured via student and staff surveys; case studies; and QTAC admissions data with the aim of increasing the number of school students who attend QUT (physically or remotely) and study our high-quality course offerings from these target demographics and geographical locations.
- Strategies to increase the retention and success of equity group students include resources and reasonable adjustments for [students with a disability,](#) [academic help and workshops support](#), [writing and speaking skills](#), [maths, science and IT](#) support, and [career advice, support and training](#).

Student Support Plan
QUT's programs and schemes to assist under-represented students include:
- Centralised Assessment and Selection Program (CASP) – An admissions pathway for First Nations people managed by QUT's Oodgeroo Unit, our dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student support centre committed to improving access and participation for Indigenous Australians.
- Significant annual [scholarships, financial support](#) and [accommodation support services](#) to our students, to help offset the high cost of living in Brisbane.
- Free learning support services available 24/7 to help students develop their academic skills and confidence regarding academic writing, researching and referencing, spoken communication and maths, science and IT skills. More than 93% of students report they are extremely (78%) or somewhat (15%) satisfied with the service.
- Specialist disability advisors who tailor support plans for each student to assist them with their specific study environment and requirements such as adaptive equipment, Auslan interpreter services, captioning, access to Assistive Technology Labs, alternative formatting, and provision of and training in assistive software.
- QUT is compliant with the Support for Students Policy requirements legislated in 2023, including the signposting of support policies and procedures for ease of student access.

Funding provided through the HECG mechanism will be used to augment support for students to increase the completion rates for students from under-represented and educationally

disadvantaged backgrounds and continue to invest in initiatives that aim to address barriers to access, participation and retention.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

QUT monitors learning and teaching performance through internal student surveys every teaching period and annual course performance reports which are reviewed by the relevant academic boards each cycle as well as through formal course reaccreditation processes. External surveys are also used to monitor overall course performance against national trends. Significant professional development is provided to academics and those supporting learning and teaching to ensure best practice approaches are fully available and supported through the university's physical and digital transformation agendas. Current areas of focus include academic integrity and multi-mode teaching and engagement strategies as well as the embedding of core attributes in all curricula (e.g. indigenous perspectives, sustainability, work integrated learning). The university has recently introduced a new learning management system with enhanced data analytics which will also aid in performance monitoring and continuous improvement.

1 . Admissions Transparency
QUT regularly reviews admission policies, procedures, and protocols to ensure compliance with the Commonwealth's Admission Transparency Guidelines. QUT has implemented the standardised presentation of admissions information and the common admissions terminology. Institution and course specific information is available in the national admissions information system CourseSeeker, and QUT regularly updates admissions website information to ensure undergraduate applicants can find good quality information that allows them to make informed study choices.

2. Learner Success and Achievement
QUT's Connections strategy includes specific performance indicators for learner success and achievement through the measurement of: Commencing QUT retention, Overall student experience and Overall graduate outcomes. Overall university performance is monitored as well as through individual discipline areas and for specific student cohort groups where applicable.

QUT aims to improve student retention and student experience by employing overarching student support strategies complemented by specific approaches to create parity among various equity groups. Overall retention is monitored as well as specific sub-group outcomes to determine the effectiveness of different strategies and approaches. Recent campaigns have also been targeted to students on leave of absence to support them to return successfully to study. QUT is making more units and support services available flexibly to provide students with choice and provide more opportunities to arrange their studies around their work and life commitments.

Three key programs underpinning our student success approach include our Get on Track, Stay on Track and Get Back on Track programs which are designed to improve the success of commencing students, those who are showing signs of being at risk or disengaged and those who are experiencing progression challenges or probation due to unsatisfactory academic performance. These programs refer students to QUT's ecosystem of support, including from Student Success (Career Development and Employability, Language and Learning, STEM and student success coaching) and the wider institution (such as library, disability services, HiQ, and counselling).

Further information: [Enabling student success](); [Peer mentoring and support](); [Maths, science and IT support](); [language and learning skills](); [Student orientation and transition](); [student life and development](); [Support for Students Policy]().

We provide support for learning through proactive curricular and co-curricular opportunities that are timely, fit for purpose, and personalised to help learners build capabilities essential for success at university and beyond. QUT's learners are diverse, each with different goals, experiences and expectations of life at university. In response, QUT intentionally designs services and learning

experiences to support learners' transition in, through and out of formal study. These opportunities facilitate connectedness and relationships at, and with, the university and broader community; promote active participation and lifelong learning; and create environments for success.

Keystones of Success, in partnership with the Commonwealth government, assists Indigenous Australian students with academic performance, job market and postgraduate study transition. Additionally, it aims to improve access to Indigenous Australian students to higher education and their retention and completion rates with specialised academic extension activities centred on tutorial assistance, academic skills programs, one-to-one academic advising and contextualised discipline-specific guidance with a faculty liaison support.

QUT invests in and employs specialist Disability Advisors who assist students who have a disability, injury or health condition and we assist students to plan and participate in their studies. Additionally, QUT invests significantly in physical and digital accessibility so that students are assured of being able to undertake their studies when and where they are needed.

The embedding of real-world learning experiences throughout QUT programs continues to be a focus within our new strategy to maintain positive graduate outcomes. We continue to perform strongly with high employment rates as well as positive support from respondents on how well their degree prepared them for employment. Graduate outcomes will continue to be monitored through our KPIs.

Further information: [Work integrated learning](#); [WIL & international internships](#);

3. Student Belonging and Advocacy
QUT Connections strategy focuses heavily on enhancing the student experience. To entrench this focus, a new university KPI has been added on Student Sense of Belonging and Student Advocacy as we see these are two important ways to monitor engagement and support for program delivery. These areas will be monitored through national survey data.

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

University-level objectives, strategies and measures for research, innovation and research training are in place under the new strategy. Outcomes against the strategies are defined at the Faculty or Portfolio level with key results and performance indicators measured at both the Faculty/Portfolio and university level.

Research Intensity - Increase capacity for transformative research relevant to our communities – academic, end-user, government and industry with the below strategies:
1. Increase and diversify research income, and align investment efforts with research strengths
2. Build capacity through the development and growth of research centres aligned with our existing and emerging research strengths and government, industry and community priorities
3. Provide access to excellent research infrastructure, technical expertise, capabilities, personnel, equipment and physical space, including via partnerships
4. Build capacity and capabilities of high-calibre researchers, with attention to equity, inclusion and diversity principles, including a focus on higher degree research students and early career researchers
5. Build capacity and capabilities of Indigenous Australian researchers as outlined in the Indigenous Australian Employment and Research Strategies
6. Build capacity and capabilities in research commercialisation

Measures – external research income, research centre annual performance report research infrastructure utilisations, research infrastructure external investment, research commercialisation event/workshop attendance and offerings.

Research excellence, impact and relevance - Conduct high-quality fundamental and applied research to advance knowledge and address local, national and global problems and opportunities using the below strategies:

1. Leverage existing relationships and establish new partnerships – academic, end-user, government and industry – that enhance QUT's real-world relevance and impact
2. Enhance the quality of QUT research
   a. Attract and retain high-performing researchers in priority areas
   b. Build strategic local, national and international partnerships
   c. Position academic rigour, research ethics and integrity, and professional best practice at the core of all our research endeavours
3. Co-design mutually beneficial and impactful projects and partnerships with our collaborators
4. Build and support Indigenous-led research and research respectfully co-designed with Indigenous Australians
5. Increase, capture and communicate research impact

Measures - External research income, research publication quality, research impact evidence, research commercialisation outcomes

Research training and development - Provide outstanding research training and development that supports employability and creation of the next generation of excellent researchers with the below strategies:

1. Deliver signature research training, microcredentialled professional development, infrastructure and support in a flexible, inclusive and academically rigorous learning environment that considers student and academic lifecycles and wellbeing
2. Provide tailored HDR programs that reflect QUT's focus on community and industry collaboration, and connect HDR students with local, national and international partners
3. Provide high-quality supervision to HDR students and early-career researchers, including through active sponsorship and mentoring

Measures - HDR Completions, uptake of signature research training, industry PhDs, annual surveys

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

QUT utilises various mechanisms to both deepen existing engagement with industry as well as identify and foster new collaborations. These include:

- The establishment of the Office of Industry Engagement to facilitate and enhance interactions between researchers and external partners to support the development of research projects, commercialisation of IP, and establishing start-ups and spin off companies.
- QUT appoints Industry Fellows who actively promote engagement with industry.
- QUT partners with industry and the community to provide students with opportunities to learn in and through work, internships, professional placements and industry projects, known as Work Integrated Learning (WIL). Over 90% of QUT's students are involved in WIL opportunities, which are a result of QUT's partnerships with industry and can include internships, work placements and projects across a variety of disciplines such as engineering, law and applied health.
- QUT is the largest participant in the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Grants program which provide funding for industry-led research collaborations. QUT is active in over 15 CRCs.
- Faculties establish Industry Advisory Boards that provide advice in relation to courses for students and identify opportunities for engagement with industry.

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

Queensland University of Technology

by

PROFESSOR MARGARET SHEIL AO	TIANI VISCARRA
_____	_____
Full name (please print)	Witness (please print)
QUT VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT	BUSINESS SERVICES OFFICER
Position	Position or profession of witness (please print)

In the presence of:

_____   _Tiani Viscarra_____

Signature   Signature

Date: 23/04/2024