

## **Background**

The University of Newcastle is proud to be recognised for its distinctive commitment to, and capacity for, holding equity and excellence together. Our commitment to equity and excellence is embedded in institutional strategies, practice, research and pedagogy. This commitment is ongoing as we continue to work toward our goal of parity of participation, and to strengthen our impact for local and international communities.

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 UON Student Equity & Social Justice Strategic Framework compliments the NeW Education Framework, through guiding decisions in regard to where and how as an institution we allocate resources to address 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 & social justice 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 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.

## **Strategic Framework Scope**

The Student Equity and Social Justice Strategic Framework directs a principled, whole-of-institution approach for the allocation of UON resources (specifically HEPP); inclusive design of frameworks, projects and initiatives; and the recognition of the diversity and difference in our communities.

Strategies, projects and initiatives directly related to equity of access, participation and success in higher education work best when aligned with broader institutional commitments and strategies; that is, when equity is embedded in all of our teaching, learning, research, engagement and governance practices.

This Framework demonstrates how our commitments and goals are applied and embedded. Underpinning strategies and initiatives support this Framework and further translate the goal and the three key principles for application.

## UON's Goal: Achieving Equity through Parity of Participation

<b>PARITY OF PARTICIPATION</b>	<p>Achieving Equity through Parity of Participation is a multi-dimensional goal.</p> <p>UON is committed to achieving parity between the proportion of UON students from diverse backgrounds, who enter and graduate from all disciplines with the proportion of people who are from those backgrounds in our regions.</p> <p>Beyond this, parity of participation is about who is included in the design of initiatives, who the university is accountable to, and how backgrounds and cultures are recognised as important to the future of the University.</p>
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### Principles:

<b>RESOURCE ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	<p>Resources are ethically allocated on the basis of our commitment to equity and are guided by high quality research that is sensitive to the complexities of social inequalities.</p> <p>Ongoing processes of ethical, contextualised and rigorous evaluation of the short and long term impact of initiatives are engaged across the University to directly inform allocation of resources, related to equity &amp; social justice.</p>
<b>CO-DEVELOPMENT</b>	<p>Students and our community are at the centre of all equity endeavours.</p> <p>Frameworks and initiatives are co-developed with students, staff and our communities through ethical consultation and engagement.</p> <p>Initiatives are research-informed, rigorously evaluated, and have a clear link with the goal of parity of participation.</p>
<b>VALUING DIVERSITY &amp; DIFFERENCE</b>	<p>The diversity of our student body and communities are celebrated, recognised and valued.</p> <p>UON thrives on the richness of its diverse communities but also recognises the significance of developing empathy across our differences.</p> <p>Going beyond a superficial understanding to ensure that systems, frameworks and initiatives respond to student/ community contexts. This will support the development of an environment that nurtures student aspirations, capabilities, and sense of belonging.</p>

These principles intersect and help to strengthen, advance and reinforce the others. Within each principle, key strategies have been prioritised to provide a starting point for implementation.

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## **Sub-Strategies**

- Implement an innovative and contextualised evaluation framework for all equity focused initiatives of the University, including those funded via HEPP. The evaluation methodologies will be informed by international, peer-reviewed research and include: qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, underpinned by principles of equity and social justice.
- Embed a strong and sustainable governance framework for effective oversight of UON HEPPP resources.
- Maintain mechanisms whereby knowledge from other HE contexts (nationally and internationally) becomes useful to UON's frameworks for policy making, governance and initiative development.

# CO-DEVELOPMENT

**Students and our communities are at the centre of all equity endeavours.**

**Frameworks and initiatives are co-developed with students, staff and community through ethical consultation and engagement.**

**Initiatives are research-informed, rigorously evaluated, and have a clear link with the goal of parity of participation.**

## **Sub-Strategies**

- Draw on the UON Equity & Social Justice Evaluation Framework to better understand the ways that different initiatives can be valuable and are valued.
- Continue engagement with UON Data to inform frameworks, initiatives and resource allocation more broadly.
- Embed a strength-based, participatory approach for engagement and consultation that builds on University-to-community connections.

# VALUING DIVERSITY & DIFFERENCE

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**UON thrives on the richness of its diverse communities but also recognises the significance of developing empathy across our differences.**

**Going beyond a superficial understanding to ensure that systems, frameworks and initiatives respond to student/ community contexts. This will support the development of an environment that nurtures student aspirations, capabilities, and sense of belonging.**

## **Sub-Strategies**

- Maintain an active UON Student Equity and Social Justice Expert panel to support dialogue between equity research and practice and to ensure student and staff voices are captured in university decision-making about equity funding and initiatives.
- Draw on the UON Equity & Social Justice Evaluation Framework to better understand the ways that different initiatives can address the needs of students and communities and respond to changes in policy, environments or the institution that may impact on student experiences of HE (and school or graduate pathways).
- Build and maintain Communities of Practice locally and internationally to facilitate the development of nurturing environments for students through the sharing of practice and research.

**APPENDIX: Student Equity and Social Justice Strategic Framework  
2019 HEPP Funded Initiatives**

All of the initiatives outlined below have been developed in line with the UON Student Equity & Social Justice Principles:

<b>Parity of Participation</b>		
<b>Resource Accountability</b>	<b>Co-Development</b>	<b>Valuing Diversity &amp; Difference</b>

Underpinning all of the strategies and initiatives is the continual development of a UON Equity & Social Justice Evaluation Framework. The framework is being co-developed between CEEHE and project teams, in order to produce a context specific approach to evaluation that is fit for purpose and is aligned to equity and social justice principles.

<b>Strategies</b>		<b>Provision of accessible and inclusive life-long learning pathways for individuals and communities who have had a disrupted educational journey</b>	<b>Develop and nurture engagement with university and build an appreciation of life-long learning amongst our communities.</b>	<b>Increase the retention, success and career readiness of students by embedding a range of research-informed strategies throughout our courses, programs and student support offerings.</b>	<b>Design and implement a supportive and research-informed framework to grow the capability of the sector to address complex equity issues and to work inclusively with diverse student cohorts across a range of contexts</b>
<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>	<i>Shaded areas below indicate how each initiative relates to one or more of the strategies</i>			
Uni4You	Uni4You supports students from historically under-represented backgrounds to access and complete an enabling program. Uni4You provides a supportive pathway to university via enabling programs and includes preparation workshops, individual case				

	management and learning support groups.				
Reclaim My Place	An arts-based program to promote a sense of capability and a curiosity for learning amongst women experiencing adversity. Through the creation of art products, participants explore themes relating to educational aspiration and goal-setting, with the aim of developing new skills and increasing knowledge about lifelong learning opportunities. Participants work alongside sector professionals as co-contributors in the process.				
Live Learn Grow	The Live, Learn, Grow (LLG) program seeks to overcome the known barriers preventing care leavers engaging with higher education. The program has a dual focus of providing dynamic, student-cantered support to young people with an out of home care (OOHC) background as they transition to their first year at university, along with increasing awareness and understanding of educational pathways amongst case workers in the sector.				
Children's University Newcastle	The Children's University – Newcastle (CU Newcastle) provides extra-curricular learning opportunities to children aged between 7 and 14 years; the aim being to engage children in learning in its broadest sense and to provide the scaffolding for children to develop self-efficacy, confidence and their aspirations.				

Deadly Streaming	The Deadly Streaming Project is focussed on building positive self-regard amongst Aboriginal, low SES students, leading to an increased awareness that they belong in educational settings.				
Enabling Support	A range of embedded initiatives that provides timely and tailored support to build the foundational tools needed to succeed in higher education.				
Transition & Progression	A range of activities that are designed to increase the retention, success and career readiness of domestic undergraduate students by embedding a range of evidence-based support strategies throughout the curriculum. Including; early intervention programs designed to identify students who are disengaging before they fail courses or drop out of university studies, and ensuring courses and programs are designed and assessed in ways that actively engage a diverse community of students with their learning				
Equity Scholarships (ESSUN)	ESSUN is focused on encouraging participation in higher education through the provision of equity scholarship opportunities. Hardship grants are awarded to students to meet urgent needs which if unable to meet, would place continued study in jeopardy.				
Excellence for Teaching Equity in Higher Education	The aim of ETEHE is to build on, support and extend the research and pedagogical expertise that exists at UON in relation to excellence for teaching and equity in HE; to create high quality research-informed				



	pedagogical practices at UON to ensure parity of participation and completion.				
Parity of Participation Grant: responding to UON Equity Performance Data	The grant scheme supports projects to develop research, trial and evaluate innovative ideas, build capacity and reform systems in response to the UON Student Equity Data Report, at a Faculty/ School level, as we work towards increasing parity of participation.				
Writing Program for Equity & Widening Participation Practitioners	<p>In recognition of the need for higher education institutions to reveal the significant impact of equity and widening participation initiatives, including strategies to support access, transition and retention of students from historically under-represented background, the aim of the Writing Program is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhance the relationship between widening participation practitioners and academics</li> <li>• raise the profile of robust research and evaluation of widening participation activity nationally and internationally</li> <li>• support widening participation practitioners to present research and evaluations of their practice in refereed academic journals, enabling practitioners and academics to share their work with broader audiences.</li> </ul>				