



# Access and Participation Plan 2020



## Introduction

ECU has a long-standing commitment to widening participation in higher education. Our entry pathways and supportive student experience encourage all people, including those from under-represented groups, to access and to succeed.

The *Access and Participation Plan* focuses on increasing opportunities for university study for people from a low-socioeconomic status backgrounds. Many of the strategies also apply to other defined equity groups, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders; people with disability; and people from regional and remote areas of Australia.

For additional strategies to widen university access, please refer to [ECU's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, 2016-2021](#) and [ECU's Reconciliation Action Plan, 2018-2021](#), and ECU's [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) web pages.

## Student lifecycle

The *Access and Participation Plan* strategies and key activities are aligned with the student lifecycle. *Pre-access* refers to outreach to schools and communities; *Access* is pre-entry and admission; *Participation* means transition and progression during studies; and *Progress and attainment* is defined as successful completion and preparation for employment.

## Partnerships and collaboration

In 2020, ECU will partner with leading education services providers in order to progress our strategies for *Pre-access* and *Access*. These include: Studiosity, Children's University Australia and the New North Education Initiative collaboration.

## Equity outcomes and strategies

### Pre-access

- Awareness-raising
- Aspiration-raising
- Building esteem

### Access

- Attraction
- Recruitment
- Other entry pathways

### Participation

- Understanding the university environment
- Building a sense of belonging
- Building academic literacy
- Providing financial support
- Build sense of identity
- Interventions for 'at risk'
- Improving progress (pass rates)

### Progress and attainment

- Career development
- Workplace learning
- Supporting better employment outcomes
- Developing professional identity
- Supporting further study

## Key activities

### Pre-access

Our outreach programs focus on secondary schools designated low-ICSEA (Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage), communities in our campus catchments, regional students, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Attraction of Regional and Remote Students project specifically aims to raise aspirations, promote pathways to and demystify higher education, and provide information on support such as orientation programs and scholarships.

### Access

The ECU Access program provides an automatic ATAR adjustment to students from eligible WA schools, to support the entry of students from areas of educational disadvantage.

Our Experience Based Entry Scheme allows applicants provide a portfolio of evidence for admission, which may include consideration of the impacts of adverse events, such as bushfires, on their secondary school results.

Our UniPrep enabling courses provide an alternative entry pathway while preparing students for university study.

ECU Equity Scholarships are also available to support students.

### Participation

ECU offers a wide range of services to support students' transition to university life, including an orientation program.

Our Student Success Officers can assist with adjusting to university study and identifying attainable goals. Peer Advisers and Learning Advisers at ECU's Academic Skills Centres can provide advice and learning support.

Students can access counselling, disability support services, health services, mentoring, and other support.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have access to additional support, funded by the Commonwealth's Indigenous Student Success Program.

### Progress and attainment

ECU Careers and Employability Services provides support to current students and alumni to support success upon graduation.

Resources include professional career advice and job search support via workshops, events, online resources, and one-on-one appointments.

ECU's volunteering program, VolunteerHub, connects students with opportunities to give back to the community while building their job skills.

Our mentoring initiatives include peer mentoring, for all new students, and alumni mentoring for current students who wish to connect with successful ECU alumni.

## Evaluation

### Pre-access

As most outreach activities are conducted with high school students, the delay between the activities and commencement of university study causes difficulties measuring the direct impacts. Therefore, these activities are usually evaluated through student and teacher surveys to measure improved aspirations and self-esteem.

### Access

These activities are evaluated in accordance with their priorities and methods. For example, ECU monitors the rates of retention, success and graduation for UniPrep graduates in bachelor degrees compared to students admitted via other pathways.

### Participation

These strategies have individual assessment mechanisms. ECU monitors its overall performance through student success and retention figures, including via benchmarking. Individual student progress is monitored so that additional support can be offered to those "at risk".

### Progress and attainment

The national Graduate Outcomes Survey provides valuable data to assess the satisfaction and success of our graduates. Although many factors contribute towards graduate success, this survey allows ECU to benchmark its progress in response to the initiatives undertaken.

