



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

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

UniSC has a clear mission of enriching our regions, connecting with our communities, and creating opportunities for all. UniSC's [Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#) defines six key goals, measured through the achievement of our strategic plan and operational KPIs.

1. Inspire more people to achieve their ambitions through education.

- Increase participation and support life-long learning, attract and retain a diverse student community, enhance the student experience.
- *Measured through enrolments, student experience, and student retention rate.*

2. Enable more people to work, contribute, and innovate in their local and global communities.

- Develop quality curricula, expand and enhance work integrated learning, build organisational capability to enable improved graduate employability outcomes.
- *Measured through graduate employment outcomes, student completions, and employer satisfaction.*

3. Produce research outcomes that make a difference.

- Build critical mass of impactful research activity, develop strong and collaborative research partnerships, establish researcher development framework.
- *Measured through improved publication citation impact, and HERDC income.*

4. Empower communities to thrive through dynamic and productive partnerships.

- Be a catalyst for partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and communities, achieve distinctive identity for each campus, enhance partnerships that align with our teaching and research, strengthen organisational capacity.
- *Measured through regional impact, and Times Higher Education university global impact assessment performance.*

5. Build a contemporary, sustainable, accessible university.

- Future-proof the university through focused growth, re-envision campuses, create a digital strategy, and maximise infrastructure investment.
- *Measured through revenue, and carbon dioxide emission levels.*

6. Become a workplace of choice.

- Improve attraction and retention, enhance leadership and professional development opportunities, workforce diversity, enhance health, safety and wellbeing, effective corporate governance.
- *Measured through employee satisfaction, employee brand recognition, and workforce diversity participation rates.*

National and Sector Priorities

- **Workforce and skill needs.**
 - Planning and review of academic offerings to ensure response to industry trends and workforce and skills shortages.
 - *Measured through WIL participation, graduate outcomes, scholarships, program and course evaluation, and research collaboration.*
- **Ensuring student and staff safety.**
 - SafeUniSC team provide students and staff with emergency response, first aid, safety escorts, and personal safety.
 - *Measured through incident and near-miss reporting, work health and safety training, use of SafeZone app, and access to student support.*
- **Countering foreign interference.**
 - Countering Foreign Interference Steering Committee and work program.
 - *Measured through compliance with Australian Government Guidelines, Security of Critical Infrastructure (SOCI) and Defence Industry Security Program (DISP).*
- **Cyber and data security.**
 - [Policies](#) and processes are in place to ensure effective and coordinated responses to cyber incidents and data breaches.
 - *Measured through assessment against the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework.*
- **Freedom of speech and academic freedom.**
 - UniSC demonstrates commitment to academic freedom and freedom speech through our [Governing Policy](#), supported by the [Staff Code of Conduct Governing Policy](#).
 - *Measured through monitoring the implementation of the Staff Code of Conduct Governing Policy, delivery of training and awareness, and reporting of breaches of the Code.*

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

UniSC is committed to providing equitable access to education and knowledge for people from underrepresented backgrounds, embracing diversity and inclusion, and fostering an environment that ensures every individual feels a sense of belonging, where students are deeply connected and empowered. UniSC employs strategies through a whole of student journey, with specific areas of focus for students from identified underrepresented groups.

See the [Diversity and Inclusion Plan](#), [Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021-2024](#), [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Strategy](#), [Indigenous Education Strategy 2023-2028](#), the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Career Development Strategy](#), and the [Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#). UniSC offers a range of [support services](#) for students, including dedicated support for Indigenous Students.

The university is focusing its strategic approach to achieving positive student outcomes at scale through building academic capability to provide pastoral care to students in their classes and to embed student success strategies within the curriculum. Initiatives are tailored to particular cohorts of students using early warning indicators and learning analytics to identify students at risk. UniSC is committed to achieving the following over the next three years:

1. Building student aspirations.

- Building future student aspirations for higher education through identity, educational and career planning activities, and through key community relationships.
- *Measured by the proportion of students from underrepresented backgrounds enrolled in UniSC programs.*

2. Creating student pathways.

- Creating admissions pathways to UniSC for people from underrepresented groups.
- *Measured by the number of students undertaking UniSC pathway programs including UniSC's Indigenous Direct Entry and Access Scheme, Indigenous Medical Access Pathway Program, and Tertiary Preparation Pathway.*

3. Improving retention and success.

- Improving the retention, success and graduate outcomes of students from underrepresented backgrounds.
- *Measured by improved retention and progression rates, student satisfaction, full-time employment, overall employment, and employer satisfaction.*

4. Providing a universally accessible and high-quality learning environment.

- Providing a universally accessible learning environment.
- *Measured by the proportion of courses that are designed in accordance with the principles of universal design for learning.*

5. Delivering inclusive learning opportunities.

- Building staff capability to improve their knowledge and skill in delivering inclusive learning opportunities.
- *Measured by proportion of staff completing UniSC diversity training modules and the proportion of courses in which Indigenous knowledges and perspectives, and awareness and understanding of diversity are embedded in the curriculum.*

Equity Plan (Higher Education Continuity Grant)

UniSC's Equity Plan will strengthen and expand existing measures and introduce a number of new measures to support equity students. The key categories of activity addressed by this plan include: strengthened and expanded equity student outreach, support and success; improved bridging programs and/or pathways from VET programs; expansion of online delivery of program offerings; delivery of Learning and Teaching Futures project; student industry engagement, employment and innovation; subsidised transport between campuses; digital infrastructure upgrades; student support facilities upgrades; and upgraded blended learning environments to support and sustain skills. Further information is provided in a detailed Equity Plan to be submitted to the Department in March.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

UniSC is committed to improving teaching and learning for all students including equitable access to education, enhancing the quality of learning and teaching, providing work integrated learning opportunities, providing co-curricular student support, targeted monitoring of student outcomes, and ongoing professional development for academic staff.

1. Fostering equitable access to education.

- Advocate for equitable access to education by embracing diversity and inclusion. Effectively serve our growing student population needs across a region with complex variations in cohort characteristics and learning needs.
- *Measured through equity participation, and student satisfaction.*

2. Enhancing learning and teaching quality.

- Curriculum Design Principles to inform development and renewal of programs and courses, enabling transparency in curriculum design and quality assurance. Programs and courses will be learning-centred, constructively aligned, standards based, and career and employment outcome focused. In addition, students will develop non-discipline specific skills and knowledge encompassing personal competencies, study skills, decision making, autonomy, resilience, goal setting, reflecting on progress, and employability development.
- *Measured through student satisfaction, and employer satisfaction.*

3. Providing work integrated learning (WIL) opportunities.

- Student placements and other WIL activities are facilitated by a dedicated team of specialists in the Academic Support Unit. The National Priorities and Industry Linkage Fund (NPILF) grant to UniSC has enabled us to align and strengthen our partnerships with Industry.
- *Measured through graduate employment outcomes, growth and proportion of students offered WIL placements and WIL project opportunities.*

4. Providing co-curricular student activities.

- Support to domestic and international students with opportunities to build their networks, volunteer in the community, mentoring, develop qualities and skills linked to graduate attributes, and to enhance employability and wellbeing.
- *Measured through student completion rate, students as partners program, and participation in co-curricular activities.*

5. Monitoring student outcomes.

- Targeted program improvements to address needs identified through monitoring student outcomes. These improvement activities complement regular cycles of external program review.
- *Measured through program performance, and student attrition.*

6. Providing staff professional development.

- Support for academic staff including training in learning design, use of educational technologies, and professional development.
- *Measured through support provided by the Centre for Support and Advancement of Learning and Teaching, and completion of the Foundations of Teaching course and/or AdvanceHE fellowship.*

7. Embracing innovation in learning technology and design.

- Utilising contemporary educational technologies to support improved student learning outcomes, including acting with integrity and making appropriate use of artificial intelligence technologies. Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching (TELT) standards inform the design of the University's curriculum.
- *Measured through incidence of academic misconduct, and student satisfaction.*

8. Collaborating for curriculum enhancement.

- Curriculum design involves active industry collaboration and incorporates nested and integrated qualifications, including opportunities for students to achieve industry-accredited microcredentials and short-courses as part of their program of study.
- *Measured through the number of programs of study providing nested qualifications, graduate employment outcomes, and employer satisfaction.*

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

UniSC is committed to improving research, research training, and innovation through a range of strategies including building critical mass of impactful research activity by enhancing processes and systems, developing emerging and regionally relevant research areas, developing and establishing strong partnerships and research identity awareness, and increasing the uptake of research development programs.

1. Building a critical mass of impactful research activity.

- Enhance research enterprise processes and systems, and stronger alignment with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in multiple aspects of research activity from project generation to commercial outputs. Develop and align new, emerging and regionally relevant research areas, develop and implement an Indigenous Research Plan and skills development, and create new cross-disciplinary teams to solve large and complex problems that draw on our expertise in sustainability, health, and human factors.
- *Measured through research impact framework, implementation of research infrastructure plans, and implementation of Indigenous Research Plan.*

2. Developing strong research partnerships.

- Establish research partnership arrangements with preferred partner universities including international benchmarking and new investment to build partnerships. Develop new research identity to provide a clear and consistent internal and external research message to build UniSC's research reputation and facilitate partnership development. Create end-user research partnerships focussed on impactful applied research and develop stronger relationships with key stakeholders. Improved IT facilities for the UniSC Innovation Centre and implementation of refreshed strategy to link the Centre to student entrepreneurship skills development and research collaboration in focus areas, such as the green economy.
- *Measured through strengthened research partnerships, and implementation of a new Intellectual Assets policy.*

3. Improving researcher development, encompassing HDR students.

- Attract and retain high quality HDR students in areas of strength. Implement an integrated and streamlined approach to HDR candidature management. Research development programs, including Research Leadership Development, training and development in the ethical use of AI in research, and enhanced focus on skills development regarding Category 1 Schemes, particularly National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).
- *Measured through HDR student retention, and increased uptake of research development programs.*

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

UniSC is committed to meaningful engagement with industry through partnership, both locally and globally. The extent of this engagement currently includes: 5,425 student placements across 1,165 industry partners; \$17 million in industry funded research; and \$73,000 in industry funded scholarships from 34 partners. Current industry engagement at UniSC includes the [Sunshine Coast Health Institute](#), [Lutheran Services \(Aged Care\)](#), [Veolia](#) (Clean energy), [Queensland Hydro partnership](#), Sim Leisure Group, Unitywater, Youi, SRJ Walker Wayland (Industry cadetships), Geospatial Intelligence, Sanofi (Clinical Trials) and industry certification embedded degrees ([Information Technology](#)), and [HavenXR](#) (Global design studio).

UniSC's key priorities (2023 – 2027) for engaging with industry include:

1. An established Industry Engagement Unit.

- The dedicated Industry Engagement Unit provides a streamlined approach to engaging industry partners, including:
 - Implementation of the Industry Engagement Strategy.
 - Connecting with students, including events that link students with industry, accessing professional development for industry staff, and supporting research.
 - Fostering collaborative research opportunities.
 - Providing professional development opportunities for industry including business short courses and microcredentials.
 - Offering employer and industry services including promotion of industry pathways, job vacancies, graduate opportunities, work experience, volunteering opportunities and company events directly to UniSC students.

2. Implementing an Industry Engagement Strategy.

- UniSC's Industry Engagement Strategy focuses on creating opportunities for collaborative learning, innovative research, product co-creation, and shared infrastructure, positioning the university to deepen industry linkages for impact and through measurable goals. The Industry Engagement Strategy identifies ten priority actions for 2023–2027 to enable a more streamlined collaboration pathway for industry and internal stakeholders:
 - Process clarity for external and internal stakeholders.
 - Embed a culture and capability of industry engagement throughout the university.
 - Review policies and procedures that impede our external engagement capability.
 - Review promotion criteria to embed industry engagement as core activity alongside research, teaching, and learning.
 - Develop industry engagement indicator benchmarks for academic and senior staff.
 - Grow internship opportunities for UniSC students.
 - Leverage extramural funding for research and infrastructure.
 - Grow contract research funding through corporate and SME engagement.
 - Increase on campus industry participation and co-location.
 - Embed industry engagement in organisational operational plans.

3. Revitalisation of the UniSC Innovation Centre.

- In addition, the strategic direction of enhancing university-industry partnerships includes UniSC's Innovation Centre which provides a hub for:
 - Early-stage start-ups looking for professional office facilities, expert resources, networking exposure, and a community of like-minded entrepreneurs.
 - Mature scale-ups poised for the next stage of growth and looking for access to industry and government mentoring, as well as collaboration opportunities.
 - High-growth businesses ready to meet the investors as well as prepare for national or international expansion.

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
UNIVERSITY OF THE SUNSHINE COAST

by

Professor Helen Bartlett

Full name (please print)

Vice-Chancellor and President

Position



Signature


In the presence of:

Sheree Hackwood

Witness (please print)

Executive Support Officer

Position or profession of witness (please print)



Signature