



Access and Participation Plan 2018



Introduction

ECU has a long-standing commitment to widening participation in higher education. Our entry pathways and supportive student experience encourage all people, including those from under-represented groups, to access and to succeed at university.

The *Access and Participation Plan* focuses on increasing opportunities for university study for people from a low-socioeconomic status backgrounds. Many of the strategies also apply to other defined equity groups, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders; people with disability; and people from regional and remote areas.

For additional strategies to widen university access, please refer to [ECU's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, 2016-2021](#) and [ECU's Reconciliation Action Plan, 2015-2018](#).

Student lifecycle

The *Access and Participation Plan* strategies and key activities are aligned with the student lifecycle. *Pre-access* refers to outreach to schools and communities; *Access* is pre-entry and admission; *Participation* means transition and progression during studies; and *Progress and attainment* is defined as successful completion and preparation for employment.

Partnerships and collaboration

In 2018, ECU will partner with leading education services providers in order to progress our strategies for *Pre-access* and *Access*. These are: AIME (Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience), the St Vincent de Paul Society WA (Catalyst Clemente Program), GRIP Leadership (GRIP Leadership (LEAP) program), Studiocity (YourTutor program), Children's University Australia and sixteen high schools, including those in the New North Education Initiative collaboration.

Equity outcomes and strategies

Pre-access

- Awareness-raising
- Aspiration-raising
- Building esteem

Access

- Attraction
- Recruitment
- Other entry pathways

Participation

- Understanding the university environment
- Building a sense of belonging
- Building academic literacy
- Providing financial support
- Build sense of identity
- Interventions for 'at risk'
- Improving progress (pass rates)

Progress and attainment

- Career development
- Workplace learning
- Supporting better employment outcomes
- Developing professional identity
- Supporting further study

Key activities

Pre-access

Our outreach programs focus on high schools designated low-ICSEA (Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage), communities in our campus catchments, regional students, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In 2018 **ten outreach programs** will be run with the support of the Commonwealth's Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program.

Access

Key activities include the **Attraction of Regional and Remote Students** project (presentations and activities for high school students from low-SES backgrounds, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students), and the **Catalyst Clemente Program**, a free course for people who have not had the opportunity to complete higher education due to challenges in their life.

In addition, our enabling programs (such as UniPrep and the Indigenous University Orientation Course) provide an alternative entry pathway while preparing students for university study.

Participation

ECU offers a wide range of services to support students' transition to university life. Our orientation program includes sessions on study/life balance, study skills, health, and IT. A dedicated first year support program will begin in 2018.

Students can access counselling, disability support services, health services, mentoring, and other support. Scholarships are offered to students from equity groups, including low-SES.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have access to additional support, funded by the Commonwealth's Indigenous Student Success Program.

Progress and attainment

ECU Careers and Leadership Services provides support to current students and alumni. Workshops are held regularly on topics like resume writing and interview skills, and students and alumni are encouraged to attend employer information sessions and on-campus career fairs. Specialist online tutor support and peer-assisted study sessions are also available.

One-on-one appointments are also available with Career Advisers, including via phone for students unable to attend campus. Online and hard copy resources complement the on-campus services.

Evaluation

Pre-access

As most outreach activities are conducted with high school students, the delay between the activities, and university study renders it difficult to directly measure the impact of the activity. Therefore, these activities are usually evaluated through student and teacher surveys to measure improved aspirations and self-esteem.

Access

These activities are evaluated in accordance with their priorities and methods. ECU monitors the proportion of graduates from "preparation programs" entering bachelor degrees, and their rates of retention, success and graduation compared to students admitted via other pathways.

Participation

These strategies have individual assessment mechanisms. ECU monitors its overall performance through student success and retention figures, including via benchmarking. Individual student progress is monitored so that additional support can be offered to those "at risk".

Progress and attainment

The national Graduate Outcomes Survey provides valuable data to assess the satisfaction and success of our graduates. Although many factors contribute towards graduate success, this survey allows ECU to benchmark its progress in response to the initiatives undertaken.

