

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2019

Australian Catholic University

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

Equity outcomes:

- Increase participation rates for people from low socio-economic backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from regional and remote areas
- Increase retention and success rates of students from low socio-economic backgrounds to be at or above the sector rate.

Equity strategies:

Building awareness of higher education, informing aspirations, providing access and enabling successful participation and attainment in higher education is the focus of ACU's Widening Participation strategy activities. The strategies and activities are embedded throughout the student lifecycle:

- Pre-Access: Partnership with schools and communities to facilitate widening participation strategies and programs
- Access: Pathways and admissions (including enabling pathways)
- Participation: Transition, engagement and progression programs to improve retention
- Attainment: Inclusive learning and teaching pedagogical development

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

Pre-Access & Access:

First People's and Equity Pathways Directorate widening participation programs delivered in collaboration with partner school and community organisations:

- Explore your Future programs: High Schools & Primary Schools: in-school and on-campus programs designed to raise awareness of the benefits of higher education and possible career paths; build and inform aspirations for higher education. This is achieved through peer assisted educational activities which promote engagement in learning and demonstrate the links between learning, higher education and career pathways
- Academic Workshops: High Schools: Year 12 workshops to provide academic enrichment opportunities

- Uni Step Up Programs: High School students in partner schools can experience university life by studying a first-year undergraduate unit at ACU whilst in year 11 or 12. Credit points are given towards a related undergraduate degree for the successful completion of the unit.
- Teacher Professional Development: Partner schools can access teacher professional development opportunities at ACU to contribute to building school capacity
- Access programs: ACU Schools Recommendation Program provides access into ACU for students of partner schools; ACU College (articulation of diploma courses and certificate IV courses into undergraduate degree courses);
- Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in collaboration with ACU's Indigenous Higher Education Units to increase motivation towards higher education participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from low socio-economic backgrounds
- Continued development of practice and research informed widening participation programs

Participation and Attainment:

Transition, retention and success strategies for students from low socio-economic backgrounds are developed, embedded and delivered as a central focus throughout the whole of ACU:

- Learning for Life: ACU's Learning and Teaching Framework assists development of curriculum, educational technology use and teaching methodology to improve retention and success for students from low socio-economic backgrounds
- Office of Student Success services including:
 - Connect2Uni: a transition program for students from low socio-economic backgrounds
 - Peer Assisted Student Sessions (PASS) for first year undergraduate units
 - Academic skills support
- Faculty development and provision of engagement, retention and success strategies including:
 - National Educating Teachers in Disadvantaged Schools Program
 - Catholic Teachers Education Consortium
- Transition, Success and Retention Unit: Retention coordinator
- Learning and Teaching Centre: Evaluation unit
- First People's and Equity Pathways Directorate:
 - Widening Participation Student Ambassador Team
 - Indigenous Higher Education Units
 - Equity Pathways Teams
- Equity Scholarships for students from low socio-economic backgrounds

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

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

- 4 **Partnerships and collaboration:** who the university will partner and collaborate with and how this will improve equity performance.
- ACU will continue to build sustainable, strong partnerships with First People's and Equity Pathways partner schools and partner community organisations in VIC, NSW, QLD and ACT which enable widening participation work with schools, students, their families and the wider community.
 - ACU will continue to collaborate with other tertiary education providers (including universities and TAFE's) such as the Widening Participation Forum Queensland; Widening Participation Managers University Consortium NSW and the Widening Participation Network VIC and TAFE's in each state.