Australian Government

Department of Education

2019 Mission Based Compact
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Edith Cowan University

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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

The strategic focus, values and aspirations of Edith Cowan University (ECU) are set down in the ECU Strategic Plan 2017-2021, approved by the University's governing Council in October 2016.

ECU's vision is to be recognised for our world-ready graduates and leading edge research.

ECU's purpose is to transform lives and enrich society through education and research.

ECU's values are: Integrity (being ethical, honest and fair); Respect (considering the opinions and values of others); Rational Inquiry (motivated by evidence and reasoning); and Personal Excellence (demonstrating the highest personal and professional standards).

ECU's strategic themes are: dedication to our students; connections to the community and the world; building strategic partnerships and collaborations; fostering strong alumni relations; and promoting equality, diversity and social responsibility.

French Review

ECU established a working group of stakeholder representatives to consider the recommendations of the French Review. Proposals from the Free Speech and Academic Freedom working group will be considered by ECU's Academic Board and will be referred to Council for approval on 12 December 2019. ECU's responses to the French Review recommendations, including for the adoption of the Model Code, will be provided to the Minister, as required, by end of 2019.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

ECU's Strategic Goal 1: **Enhancing learning and teaching** includes the following objectives:

- Objective 1: *Teaching that inspires* - ECU maintain the exceptional quality of its teaching and teaching staff, through actions that recognise, support, and upskill Academic staff and increase the emphasis on collaborative working.

- Objective 2: *Transformative learning experiences* - ECU will continue to provide excellent learning experiences that motivate and inspire and are inclusive and focused on the needs of our students.

- Objective 3: *A globally relevant and innovative curriculum* - There will be a renewed focus on a curriculum that is outcomes-driven and learner-focused and builds graduate readiness for careers and further study.

- Objective 4: *Improved learning outcomes and career readiness* - There will be additional emphasis on improving outcomes for our graduates, through a range of actions that extend opportunities and connections with business and industry partners and embed employability skills in the curriculum.

ECU's strategies to ensure quality in teaching and learning are driven from the *ECU Student Success Blueprint, 2018-2021* and this identifies five priorities:

- High quality and fit-for-purpose student success and teaching quality analytics, supported by sophisticated IT infrastructure, providing high levels of insight with analysis by campuses, courses and varying student cohorts.

- An organisational culture that cements an inclusive, student centred, whole-of-institution approach to the student experience and subsequently student success.

- Sustained collaborations with students, academics and professional staff to create systematised and innovative responses that retain students across the student lifecycle.

- Course design and a student experience that prioritises lifelong learning and future-oriented employability.

ECU consistently achieves high ratings for teaching quality in the Commonwealth Government's national Student Experience Survey and in the student and graduate satisfaction surveys that preceded the introduction of the Quality Indicators in Learning and Teaching surveys in 2015.

UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS TRANSPARENCY

ECU understands the transformational power of education and is committed to providing opportunities for study to a diverse student community. Almost 70 per cent of ECU students are admitted by direct entry, on a basis other than ATAR.

ECU admissions criteria are based on the assessment of academic background and preparedness, English proficiency and additional course-specific requirements and inherent requirements. Applicants may demonstrate academic preparedness through Year 12 completion (ATAR or Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) or equivalent), completion of a Cert IV or above vocational education and training qualification, completion or partial completion of higher education courses, work experience, the Special Tertiary Admissions Test, or the successful completion of a university preparation course.

English proficiency is assessed through ATAR or equivalent scores, specific testing (IELTS, STAT, ASIT) or completion of predetermined study durations in Australia and some other countries.

Portfolio entry is available to those who have experienced past educational disadvantage, or are from a disadvantaged group. Applicants are required to submit a portfolio of evidence: work and life experience, achievements and commitment to study, and references. Assessments are on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants not meeting ECU's minimum entry requirements, as described by the criteria outlined above, may be offered a place on the UniPrep course, in order to gain the skills needed to succeed in their undergraduate studies.

Further information on entry requirements can be found on the ECU website.

ECU's Education Committee and Academic Board receive regular evaluation reports of student cohorts (including ATAR entry versus non-ATAR entry pathways). On measures of retention, progress, completion and graduate outcomes, assessed across time series, there is no material difference between the ATAR entry and non-ATAR entry cohorts.

UNIVERSITY RETENTION STRATEGIES

ECU has a strong focus on strategies to improve retention and academic success, driven from the *ECU Student Success Blueprint, 2018-2021.*

Annual implementation action plans describe actions relating to the Blueprint strategies, providing appropriate prioritisation, assignment and tracking of initiatives and their outcomes.

Current ECU initiatives include:

- Enhanced use of personalised automated interventions for students with demonstrable low academic engagement or success, harnessing the functionality of ECU's new customer relationship management tool.

- Additional availability of online study support resource (*Studiosity*) service options: "connect live" with tutors; and "24/7 Writing Feedback".

- Mandating the completion of a diagnostic assessment of communication skills for students in their first year of study. Course Coordinators, Post-entry Language Assessment (PELA) Advisors and relevant support staff collaborate in the design and delivery of appropriate interventions for students who demonstrate a poor result for this assessment.

- ECU Academic Skills Centres established to assist students to transition to university study and to become successful students and lifelong learners. The Centres provide individual consultations, workshops and online materials to assist with assignments, English language skills, academic writing, oral communication, referencing and mathematics.

- An "academic preparedness quiz" to promote early engagement and readiness for study amongst commencing students.

- An enhanced focus on academic integrity, assessment and invigilation, including revised policies, student and staff information, and online resources (*Turnitin, Cadmus, ProctorU*).

- Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS), providing a free academic support program, in a friendly and active learning environment.

- A comprehensive review of first-year course units with high fail rates to inform guidance to course co-ordinators on continuous improvement in learning and teaching aimed at better supporting student success.

In addition, student evaluations are conducted for every unit and lecturer/ tutor to provide comprehensive information on the unit content and teaching quality of ECU's courses.

As part of ECU's Learning Journey Analytics project, processes are in development for the capture of more complete data on the reasons for discontinuation and to aid communication with students considering discontinuing.

The impact of the initiatives described above, and others, is regularly evaluated and reported to ECU's Academic Board and Council, along with progress against measures of retention, progress, completion and graduate outcomes, assessed across time series and for student cohorts, and against sector averages and comparison institutions.

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING AND INNOVATION

ECU's Strategic Goal 2: Advancing research and knowledge translation includes the following objectives:

- Objective 5: *Growth in research capacity and culture* - ECU will continue to build research capacity, by recruiting high-achieving researchers, enhancing retention strategies and

succession planning for high-performing research teams, refining recognition and incentive mechanisms and increasing support for researchers.

- Objective 6: *Extensive research collaboration* - ECU will grow research collaborations and alliances, through actions to: increase the visibility of ECU's research; foster connections across disciplines; and seek out international partners.

- Objective 7: *Increased knowledge translation* - ECU will promote partnership and collaboration with business, industry, the professions and government in research, especially where this leads to knowledge translation and commercialisation, to build capacity and societal impact.

- Objective 8: *Growth in research training* - ECU will increase higher degree by research (HDR) enrolments and completions, by: improving supervision capacity; including generic and targeted research skills training in HDR programs; increased marketing to high-performing coursework students; and providing additional support for those completing their research and moving into employment.

ECU's current strategies for ensuring excellence in research and strengthened research capability include:

- A comprehensive external review of ECU's research strategy and operational support, which led to the establishment in mid-2019 of <u>new research themes and priority research areas</u>.

- A <u>professorial recruitment strategy</u> focusing on Academic Level E researchers, and a fellowship scheme focusing on early and mid-career researchers ("<u>Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellowships</u>"), linked to ambitious targets for growth in research income from grants and contracts, research publications and citations.

- A new competitive funding scheme, providing incentives and financial support to early and mid-career researchers to publish in open access journals.

- The development of professional development offerings for researchers to support career progression and research leadership.

- A renewed focus on researcher networking initiatives to improve ECU's international research reputation as measured through the *Times Higher Education* rankings and others.

Strategies for high quality research training include:

- Growing supervisor capacity through a twelve-month "Principal Supervisor Accreditation Program".

- Maintaining ECU's annual national top 10 position for higher degree completions per 10 academic staff FTE.

- Encouraging PhD industry placements through an "Industry Engagement PhD Scholarships Program". Industry partners provide additional financial support as well as industry expertise, equipment or data. In 2019 ECU provided 22 new scholarships to the value of $1.2M.

- The mandating of *viva voce* assessments for PhD candidates from 2018 commencements.

- An online induction program for new ECU researchers, and a peer support program for research skills development and support. ECU's "Support Opportunities Advice Resources" (SOAR) program was awarded the *2019 International Education Program of the Year* by the Council of International Students of Western Australia (CISWA).

Strategies to encourage research translation, commercialisation and industry collaboration include:

- Strengthening international research partnerships with high performing overseas universities.

- Increased industry collaboration, incentivised through a new "ECU-Industry Engagement Scheme" where cash investment by industry partners is matched by ECU grants of $10,000-$30,000.

- Collaborative research through industry placements for Western Australian PhD candidates, with local businesses. In 2019 iPREP WA placed 36 PhD candidates (nine from ECU) in 13 industry projects. iPREP WA was established by ECU in 2014 and now includes all five Western Australian universities.

- Participation in the APR intern initiative, to provide internship opportunities for ECU PhD candidates. These are typically 3-5 month research collaborations with businesses.

- A review of the ECU Research Commercialisation Operating Model Design with the aim of optimising the delivery of commercialisation services to the researcher community, for implementation in 2020. This will draw on both internal and external expertise.

- The establishment of a wholly owned subsidiary 'ECU Holdings Pty Ltd' to drive and support significant research commercialisation opportunities.

- Community engagement and awareness-raising on ECU research through a VC Professorial Research Fellow Lecture Series, The Conversation, and other publicity activities.

- Support for existing collaborative research centres such as the ECU Security Research Institute (headquarters for the Cyber Security Cooperative Research Centre), the Exercise Medicine Research Institute, and the Electron Science Research Institute.

- Contributions to research translation organisations in Perth, such as the Western Australian Health Translation Network and CERI (Centre for Entrepreneurial Research and Innovation).

- Promotion of ECU's leading-edge intellectual property conversions, such as the multiple biometric security system, the Melanoma blood test (MelDx) and solar-glass (ClearVue Technologies).

- Research translation and commercialisation is measured by research income from commercialisation activities and option and assignment of intellectual property.

ECU promotes open access to research publications and data through the application of its *Open Access to Research, Institutional Repository* and *Intellectual Property* policies. ECU's "Research Online" archive is the chief means of satisfying the requirements for allowing open access to other researchers and the wider community.

EQUITY

Strategies for improving Indigenous outcomes are detailed in ECU's current (and fourth) *Reconciliation Action Plan, 2018-2021.* In addition, the ECU *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy and Action Plan, 2018-2021* seeks to increase the employment rate of Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander staff to 3% of total ECU full-time equivalent staffing by 2021.

Strategies for achieving equity for regional and remote students, and for people from a low socio-economic status background are set down in ECU's Access and Participation Plan 2019. This aligns with the student lifecycle and includes activities supported by Commonwealth Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program funding. Many of the strategies also apply to other defined equity groups, such as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders.

Strategies to support people with a disability are described in ECU's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, 2016-2022.

Progress against the objectives and actions described in this suite of ECU equity plans, is closely monitored by ECU's Equity and Diversity Committee, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Indigenous), University Executive and Council.

Current ECU initiatives to improve Indigenous outcomes and equity for other disadvantaged groups include:

- The development of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Blueprint, which will provide a more co-ordinated approach to student and staff equity matters at ECU.

- Flexible entry arrangements and articulation pathways to encourage wider participation.

- Equity scholarships and grants for students from disadvantaged groups to promote success and external sponsorship for additional equity scholarships.

- Mentoring, peer support, tutoring and tailored academic support to ECU students facing barriers to success in higher education.

ECU has a significant regional presence through its South West Campus at Bunbury, as well as through regional study hubs (Mandurah and Busselton) and a community partnership at the new Pilbara Universities Centre. Actions to reduce unemployment in the South West Region, including youth unemployment, are based on a continuing engagement with the South West community, to provide ECU students with invaluable industry opportunities and practical skills. ECU's educational and industry partnerships are based on mutual benefit and positive outcomes for the South West Region economy and community.

Onboarding programs, recognising the transition to study are delivered through ECU's Academic Skills Centres and provide individual consultations, workshops and online materials to assist with assignments, English language skills, academic writing, oral communication, referencing and mathematics.

Community access to university facilities, including the ECU Sports and Fitness Centres and lecture theatres, is determined by ECU's Laws and Traffic By-laws and policies governing the hiring of facilities. ECU strongly supports the right of all students, staff and visitors to its campuses to engage in events, where such activities are consistent with ECU's values, and our teaching and research activities. ECU has a number of partnerships with community groups, including the Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre, hosted on the Joondalup Campus.

ECU has a range of outreach programs focused on aspiration-raising in high schools designated as low-ICSEA (Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage), low socio-economic communities in campus catchments, regional students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These include the Children's University Australia, the Catalyst Clemente Program, Studiosity and the New North Education collaboration initiative. Study options advice is delivered through more than 150 events each year in WA's South West Region and other regional locations.

LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

Emerging skills gaps and unmet demand in the University's catchments are identified through environmental scanning and labour market analysis. ECU's schools maintain close relationships with local industry representatives in their disciplines and ECU Course Consultative Committees ensure that current courses and programs provide graduates with skills that continue to be relevant to the needs of employers.

Labour market priorities at the local, regional and national level are identified by working with industry representatives and new courses and programs of study are developed in consultation with these partners. ECU also works with State Government agencies (e.g. the WA Department of Education), as significant local employers for workforce planning purposes, so that the future needs of the State can be anticipated.

The employability of ECU graduates is supported through a range of strategies, developed to achieve the aims of the *ECU Student Success Blueprint, 2018-2021.* These include:

- Embedding experiential learning and career development learning in all course curricula.

- A focus on early assessment of communication skills – as a key graduate employability requirement – in courses, followed by planned interventions for students.

- "WIL Learning Communities", for the sharing of good practice in design, delivery, assessment and evaluation of work-integrated learning in all disciplines.

- Volunteering opportunities, alumni mentoring and student mobility activities that develop students' skills and business knowledge in real-world settings.

- A data investigation into graduate employment outcomes to inform the Careers and Employability Services team deployments and interventions.

- Embedding graduate employment outcomes in course and program reviews and assessments as part of the ECU Learning Journey Analytics project.

ECU's admissions and enrolment processes provide careers advice and guidance to future students. Course information includes clear sign-posts to career opportunities, so that applicants can make informed decisions about what to study.

The University's Course Approval system ensures that labour market strategies are taken into account in developing both new course offerings and amending existing courses. New courses require a thorough business case, with explicit consideration of current and future student and employer demand. ECU's Academic Board is responsible for approving new and amended course proposals, based on its assessment of the ongoing sustainability of the course and its effectiveness in addressing labour market needs.

SECURITY MEASURES

ECU participates in the Australasian Higher Education Cybersecurity Service (AHECS) initiative, through its membership of the Council of Australasian University Directors of Information Technology (CAUDIT). AHCS provides fast access to fit for purpose services and proactive support for the adoption of risk mitigation practices to counter cybersecurity threats and to help universities safeguard their intellectual property and reputation. It also provides good practice guides, templates, and a talent pool of advisors available to assist in the mitigation strategies, as well as a community of practice across the sector with expertise in cybersecurity.

ECU also participates in the Cybersecurity Community of Practice supported by CAUDIT. This provides a means of sharing good practice in a confidential, collegiate environment.

ECU has detailed policies and procedures relating to information security, risk management and business continuity management, that include critical incident management. These provide an integrated business approach, consistent with the Australian Cyber Security Centre's "Strategies to mitigate cyber security incidents" document.

ECU monitors its cybersecurity detection and responses through regular reporting to the Quality, Audit and Risk Committee, a committee of Council. ECU's IT security procedures are audited by the State Government's Office of the Auditor General.

ECU has a number of measures in place to identify and deter foreign interference activities and to ensure compliance with the *Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011*, the *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012*, and the *Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018*. ECU has a compliance process to identify and assess sanctions obligations for the engagement of PhD students. The University also has a "Foreign Engagement Compliance" (FEC) process to assess compliance with legislative requirements for other engagement activities with individuals and entities from sanctioned countries, such as employment of staff, agency contracts, and other relationships. The FEC process has been socialised with the University community, with reminders sent to ECU staff as to the process for identifying and reporting applicable activities.

Further, ECU has risk management procedures in relation to overseas partnership due diligence and travel arrangements for travelling staff undertaking learning and teaching, internationalisation and research activities on behalf of the University.

SIGNED for and on behalf of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

DOM ENGLISH

Full name (please print)

GROUP MANAGER

Position

of the Department of Education as delegate of
the Minister for Education.

Signature

Date 23/12/19

In the presence of:

Drew Menzies-McVey

Witness (please print)
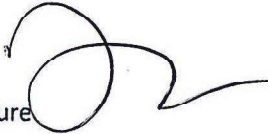
Branch Manager

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

SIGNED for and on behalf of

UNIVERSITY
Professor Steve Chapman

Full name (please print)

Vice-Chancellor

Position

Signature

In the presence of:

KAREN D'COSTA

Witness (please print)

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature