

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2019

Victoria University

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

As the University of *Opportunity and Success*, Victoria University (VU) is committed to being inclusive rather than exclusive, with a vision that incorporates our aspiration to uplift communities across Melbourne's west.

Victoria University's Access and Participation plan 2019 is underpinned by the university's overall mission and [Strategic Plan 2016-2020](#), [Student Equity & Social Inclusion Policy](#), Student Retention Strategy 2018-2020, [Student Employability Strategy 2018-2020](#) and the [Bathelmun Yalingwa Strategy \(2017-2020\)](#).

VU also provides extensive accessible and transparent welfare and financial support that aims to reduce barriers to successful course completions and graduate employment outcomes.

VU continues its tradition of increased participation and success for low SES (LSES) students by focusing on aspiration raising, transition programs, early interventions and innovation across a range of programs and initiatives. This is core business for VU.

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

(a) The University collaborates extensively with a large number of local catchment schools in the West of Melbourne that are characterised by high numbers of LSES students, many of whom are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, to deliver aspiration-raising, pathways and transition initiatives, including:

- Information sessions for parents, school staff and students.
- 'VU Guarantee' early offer program for eligible schools with large LSES cohorts.
- Pre entry workshops for Secondary School students to prepare them for entry into university and introduce them to valuable life-long enterprise skills
- Significant pathways programs into higher education including through a range of sub-bachelor offerings in our Polytechnic.

(b) New career-development and employability initiatives available to VU students in 2019 will include:

- A VU recruitment agency that will focus on developing a coordinated approach to flexible employment opportunities for students including part time, holiday, on-demand, work integrated learning and on-campus roles.

- Improved career development resources, digital tools and services designed to increase student employability, enterprise skills and workplace readiness.
- Expanded professional practice workshops in VU's Learning Hub and access to Work Integrated Learning activities.

(c) Expansion of VU's Block Model beyond first year undergraduate students with a focus on attracting and retaining non-traditional and LSES students:

- According to our research, students benefit significantly from the Block Model's unique design that enables clear identification of students at risk via learning analytics and in-time follow up. LSES students benefit disproportionately in terms of pass rates and learning gain.
- Delivery of integrated programs, activities and learning support via Learning Hubs, designed to enhance learning, stimulate thinking and build skills recognised as pivotal to successful study and employability outcomes.

(d) Provision of pathways and transition programs for students entering the university into second year via a TAFE course:

- The Transition Essentials initiative targets students from LSES backgrounds who are commencing university courses in year 2, following their successful completion of a TAFE course.

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

- Collection and analysis of LSES student participation and engagement across a range of targeted programs and equity strategies.
- Evaluation of LSES academic progress and outcomes.
- Ongoing evaluation of the success of the Block Model for the LSES student cohort.
- Continuing to report outcomes for LSES students against the university's Student Retention Strategy and Student Employability Strategy.

4 Partnerships and collaboration: who the university will partner and collaborate with and how this will improve equity performance.

- Secondary schools with high LSES student cohorts will continue to advise the university on best practice to foster successful transition from secondary school.
- Internal and External TAFE providers that are provided with pathway opportunities (some with credit) into higher education programs
- Collaborative programs involving key industry partners and Alumni Services such as VU's Talent Connect program which provides industry mentoring and networking initiatives for LSES students and graduates.