

## **The University of Newcastle**

### **Access & Participation Plan 2018**

The University of Newcastle is proud of its reputation as an institution of excellence and equity. In 2018 the UON launched the NeW Education Framework. The NeW Education Framework provides an integrated and transformative strategy for responding to the changing higher education landscape and is aimed at supporting the access and success of all students, especially those from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

The NeW Education Framework provides a roadmap for ensuring that our forty-year commitment to equity and social justice continues within a higher education landscape that is adapting to rapidly changing technological and learning environments. The NeW Education Framework is committed to addressing the ongoing and systematic inequities that exist in access, success and graduate outcomes for students.

The University of Newcastle Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE) plays a critical role in the University's Equity & Access agenda by strategically aligning, coordinating & evaluating our strategies to create cultural change and open up high quality, inclusive and equitable practice across the University. Through the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE), the University is committed to developing an agenda that brings equity practice and research together and in doing so provides a robust suite of multidisciplinary research and practice to offer leadership in equity both nationally and internationally.

CEEHE will lead the establishment of a University of Newcastle Student Equity Expert Panel in 2018. The Expert panel will be responsible for undertaking a robust review of all student equity initiatives at UON to ensure that all initiatives continue to be informed by research and adopt methodologically sound evaluation practices. This review will ensure that UON continues to meet the existing and emerging challenges faced by students, their families and communities who have previously been under-represented in higher education.

Priorities for the Expert Panel are to inform the following strategies and initiatives:

- Provision of accessible and inclusive pathways for adults into university by continuing innovative programs such as Uni4You to ensure that non-school leavers who have had a disrupted educational journey are prepared for success in our enabling programs;
- Develop and nurture engagement with higher education and build an appreciation of life-long learning amongst our communities through programs such as Children's University Newcastle;
- Review of UON scholarship strategy, with a particular focus on ensuring that scholarships provided on the basis of financial hardship are timely and appropriate for students;

- Reshape the support provided to students who have a disability to increase their success rate to be on par with students who do not have a disability;
- Increase the retention, success and career readiness of students by embedding a range of evidence-based support strategies throughout our range of courses and programs. This includes close attention to ensuring our course and programs are designed, taught and assessed in ways that actively engage a diverse community of students with their learning;
- Provide expert advice and an 'equity' lens to the Task Forces charged with transforming the UON student journey;
- Contribute to the new UON Indigenous Education Strategy, which will draw on the knowledge and expertise of the Wollotuka Institute to inform effective practice and provide a holistic approach to engaging Indigenous students and supporting their experience at UON, and strengthening their graduate outcomes;.
- Design and implement a supportive and research-informed framework to grow the capability of our staff to address complex equity issues and to work inclusively with our diverse student cohorts across a range of contexts.

The evaluation methodologies designed by the CEEHE are informed by international, peer-reviewed research and include: qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, underpinned by principles of equity and social justice, with the aim to provide high quality, deeply ethical and contextualised evaluation of the short and long-term impact of strategies. It will be this approach that frames all of the equity focused initiatives of the University, including those funded via HEPP.

The involvement of a range of external stakeholders such as schools, TAFE, community organisations and industry bodies are crucial in order for UON to meet the goals outlined in the NeW Education Framework. In continuing to develop these relationships, the University will implement a strength-based, participatory approach with our partners. We will also work to identify areas where university involvement or extra support could improve and enrich the learning opportunities for community members, whether in the development of new initiatives or adding value to existing activities.

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For Further Information on the UON Access and Participation Plan please contact:

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