

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2018

Australian Catholic University

Equity outcomes and strategies: for improving outcomes for people from a low SES background.

Outcomes for improving performance for equity groups in 2018

- Increase the access and participation numbers for:
 - students from low socio-economic backgrounds (LSES), including LSES Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and LSES students from regional and remote areas
- Increase retention rates, with a particular focus on Ballarat and Brisbane for:
 - students from low socio-economic backgrounds, LSES Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, LSES students from regional and remote areas
- Achieve a success rate of low socio-economic background students, including LSES Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, LSES rural and remote students and LSES students with a disability which is at or above the sector rate.
- Achieve an average GPA for LSES students within a 5% range of the total cohort.

Strategies: for improving outcomes for people from a low SES background.

- Collaborate with school, higher education and community partners to deliver awareness, aspiration and access programs to enable students from LSES backgrounds to access higher education.
- Provide services and support to enable students from LSES backgrounds to transition successfully to university and to be retained and complete.
- Promote and deliver inclusive learning and teaching which supports the success and retention to completion of LSES background students.

Key activities: which will deliver an increase in the access, participation and success of people from a low SES background.

- Work in collaboration with partner schools and partner community organisations to deliver sustainable ACU *gate* awareness, aspiration and access programs
 - Awareness programs: build and inform aspirations and awareness of higher education within partner schools from years K- 7 and their wider communities through in school programs and on campus programs that foster engagement in learning and demonstrate the links between learning, higher education and careers
 - Aspiration programs: students within partner schools from years 7 – 12 participate in programs that provide academic enrichment opportunities and continued engagement with ACU
 - Access programs: provide Equity pathways into ACU (Bachelor courses) and ACU College (provision of diploma courses and certificate IV courses which articulate into degree courses) for students within partner schools

- Provide educational learning opportunities, including ACUgate STEM programs, UniStepUp courses and targeted workshops to assist students from partner schools to build their academic capabilities
- Provide scholarships to support admission and participation for equity students.
- Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in collaboration with ACU's Indigenous Higher Education Units to increase participation of cultural ACUgate programs by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Continue to develop and facilitate evidence informed widening participation programs

Participation and Success:

- Learning for Life: ACU's Learning and Teaching Framework assists development of curriculum, educational technology use and teaching methodology which facilitates participation and attainment for students in the targeted equity groups
- Faculty development and provision of engagement, retention and attainment strategies for students in the targeted equity groups
- Library resources and technologies continue to support student participation and success
- Office of Student Success provide support services that meet the needs of students in the targeted equity groups including: ACU Smart: a transition to university program pre-Orientation for students from low socio-economic backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students from rural, regional and remote backgrounds, which is delivered annually; Peer Assisted Student Sessions (PASS) for challenging first year units; academic skills development.

Evaluation: how the university plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the equity strategies.

- Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of all programs will be undertaken
- Regular consultation with key stakeholders

Partnerships and collaboration: who the university will partner and collaborate with and how this will improve equity performance.

- Continue to build sustainable, strong partnerships with Equity Pathways partner schools in VIC, QLD, ACT and NSW
- Continue to develop partnerships with community organisations which enable outreach work with families and the wider community
- Continue collaborative activities with other higher education providers such as the Widening Participation Forum Queensland, Widening Participation Communities of Practice NSW, and Widening Participation Network Victoria.