



2019 Mission Based Compact
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and the University of Newcastle

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

In this section the University should refer to information on:

- *its primary focus over the term of this compact*

The **student experience** and **service to our communities** and our regions are at the centre of our new strategic plan, and our focus is anchored to our responsibilities to these stakeholders. We will look to reimagine our campuses with a focus on student experience and connecting with our communities and regions, shape our curriculum to further enhance the skills and employability of our graduates, focus our teaching and research into domains of strength and emerging challenges that are responsive to the needs of our regions, including the need for new industries, jobs and greater educational attainment, and commit to expanding on our partnerships and collaboration with the Asia Pacific.

- *its values and aspirations, what it does and how it can best serve the interests of its students, staff and key stakeholders*

The University of Newcastle is currently developing a new strategic plan and is in the process of refining the vision, values and strategies that will drive our efforts over the period 2020-2025. Our University's activity will be informed by our values of equity, engagement, excellence and sustainability, as well as our enduring commitment to Indigenous education, research and engagement. It will be driven by the central role the University plays as an anchor institution in the Hunter Region and Central Coast, and an important player in shaping the future opportunities of the people in these regions.

The central themes that will drive our strategies over the next six years have been identified through a comprehensive consultation process with our staff, students, and communities, including civic and industry leaders as well as prospective students.

A draft Strategic Plan 2020-2025 will be completed in December 2019 for further consultation with our key stakeholders, with final refinements to be made before the strategy is launched in the first quarter of 2020.

- *how the university has responded to the French Review recommendations to adopt the Model Code on free speech and academic freedom.*

Following the release of the Model Code, the Vice-Chancellor established the Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Working Group, chaired by the President of Academic Senate and including representation from across the University. This group undertook an initial assessment of the provisions of the Model Code (including the proposed amendments from The Hon Robert French AC,

The Hon Gareth Evans AC QC, and Peter Varghese AO) against the University's Rules, policies, codes and industrial instruments.

That assessment recommended that the University support the principles of the model code and - with some modification to the code and to some existing policies - it can implement a suitable version of the code into its policy framework. At its meeting of 9 August 2019, Council supported the University adopting a modified version of the Code.

The University will work to the timetable proposed by the Minister in advising of its support for the model code and in its implementation in 2020. A draft letter to the minister advising of the University's support for the model code is being prepared. To support the University's approach, further consultation with staff, students and the University community is planned in the coming months. A full review and assessment of the University's policy and procedures will also be completed by mid-2020, for implementation by the end of 2020.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- *its objectives and/or priorities for teaching and learning*

The University has embarked on an ambitious framework of transformational change to support educators and inspire learners to be 'life ready graduates'. The next generation of graduates will need to be *creative*, combining diverse concepts to generate novel solutions; *connective* in their ability to combine theory with practice; *collaborative* so they can interconnect with peers, experts, local and global communities; and must be *implementers*, actively testing and applying solutions. The University's teaching and learning strategy is designed as a holistic and multifaceted approach to learning and teaching that provides all students with opportunities for discovery, exploration and application, and enable development of a portfolio of skills and attributes, preparing students for the challenges that await them.

- *its strategies to ensure quality in teaching and learning*

- **Education excellence:** The Teaching and Learning strategic plan relies on our educators having the capability, capacity and enthusiasm to deliver teaching and learning that inspires excellence and creates excitement among students and education partners at all of our campuses and locations. Enabling our educators places the continued professional development of staff at the heart of the education transformation agenda. Strategies such as the Educator Network (tEN) are a key part of our program of education excellence.
- **Education Innovation:** The University is committed to providing a learning journey that includes opportunities to 'prepare and discover', 'explore and reinforce' and 'consolidate and apply'. Enhancement of all our programs and courses draws on a multifaceted approach to teaching and learning delivery. Curriculum design enriches the student experience and recognise different ways of learning. We recognise that a range of approaches are needed to suit the inherent learning outcomes of subject areas and student cohorts.
- **Equity:** We have a strong and vibrant pathway program that is one of the largest in the country, and a suite of outreach initiatives to reach students and community members in our regions experiencing disadvantage or barriers to education. Our diversity brings with it different learning support requirements which means resources need to be accessible to students in dynamic ways. In developing the appropriate learning support, we bring the student to the centre of the design process by using principles that focus on connecting students to the University, each other and their learning.
- **Lifelong education:** Our innovative Student Journey Map is based on a cycle of continuous discovery and flexible pathways back to study as well as opportunities for development. Our Entrepreneur Strategy has been fundamental in developing an offering of enterprise experiences to enhance entrepreneurial career opportunities aligning with the I2N, and

offering informal immersive student events delivered through a network of University and partner innovation hubs across the Hunter.

- **Graduate employment:** We aim to integrate the concept of a 'knowledge economy' with the need for a 'learning economy'. Many of our graduates are likely to have multiple jobs across their working lives and will need skills to engage with the world of innovation and entrepreneurship. The Employability Strategy gives students the opportunity to build on personal attributes and develop transferable skills that are common to a range of roles in workplaces across all industries, such as teamwork, communication, critical thinking and creativity. We will also be implementing a comprehensive 'Life Ready Graduates' initiative, which will ensure that every undergraduate student will graduate with a meaningful work-based experience as part of their degree.
- **Education Spaces:** Transformation of the learning experience relies on a structured alignment between pedagogy, spatial affordances and technology, providing a healthy learning ecosystem that increases opportunity for student success. We are investing in on-campus next generation learning spaces that will use a greater degree of spatial variation, geographic freedom, access to resources, and student agency. Our online environments will be intuitive, device agnostic, use smart technology and promote social learning.

UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS TRANSPARENCY

- *how the University selects students for offers without an ATAR score, as part of its admissions process*
 - The University's '[Getting In](#)' website explains the options for university admission for students without an ATAR. The website outlines a number of admission pathways and specific advice for a range of student cohorts. Students without an ATAR are admitted on the basis of a **selection rank** that is calculated on the basis of assessable qualifications. The use of a selection rank ensures that there is a transparent process to assess eligibility for admission.
 - In addition to our current pathways, the University is piloting a parallel admission scheme with **Big Picture Education Australia** and the Newcastle Waldorf School. Applicants through this pilot scheme present their high school portfolio to a university panel and undergo an interview for admission.
- *what evaluation strategies are in place for ensuring that students admitted without an ATAR are likely to succeed in their studies.*
 - The University has developed a comprehensive preparation and onboarding campaign from time-of-offer through to a student's first census date and beyond. This incorporates a process based on historical attrition/fail data to assign a '**risk value**' to all commencing students, regardless of entry pathway. Students are tracked and students deemed to be at risk of failure receive support at key points in the commencing student lifecycle.
 - There are two main central campaigns that operate through each semester and trimester: these are Orientation to Census Date (**OCD**) and Census Date to Exams (**CDX**). A comprehensive set of multi-channel communications and support strategies sit behind these two campaigns, including peer assisted study schemes and counselling.

UNIVERSITY RETENTION STRATEGIES

- *strategies to reduce the proportion of students that do not complete their course (including for students from regional and remote areas)*
 - **Student Success Strategy (2019-2022).** The Student Success Strategy provides a four-year vision for a whole-of-institution, integrated and collaborative approach to improving student retention and success. It articulates a commitment to a student-centred approach to learning, teaching and the student experience. The Strategy has four goals – connect, belong, empower and prepare – which contribute to our overarching goal to improve the student

experience. Strategies to support student success begin at the pre-enrolment stage, and continue throughout the student journey.

- **Commencing Student Calls Project:** A transition and preparation activity aimed at providing in-time information to address any student concerns experienced in the lead up to and through the first weeks of study. Calls focus on ensuring students are: enrolled correctly, accessing online systems and course materials, planning for assessments and aware of support.
- **Academic Success - Skills for Learning and Life:** Interactive online course that helps new students set realistic expectations about studying at university and begin to develop the academic skills that are required to be successful at study. Coordination of Academic Success: Skills for Learning and Life includes: the setup of new students within the course, marketing of the course information/benefits and continued correspondence with students via email and the discussion board. All commencing students are given access to this course, which is voluntary for students to complete.
- **The Tracking Student Engagement Pilot Project:** developed to improve student success by leveraging course learning analytic data to proactively interact with students potentially at risk academically.
- **School Improvement Plans:** addressing factors to improve program and course quality. Emphasis is placed on program and course viability factors such as enrolment trends, student success and retention, student and graduate feedback, and graduate outcomes and factors that affect these, including learning and teaching quality, curriculum and assessment design, resourcing, among others.
- **Pre-Exams Call Project:** aims to assist commencing students in preparing for their final major assessments and/or formal exams. Provides a follow up intervention for students who do not engage with assessment/exam preparation information sent by email and SMS in the week prior to the calls.
- **Peer Assisted Study Sessions PASS:** provides a structured platform for students to discuss difficult concepts and review weekly material with colleagues. Sessions are led by a trained PASS leader.
- **Learning Support:** is provided through face-to-face engagement as well as online so that students studying in all modes have a range of options.

The University has also introduced a number of initiatives and strategies which are designed to build the capability of our educators to improve learning outcomes and enable student success, including:

- **The Education Network (tEN):** established in 2018 to promote teaching excellence and drive innovation through sharing good practice and collaboration; empower educators to teach better through sharing good practice and collaboration; provide practical solutions, support and resources, and enable capability in the scholarship of teaching and learning. In November 2019, the tEN Network will be hosting a Retention and Success Expo which will include guest speakers, presentations and best practice examples.
- **Online Cultural Competency Program:** launched in May 2019, the program reinforces the University's core values of inclusiveness and tolerance, regardless of cultural or linguistic background. Available to all staff and Students. Recently launched the SBS Cultural Inclusion Program which focuses on increasing awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture.
- **The Student Retention and Success online resource:** is a 'one stop shop' for staff which provides information on current initiatives, best practice research, performance data and news on retention and success.
- *evaluation of these strategies, including follow-up with students who do not continue with their studies to better understand the reasons for this decision.*

The Student Success Strategy includes an evaluation framework to identify opportunities to scale-up and collaborate on effective initiatives.

- **Dropped Load Questionnaire:** All students who drop any load are automatically surveyed. There is a bank of questions and students are asked to tick the reasons that are relevant to them. Annual reports are prepared and some students are contacted for follow up, depending on their response.
- **Tracking Student Engagement project:** Works with Course Coordinators to contact students in courses that have historically high attrition rates. Support strategies are offered to students when they don't engage in the learning management system, have not submitted an assessment item or quiz or have been highlighted by the course coordinator as being absent. Students receive a range of advice or support, from informative emails to phone contact by Student Advisors for case management.
- **On-call analysis:** for example, comparison of UON's performance against a range of participation and retention measures for the sector presented by the Productivity Commission in June 2019.

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING AND INNOVATION

- *strategies to ensure excellence in research and the strengthening of research capability*

Research Advantage has been established to foster the development of an engaged research community at the University of Newcastle (UON), empowering academics at all levels to reach their full potential. This Program has a range of initiatives and strategies that support academics to build research capacity in scale and excellence and further support research development and success. The program supports researchers to:

- deliver competitive, high quality research
- collaborate with national and global partners
- develop as international research leaders

Specific examples from the 11 Initiatives that underpin Research Advantage include:

- The **NEWstar Program** (Program) an initiative supporting the development of Mid-Career Researchers identified as having significant research potential and/or a strong research career trajectory and who aspire to undertake research leadership at UON.
- The **Women in Research Fellowship** (WIR Fellowship) is an initiative supporting the development of academic women at levels B and C, who aspire to senior leadership roles.
- *strategies for the provision of high quality research training, including measures to encourage PhD industry placements. This information should identify the expected number of industry placements.*

UON encourages provision of high quality research training through an institution-wide research training program encompassing supervision and dedicated research training staff, student peer advisors, specialised library support and learning development. More details can be found: <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-and-innovation/graduate-research/current-students/progressing-students>.

See also information on **Research Advantage** above.

Academics and higher degree research candidates are encouraged to engage with industry to develop their attributes and professional networks as they progress through their research program. Business/Industry Scholarships for students build collaborative relationships across sectors enabling our future leaders to transform innovative research into workplace practice, deepening the partnership between UON and the private sector.

UON has developed a HDR Work Integrated Learning program to build collaborative relationships across sectors enabling our future leaders to transform innovative research into workplace practice (see <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-and-innovation/graduate-research/industry-and->

community). We estimate that approx. 20 HDR students are currently engaged in these initiatives, UON is planning to significantly expand industry placements across the HDR space in 2020.

Specific institution-wide programs include:

- Establishment of Doctoral Training Centres to advance fundamental knowledge and identify key emerging opportunities in targeted sectors through industry-embedded research training.
 - The METS Doctoral Training Centre facilitates closer links between academia and industry in the mining equipment, technology and services (METS) sector. Placements are typically 4 months to 1 year in length. The first cohort consists of 8 students.
- Targeted PhD scholarships to strengthen capacity building initiatives with our global partners, and benefit their regional communities.
 - 5 Pacific region scholarships awarded through the Global Impact Cluster for Energy Resources Food and Water).
- Industry-sponsored students through our collaborative industry centres, including the ARC Research Hub for Advanced Technologies for Australian Iron Ore and BHP Billiton Centre for Ironmaking and Materials Research.
- Industry placements: facilitated on a personalised basis through ARC Linkage projects and targeted industry scholarships.
- APR.Intern - provides a platform for industry to further develop and innovate through short-term 3-5 month tightly focused research projects and gives postgraduate students the opportunity to apply highly analytical research expertise to the project while gaining invaluable experience in an industry setting.
- *strategies to encourage research translation and commercialisation, including collaboration and engagement with industry and other end users, and the measures of success that the university monitors in this area*

The Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources (NIER) has a unique engagement model connects academia and industry through a common platform for research in the areas of energy and resources. The model facilitates collective capacity and joint branding of industry partners and research groups, enabling them to engage in significant national and international research collaborations.

- The Innovation Launchpad, an initiative facilitated through the NIER-hosted NSW Energy & Resources Knowledge Hub, which provides an opportunity for scale-up SMEs to work with world-class researchers at NIER to test, pilot and demonstrate new technology.
- Research programs developed through platforms including the GIC ERFW's Pacific Initiative and Food & Agribusiness Strategy.

UON's Integrated Innovation Network (I2N) supports entrepreneurs and businesses to make valuable connections, develop their ideas and thrive. At the heart of I2N are three strategically positioned innovation hubs at Newcastle City, Williamstown and Muswellbrook which offer coworking for entrepreneurs and innovators. These incubation facilities are complemented by a series of connection events and cohort-based programs to build the region's enterprise skill base. I2N has strategically partnered with organisations delivering best practice entrepreneurship programs, including a range of international partners as well as Australian partners such as the CSIRO and the Sydney School of Entrepreneurship. In addition, as part of the development of the University's next strategy, we are focusing on how to better enable partnerships with industry that focus on our institutional strengths, as well as our regions.

- *strategies to promote open access to research publications and data.*

UON recognises the potential benefits that publicly funded research can bring to researchers and the broader community. UON has an Open Access Guideline in place which promotes the dissemination of research findings in an international open-access environment. As part of this commitment a

partnership between Research & Innovation Services, Information Technology Services and the UON Library has been established in support of research data sharing, The University has a Research Data and Materials Management Guideline in place. The University Library provides support and advice to promote data management planning and good practice so as to enable the dissemination and sharing of research data to the national Research Data Australia service.

EQUITY

- *strategies for improving Indigenous outcomes and related targets*

The University of Newcastle is committed to a whole-of-University approach to Indigenous Higher Education and this is supported by a suite of strategic documents that embed commitments to Indigenous Higher Education. As part of our enduring commitment to equity and social justice, a measure of success is achievement of parity in enrolments, retention, and success for Indigenous students and a rate of 3.9% Indigenous employment. The Indigenous Education and Research Portfolio which includes The Wollotuka Institute, has a key leadership role to play in achieving these targets, as well as ensuring that commensurate participation occurs in an environment of excellence in the fields of education and research.

The University has also appointed a Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership, who will have responsibility for leading the University's Indigenous Education Framework and drive excellence in Indigenous education and research. This senior role, which sits on the University's Executive, will also have responsibility for innovation into Indigenous education and will be responsible for leading the implementation of our soon-to-be-released Indigenous Employment Strategy.

Student Engagement and Success strategies

- Schools 2 University (S2U) programs – iBelieve, Insights Days, UAC talks
- Indigenous Tutorial Program – academic tutoring
- Alternate Entry Schemes – Mirroma Bunbilla, Newcastle Law School Early Entry Scheme and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Alternate Admissions Scheme.
- Yapug (Enabling) program
- Cultural activities, Men's and Women's groups
- Social activities such as National Indigenous Games, luncheons, social sports etc
- Employment pathways - Career Trackers internship partnership

Indigenous Employment

The University's Maligagu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy is a standalone document, to be launched formally later in 2019. The University has set a target of 3.9% of providing employment participation 'parity' which reflects the Indigenous population percentage rates for the University's footprint area of Newcastle City / Lake Macquarie, the Broader Hunter Region (excluding Newcastle City), the Central Coast, and the Mid-North Coast.

Indigenous Governance Mechanism IGM

The IGM's role is to support the Vice-Chancellor and senior management on matters relating to the development and implementation of policy concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research, and to ensure that these meet the needs identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

UON Cultural Capability Framework

The Student Success strategy aims to improve the student experience by ensuring students from all backgrounds have a strong sense of engagement and belonging, at all stages of their student journey. A priority areas for 2019-20 is the development of a Cultural Competency Framework which aims to build capability around inclusion and cultural diversity and expand the Indigenisation and internationalisation of the curriculum, to proactively support our culturally diverse population.

Website link for further information: <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/about-uon/our-university/indigenous-collaboration/the-wollotuka-institute>

- *strategies for achieving equity for regional and remote students, for low socio economic students and students from other equity groups*

The University of Newcastle has a high proportion of students from identified equity groups in comparison to other institutions in the sector. Over time we have developed a strong pathways program to support increased access and participation rates for students from diverse backgrounds, as well as strategies to support success. Key performance indicators for access and success for identified cohorts are applied across the institution and at unit level.

- **Pathways:** The University has the largest Commonwealth funded enabling program in the country and continues to innovate in terms of course structure and delivery to maximize positive student outcomes for diverse cohorts.
- **Student Success Strategy** (refer above to Retention Strategies) and related Implementation Team.

Two key reports support the development and enhancement of strategies to achieve parity of outcomes for students from equity groups. Responses to these reports are supported by cross-institutional teams.

- **The Annual Equity Report:** A comprehensive annual report that considers key indicators for target equity groups to inform strategies that will support student success. The Report links to the Student Equity and Social Justice Strategic Framework and is considered by the Student Equity and Social Justice Expert Panel.
- **Learning Impacts Report:** A survey of all students on the issues that they feel may impact on their enrolment and study at the University. Survey outcomes are considered by the Learning Impacts Working Group, which designs and oversees implementation of targeted strategies to ensure that the University is responding appropriately and flexibly to student needs.

- *strategies for reducing unemployment in the regions serviced by institutions, including youth unemployment rates*

The University serves a region that is characterised by unemployment rates higher than those found in capital cities, particularly in youth unemployment. The broader Hunter economy is undergoing structural changes as new technologies and labour markets emerge, while having educational attainment rates lower than remote Australia in some cases. The University is playing a central role in this social and economic transformation through access to developing knowledge in education, professional practice and research, and the development of a strong knowledge-based economy. The University's two key strategies in this respect incorporate aspiration raising activities in targeted communities, and program development in areas of identified skill shortages.

- **Outreach:** Through the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education, the University runs a program of evidence-based outreach activities for children of all ages, as well as at-risk groups such as young people with an out of home care experience.
- **Program development:** The Bachelor of Public and Community Health at the University's Central Coast Campus has been developed in recognition of the demographic and labour market needs of the region and in collaboration with community, health and government stakeholders. This program is the first in the world to embrace 'Big Picture' learning design.

The University also has strong partnerships and articulation arrangements with TAFE NSW to provide an integrated suite of pathways for learners. Innovative dual qualification programs such as the Bachelor of Electrical and Electronic Engineering allow students to graduate with a Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician through TAFE NSW alongside their degree.

- *strategies for increasing student support for relocating students (potentially including specialised on-boarding programs)*

- The **Student Success Strategy** recognizes the importance of “belonging” in supporting improved retention and success for all students. The Success Strategy aims to nurture supportive peer relations and foster meaningful interaction between staff and students; develop students’ knowledge, confidence and identity as successful learners; and provide an experience that is relevant to students’ interests and future goals. To facilitate this, the University has a comprehensive preparation and onboarding campaign from time-of-offer through to a student’s first census date and beyond.
- In addition to strategies referred to throughout, the University has a program of extra-curricular support and a comprehensive **Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy** and Action Plan to ensure that students have access to effective help and services, in addition to a well-supported program of clubs and societies.
- *strategies to increase community access to university facilities*

The University has a range of longstanding public and community access strategies as well as a program of new and innovative engagement activities. In addition, our city campus is designed as a porous space, open to community and business use.

- **University libraries:** The University Library supports the Hunter Living Histories program, community membership, and community activities such as the annual book fair.
- **Open Days:** The University has implemented a strong community engagement focus in annual Open Days to bring community members of all ages on site to share in opportunities for learning.
- **City Spaces:** The University is actively investing in new and improved facilities that encourage increased community access.
- **Public Lecture series:** Our Public Lecture Program forms part of the University's efforts to contribute knowledge, thought-leadership and innovative ideas to the region.
- **Massive Online Open Courses:** Open Courses including MOOCs bring a taste of high quality tertiary education to the world at little or no cost to the consumer. The University offers a range of award winning online open courses and has engaged with around 200,000 students in partnership with online providers since these courses were introduced in 2017.
- **I2N Integrated Innovation Network** and related grand challenges (see Research above)
- *strategies to increase aspirations and advice to school students on study options.*

Outreach

- **Schools Outreach Presentations:** Presentations incorporate information about transitioning to University, explaining the differences between school and university and highlighting the support services that are available to students when they are at University.
- **School Visit/Open Days:** On campus events including Open Day, School Visits Day but also other, smaller events provide prospective students with the opportunity to experience what university is like to inform their decision making and best prepare them for the transition to university.
- **Start Smart:** This event invites non-school leaver prospective and offered students an opportunity to come onto campus late in the year prior to commencement (usually December) to experience a mini expo, campus tour and presentations. Aimed at providing this cohort answers to questions early and to engage them after they have received early offers.

LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

In this section the University should refer to information on:

- *strategies for identifying skills gaps within the relevant student and business catchments*
- **Graduate Attributes** have a focus on preparing students to be life-ready as well as job-ready, with an understanding of the rapid transformations occurring in the labour market nationally and internationally. The attributes aim to enhance the development of transferable skills and

prepare students to manage and engage with opportunities arising from digital disruption and the future of work.

- **Employer Front Door**, which offers students, alumni mentors, and industry partners a physical 'employability' space on campus to identify and exploit emerging opportunities for the benefit of all stakeholders.
- *strategies for meeting labour market priorities at a local, regional and/or national level*
 - **The Portfolio Strategy Group**: is a senior multi-disciplinary leadership group that considers national and sectoral priorities including skills shortages and labour market trends in the development of the University's portfolio of programs.
 - **A viability analysis** accompanies all program review and development to ensure that a range of factors, including labour market priorities, are considered by decision makers.
 - **External Reviews** are conducted on a cyclical basis for existing programs by a panel of experts which includes students, staff, and community and industry stakeholders to ensure that the portfolio of programs is current, relevant, and of high quality.
 - **Advisory Boards** for Faculties, Schools and individual programs draw expertise from industry and business into curriculum design, review and alignment with contemporary employer and labor market priorities.
- *strategies to address employability and graduate attribute skills gaps to ensure students are work-ready*
 - **Work Integrated Learning** opportunities ensure that all undergraduates will have at least one WIL experience during their time at the University as part of the University's Life Ready Graduates initiative. The University's term calendar has been adjusted in 2020 to facilitate formal WIL experiences.
 - **Jobs On Campus** offers students opportunities to develop employability skills in a professional workplace. The program recruits for a range of roles including the Enquiry Centre, Library, Student Ambassadors, and the PASS program.
 - **Digital badging** provides a record of skills and attributes reflecting Work Integrated Learning experiences and activities that are supplementary to academic curricula.
 - **Service website** which offers career information and CareerHub and a range of career information resources. The service also offers a daily drop in service with triaged access to longer appointments with CICA qualified Careers Consultants.
 - **Location specific industry initiatives** such as Connect ED, which brings students working together in diverse teams on real industry projects during semester break.
- *the application of these strategies to admissions and enrolments*

The University has a structured approach to recognizing prior learning and professional experience, and granting credit.

- **Credit and Articulation**: The University has had formal articulation relationships with TAFE/VET for over ten years and currently has over 200 articulation arrangements with over 20 VET providers. Applicants who have completed an AQF accredited Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma qualification are guaranteed an offer to commence one of 45 (as of 2019) undergraduate degrees across all 5 Faculties and a range of disciplines. Applicants who enter via this pathway may also be eligible for academic credit towards their degree, if they have completed a Diploma (or higher). New arrangements have been agreed in 2019 for veterans to recognize professional training with credit in a range of programs.

- *how labour market strategies are taken into account in developing course offerings.*

In developing course and program offerings the University has formal processes to ensure that labour market strategies are considered.

- **A viability analysis** accompanies all program review and development to ensure that a range of factors, including labour market priorities, are considered as part of a business case by decision makers.
- **External Reviews** are conducted on a cyclical basis for existing programs by a panel of experts which includes students, staff, and community and industry stakeholders to ensure that the portfolio of programs is current, relevant, and of high quality.
- **New programs:** the Graduate Certificate in Financial Planning which will commence in trimester 1 2020. This award has been introduced specifically to deal with an industry requirement for existing financial planners to complete relevant tertiary qualifications by 2024.

SECURITY MEASURES

- *actions being taken to ensure the safety of data against cyber attack*

Several actions have been taken over the last few years to implement a number of technical and procedural controls that have had a positive effect on the residual risk rating, including:

- The establishment of the University's Information Security Policies, with associated procedures and guidelines that define the University's expectations for the protection of information.
- A continual 'Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond & Recover' approach to managing cyber threats, including processes to proactively identify control weaknesses and implement treatment options.
- Recently introduced security intelligence partnerships to provide actionable intelligence sharing to help manage threats and attacks.
- Regular risk assessments, penetration tests and audits of key IT systems to ensure that appropriate controls are in place, and any control gaps are proactively identified and addressed
- The 2017 firewall replacement project delivered an industry leading next generation firewall, providing significantly improved and new capabilities in the areas of intrusion prevention, URL filtering, anti-virus, data leakage prevention, application monitoring, VPN termination and event correlation.
- Addressing the "Essential Eight" mitigation strategies identified by the Australian Cyber Security Centre for improvement of cyber resilience[i].
- An ongoing training and awareness program for staff and students centred on the ACSC Essential Eight strategies to create a cyber-security-conscious culture across UON
- The nine (9) streams of the 2017-2020 Information Security Policy Implementation (ISPI) program delivering new and uplifted capabilities to help protect against cyber threats as they emerge, and enhance the security of UON information assets (see below)

Enterprise log management and correlation: The centralised log management platform commissioned in March 2018 extends UON's proactive alerting and forensic evidence gathering capabilities, providing significant security intelligence improvements

Privileged Account Management (PAM): The new PAM solution provides a secure, centralised platform for the storage, backup, sharing, and auditing of the use of passwords for high-risk system access, including third-party access and password reset in case of a breach or staff termination

Anti-ransomware & Machine Learning malware detection: With around 54% of organisations affected by ransomware in 2017, this stream deployed an endpoint protection solution to detect and

stop ransomware. The solution is capable of reverting malware-encrypted files to a known good state, and implements machine learning that activates protective controls when anomalous activity is detected

User account disablement: This stream has delivered a protective control that disables non-student Uni-IDs that remain inactive for an extended period of time. The threshold will be gradually reduced to a span that balances security and the operational needs of seasonal and sessional staff

Password expiry discovery: Following recent changes to some best practice guidance around user authentication, a discovery project was completed to identify alternative strategies to achieve an equivalent level of risk mitigation as provided by regular password expiry. The outcome of this stream was an updated Information Security Policy, which has led to broader deployment of MFA

Multi-factor authentication (MFA): Building on the existing Okta single sign-on platform, Okta MFA has been implemented to strengthen user authentication, therefore protecting sensitive information. MFA has been implemented on a number of UON systems, with more to follow by the end of 2019.

E-Mail scrubbing solution: To empower end users with the tools and capabilities to more efficiently and accurately identify and block spam emails as there is a growing risk of threats to UON systems through the ongoing use of spam emails targeted at compromising user accounts or exposing the network to ransomware, impersonation and phishing attacks.

Password Manager: To reduce the risk of user credentials being misused resulting in the loss or damage to its information or systems, single Sign On (SSO) exists for many of the in house used systems. However, some systems are not enabled for SSO, and staff and students also fail to properly protect passwords to other external services used as part of their roles. This project is seeking to implement a password manager solution that allows staff and students to self- manage their credential security.

Patch Automation: Currently UON uses software to 'scan' systems for non-current software patches. With a vast amount of applications at UON (the task to ensure latest patches are applied to desktop and server fleet is an ever-continuing process that requires an automated solution. This stream implements an automated feed from Tenable to ServiceNOW to automatically create patching service request tickets.

- *mitigation strategies in the case of a breach of security*

In summary, UON's mitigation strategies are spread across People, Process and Technology domains:

- a continually updated set of Policies, Procedures, Playbooks, and Guidelines,
- Technology to support the detection, and response to any breaches, and
- Appropriately delegated and skilled personnel to respond to such events.

In addition, the University purchases appropriate Cyber Security Insurance to provide a response control where other corrective controls do not completely treat the consequences of a breach.

Details of UON's mitigation strategies available in the case of a breach of the confidentiality, integrity or availability of University information or systems are given below.

Confidentiality breaches:

- Information Security Incident Management Guidelines, which form part of the University's overall incident management procedures:
 - IT Incident Management Process;
 - Information Security Incident Management Guidelines;
 - Information Technology Services' Critical Incident Management Guide; and
 - University's Business Continuity Management Policy and Business Continuity Management Framework.
- Documented procedures and playbooks, e.g. Compromised Credential Procedure
- Continuous vulnerability and compliance scanning to detect improper configuration changes, for action by operational teams.

- Internal staff, managed service providers and partners with training and expertise in such response
- Cyber Liability Insurance
- SIEM platform to enable investigative response

Integrity Breaches:

- System backups
- Restoration points\snapshots
- Internal staff, managed service providers and partners with training and expertise in such response
- Cyber Liability Insurance
- SIEM platform to enable investigative response

Availability Breaches:

- Playbooks – e.g. Denial of Service playbook
- Malware control with restoration capabilities to defeat ransomware attacks
- Internal staff, managed service providers & partners with training & expertise in such response
- Cyber Liability Insurance
- SIEM platform to enable investigative response
- *how the University complies with the Australian Cyber Security Centre's "Strategies to mitigate cyber security incidents" document (<https://www.cyber.gov.au/publications/strategies-to-mitigate-cyber-security-incidents-mitigation-details>)*

Addressing the "Essential Eight" mitigation strategies identified by the Australian Cyber Security Centre for improvement of cyber resilience is a critical component of UON's Information Security framework. In addition to the technical strategies below, an ongoing training and awareness program for staff and students also exists, which centred on the ACSC Essential Eight strategies to create a cyber-security-conscious culture across the University.

Strategies to prevent malware delivery and execution

- Application Whitelisting
- Application patching
- Configuration of Microsoft Office macro settings
- User application hardening

Strategies to limit the extent of cyber security incidents

- Restricting administration privileges
- Multi-factor authentication
- Operating System patching

Strategies to recover data and system availability

- Daily back-ups
- *measures in place to enhance the identification and deterrence of foreign interference activities including actions to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.*

The University's Governance structure monitors and reviews standards, quality, policy and compliance and has mechanisms in place, including a Risk Management Framework, to mitigate the threat of adverse foreign interference that could occur through collaboration, partnerships, investment and unstable IT security systems at The University of Newcastle.

In addition, the University's Vice-Chancellor is a member of the Federal Government's Steering Group of the University Foreign Interference Taskforce, which is establishing guidelines for universities to protect against foreign interference in their research and education endeavours.

SIGNED for and on behalf of

In the presence of:

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

DOM ENGLISH

Full name (please print)

Drew Menzies-McVey

Witness (please print)

GROUP MANAGER

Position

Branch Manager

Position or profession of witness (please print)

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

Signature

[Handwritten Signature]

Signature

[Handwritten Signature]

Date

23/12/19

SIGNED for and on behalf of

In the presence of:

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE .

Alex Zelinsky

Full name (please print)

Kelyn Stewart

Witness (please print)

Vice Chancellor


Position

Policy Advisor

Position or profession of witness (please print)



Signature



Signature
