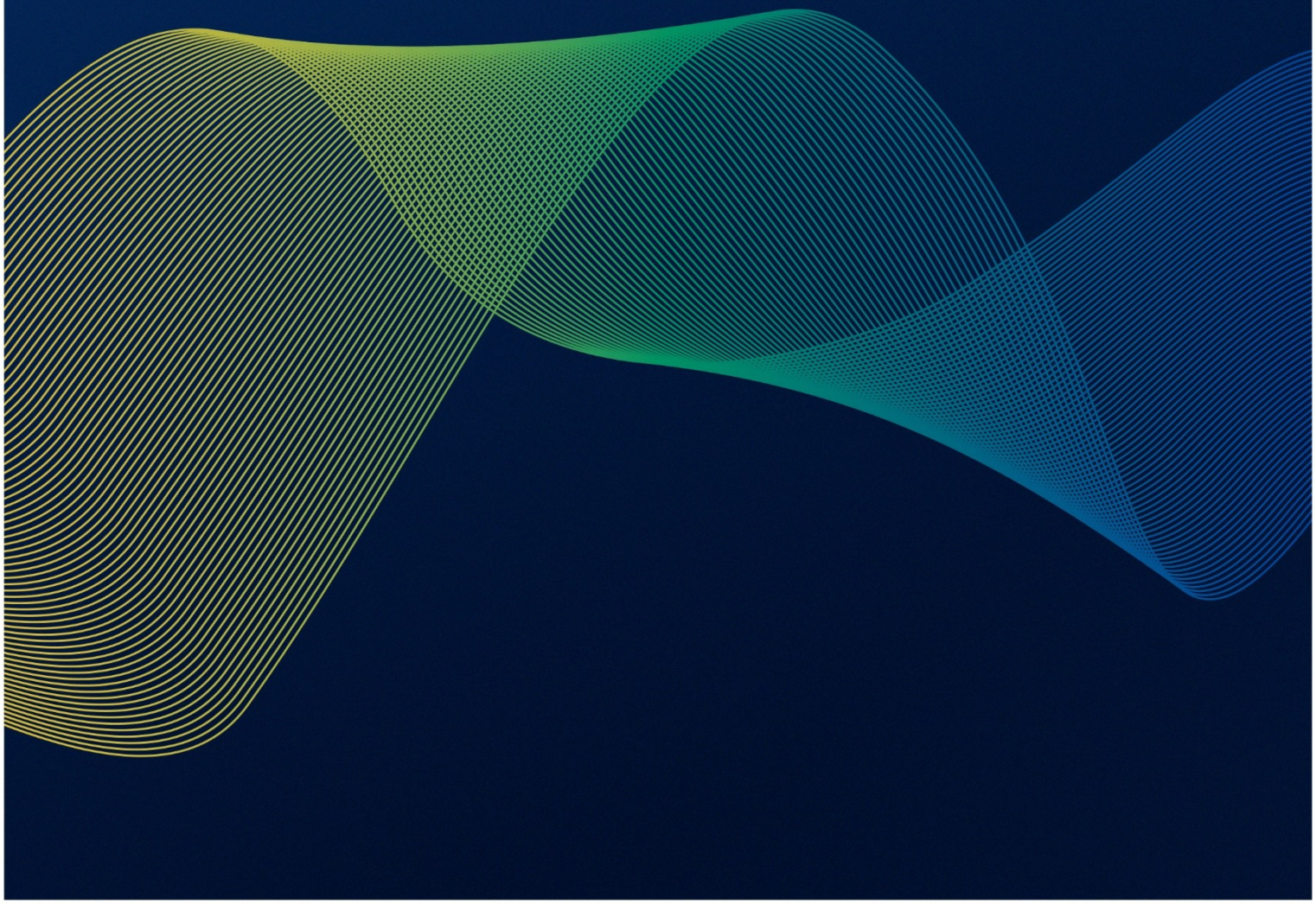
Australian Government

ATEC
Australian Tertiary
Education Commission

CQUniversity
AUSTRALIA

2027 mission based compact between the ATEC and Central Queensland University



Preface

This mission based compact is established between the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) and Central Queensland University (CQUniversity) in accordance with the *Universities Accord (Australian Tertiary Education Commission) Act 2026* (ATEC Act). This mission based compact highlights the significant contributions CQUniversity will make to the priorities outlined in the ATEC's interim Statement of Strategic Priorities (SSP) as well as how it will achieve its own strategic goals, advance its mission, and deliver outcomes for its students and local community.

Following good faith negotiation, the form and terms of this mission based compact have been determined by the ATEC with CQUniversity. In determining these matters, the ATEC has considered the strategic priorities and outcomes set out in the interim SSP, the purpose of compacts as set out in section 28 of the ATEC Act, and CQUniversity's goals, missions and strategic plan, geographic location and local community, as well as the effect (if any) the proposed terms may have on CQUniversity's academic freedom.

The terms of this compact are set out in section 2 and 3 of this document, and include CQUniversity's delivery of the commitments set out in that section.

The ATEC must assess CQUniversity's outcomes against the terms of this compact at least once per calendar year. For the purposes of paragraph 29(4)(b) of the ATEC Act, the ATEC's assessment methodology for this compact will require CQUniversity to demonstrate it has made **reasonable efforts** to progress the agreed terms of the compact. Assessment is proposed to occur during 2028.

Assessment will focus on the extent to which providers have actively progressed commitments, recognising that full attainment of all outcomes may not be achievable in all instances. In considering whether reasonable efforts have been made, the ATEC will take into account:

- the actions undertaken by CQUniversity to progress its commitments, including relevant steps, initiatives, activities, or planning work aimed at achieving the intended outcomes; and
- any factors it is aware of that are reasonably outside CQUniversity's control that may have affected its ability to deliver the commitments set out in the compact.

In making an assessment, the ATEC may require CQUniversity to provide relevant information consistent with subsection 30(2) of the ATEC Act.

The ATEC may conduct annual check-in meetings with CQUniversity as needed, to discuss CQUniversity progress towards meeting the terms of this compact. If CQUniversity has any concerns about their ability to meet the agreed terms of this compact, including as a result of matters reasonably outside CQUniversity's control, CQUniversity agrees to inform the ATEC as soon as possible. Any amendments to the compact terms may be made with mutual agreement of the parties.

As set out in section 30-45 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and section 46D(2) of the ATEC Act, assessment against the terms of this compact must be taken into account by the ATEC in making decisions on domestic and international student place allocations in 2028, helping to shape a high-performing, diverse higher education system.

In line with the ATEC Act, this mission based compact will be published on the ATEC's website within 28 days after the compact is entered into. It is the responsibility of the ATEC to ensure that the information in this compact is up to date.

This mission based compact is in effect from 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2027, unless varied or terminated earlier.

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Section 1: Context

Mission statement

CQUniversity is a regional, dual-sector and equity-focused university with a national footprint and a mission to expand access, participation, success and workforce outcomes through high-quality education, training and applied research. This mission is underpinned by the CQUniversity Strategic Plan 2024-2028, We Change Lives, which positions the University as Australia's most accessible and supportive university, committed to inclusive education, regional engagement, lifelong learning and positive social impact.

CQUniversity delivers at scale for communities historically under-represented in tertiary education, including regional and remote learners, First Nations peoples, low SES students, first-in-family students, students with disability, working learners and pathway-entry students. Through flexible delivery, regional campuses, online learning, supported distance education and integrated Vocational (VET) - Higher Education (HE) pathways, CQUniversity reduces structural and participation barriers while strengthening retention, success and completion outcomes regardless of location or background.

CQUniversity is committed to advancing First Nations self-determination, participation and success through First Nations-led governance, culturally responsive education, community partnerships, Indigenous knowledge and place-based engagement.

CQUniversity supports Australia's current and future workforce capability, particularly across regional communities served through its national campus network, partnerships and Regional University Study Hub arrangements. The University has a clear and established national role in developing regional workforce pipelines in priority sectors where persistent shortages intersect with regional access and equity challenges.

CQUniversity targets enrolment growth, delivery and partnerships to areas of demonstrated workforce and community need in health and education alongside engineering, resources, renewables, construction, agriculture and digital capability. By training students in-region and supporting them to completion and employment, CQUniversity contributes directly to regional workforce supply and retention, supporting national and Queensland Government priorities of regional economic development, health service sustainability, education, social inclusion, productivity and resilient communities.

CQUniversity contributes to Australia's international education objectives through a distributed national delivery model supporting regional participation, cultural diversity and global engagement. International education supports both educational outcomes and institutional sustainability, ensuring continuity of provision, particularly in high-cost and thin-market disciplines critical to regional communities. Through diversified international recruitment, transnational education partnerships and globally connected learning opportunities, CQUniversity strengthens regional capability while connecting regional Australia to international markets, industries and communities.

As one of Australia's largest dual-sector providers, CQUniversity contributes to national tertiary reform by strengthening collaboration between VET and HE through transparent credit and recognition of prior learning (RPL), integrated qualifications, embedded VET awards, degree apprenticeships and more seamless pathways across qualifications. This model supports lifelong learning, workforce mobility and the objectives of the Australian Universities Accord.

CQUniversity's applied, industry-connected and community-engaged research contributes to regional innovation, workforce development and national capability. Through strong partnerships with industry, government, communities and First Nations stakeholders, the University delivers research and research training that addresses regional challenges and contributes to economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Through this compact, CQUniversity will demonstrate how an integrated, dual-sector model can strengthen equitable participation, regional workforce capability, student success, tertiary harmonisation, international engagement and applied research impact, contributing to a more accessible, responsive and regionally connected tertiary education system for Australia.

Enrolment strategy and priorities

CQUniversity's enrolment strategy is focused on targeted, sustainable growth that aligns with national, state and regional workforce priorities, while improving access, participation and success for under-represented students. Growth will be directed to areas where CQUniversity can demonstrate both student demand and measurable workforce and equity impact.

As a regional, dual-sector and equity-focused university, CQUniversity is strongly positioned to support the objectives of the new funding system by growing in areas of demonstrated workforce need, strengthening VET-to-HE pathways, and supporting students who may not otherwise access tertiary education.

CQUniversity will prioritise growth in fields critical to regional and national productivity, including health, education, engineering and related technologies, resources, renewables, construction, trades and digital capability. CQUniversity will seek to grow places in Health and Education, reflecting persistent workforce shortages and strong regional demand in these disciplines.

Health will remain a major focus area, including nursing, allied health, medical imaging and other specialist workforce areas where regional and remote communities experience persistent shortages. Education will also remain a key priority, supporting regional teacher workforce pipelines and improving access to qualified educators in regional, rural and remote communities. CQUniversity's strategy recognises that training people in regional locations is critical to improving long-term regional workforce retention.

Growth will be supported by an integrated and sustainable portfolio, with expanded dual-sector offerings, including nested qualifications, standardised articulation, VET-HE pathways, and stackable or credit-bearing micro-credentials. This will provide more flexible entry and progression points for diverse learners, while supporting completion and lifelong learning. Ongoing rationalisation of low-demand or duplicative offerings will ensure the portfolio remains financially sustainable, relevant and aligned to national priorities.

CQUniversity's regional campuses will continue to play a central role in place-based participation, particularly for First Nations students, low SES students, regional and remote learners, students with disability, mature-age learners and working students. These campuses will be complemented by online, multimodal and supported distance delivery, including Regional University Study Hub partnerships where local provision is limited. This distributed delivery model enables CQUniversity to operate as a national provider of regional access with models increasingly aligned across VET and higher education to support a consistent student experience and enable seamless progression.

Student success and retention will remain central to the growth strategy. Growth planning will account for both new participation and continuing load generated by improved retention. CQUniversity will strengthen transition, early intervention and academic support for pathway-entry, online and equity cohorts, using data-informed approaches to improve progression and completion.

International education will remain an important component of CQUniversity's overall enrolment strategy and regional sustainability, with growth in commencements, diversification of markets, and exploration of transnational education partnerships aligned to quality, sustainability and government expectations.

Table 1: provides an overview of CQUniversity's key equity and participation cohorts and demonstrates the University's strong contribution to improving access and participation for students from under-represented and priority groups.

Student equity cohort	Higher education student headcount
Total equity students*	13,386
Low SES students	5,887
First Nations students	1,002
First-in-family students	7,944
Regional and remote	10,692
Students living with disability	1,469

**Students may be counted in more than one equity category.*

Table 2: provides an overview of CQUniversity's student age profile in 2025, demonstrating the University's strong role in supporting mature-age learners, lifelong learning, workforce participation and upskilling across both VET and higher education.

Age group	VET	HE
0-16	955	1
17-19	2,137	2,165
20-29	3,261	5,948
30-39	2,304	3,364
40-49	1,513	1,865
50-59	700	678
60+	167	-

Section 2: Performance domains

National, State/territory and regional priorities

A tertiary education system which meets Australia's current and future skills and knowledge needs

Vision

CQUniversity will support Australia's current and future skills needs by strategically aligning enrolment growth with national, state and regional workforce priorities. As a regionally headquartered Queensland university with a national footprint, CQUniversity will strengthen regional workforce pipelines, particularly in health and education, while supporting participation and skills development through delivery in New South Wales, Victoria, online environments, partnerships and Regional University Study Hubs. Growth will be directed to areas of demonstrated workforce demand, delivery capability, equity impact and regional benefit, leveraging its dual sector model, place-based delivery, and strong industry and community partnerships.

Action

CQUniversity will support national, state and regional priorities by aligning enrolment growth, delivery and research with demonstrated workforce need. Health and Education will form the primary Compact focus reflecting critical regional workforce shortages and maximising CQUniversity's established capability across regional campuses, multimodal delivery and industry partnerships. CQUniversity will collaborate with regional universities and the Northern Australia Universities Alliance to strengthen workforce pipelines across northern Australia.

The following targeted actions will be progressed in 2027:

Deliver targeted growth in Health and Education

- Grow enrolments in areas of workforce need across regional Queensland communities.
- Expand pathways across nursing, allied health, medical imaging, teacher education and related workforce areas, through dual-sector, regional, online and multimodal delivery.
- Increase participation for regional, First Nations, low SES, online and pathway-entry students, supporting both workforce supply and equity outcomes.
- Through the Retention Equity Program, build on improving retention, with Term 1-to-Term 2 re-enrolment for commencing domestic students increasing by nearly 4 percentage points since 2022 and Term 1-to-next-Term 1 re-enrolment by nearly 7 percentage points since 2021.
- Coordinate growth through integrated planning across teaching capacity, placements, student support, infrastructure, workforce demand and regional delivery models.

Strengthen regional Queensland workforce pipelines

- Align course offerings, delivery locations and student support to workforce demand.
- Expand place-based training pathways, enabling students to study locally.
- Partner with health services, schools, employers, communities and government to strengthen placements, employment pathways and regional workforce retention.

Leverage CQUniversity's national footprint to support workforce and participation outcomes

- Use CQUniversity's presence in New South Wales and Victoria to support, student diversity and institutional sustainability.
- Extend access through partnerships, online delivery and Regional Study Hubs.

Align broader capability with national priorities

- Strengthen CQUniversity's higher education, VET and research capability in national priority areas, with Health and Education the primary Compact growth focus, alongside:
    - Food security-research through the Institute of Future Farming, with a focus on agriculture, food production and regional research capability.
    - Digital and technology – applied artificial intelligence and digital skills programs aligned to emerging workforce needs.

- Housing and construction – engineering, construction and building trades, including apprenticeships and industry-aligned training.
- Renewables and the energy transition – renewable and future energy systems, industry-aligned training and applied research supporting regional transition.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
06 Health				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	5,587	Increase by up to 3%	Sustained growth in student enrolments in priority workforce fields, contributing to strengthened regional workforce supply and participation, by December 2027.
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	91.09%	Maintain or increase by up to 1%	Maintained or improved student success rates, supporting timely progression and completion in priority workforce disciplines, by December 2027.
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	77.41%	Maintain or increase by up to 1%	Improved student retention, particularly for regional and equity cohorts, contributing to stronger completion and workforce outcomes, by December 2027.
07 Education				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	1,749	Increase by up to 2%	Sustained growth in student enrolments in priority workforce fields, contributing to strengthened regional workforce supply and participation, by December 2027.
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	88.25%	Maintain or increase by up to 1%	Maintained or improved student success rates, supporting timely progression and completion in priority workforce disciplines, by December 2027.
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	73.75%	Maintain or increase by up to 1%	Improved student retention, particularly for regional and equity cohorts, contributing to stronger completion and workforce outcomes, by December 2027.

Indicators are for the domestic undergraduate student cohort. Success rate includes both commencing and continuing students.

First Nations

First Nations leadership, access, participation and success

Vision

CQUniversity will advance First Nations leadership, access, participation, success and self-determination through First Nations-led governance, community partnership and the Indigenous Engagement Division. First Nations voices will have meaningful influence over decisions affecting First Nations students, staff, communities, education and research, supported by representation in university governance and direct engagement with communities.

Leveraging its regional footprint, dual-sector capability and strong community partnerships, CQUniversity will expand culturally responsive pathways, flexible delivery and place-based engagement that support First Nations aspirations, workforce participation and community outcomes, with a focus on priority workforce areas including health and education while embedding First Nations perspectives, cultural authority and self-determination across learning, teaching, policy and institutional decision-making.

Action

CQUniversity has expanded Indigenous leadership within the Indigenous Engagement Division to 3 specialised directorates, strengthening Indigenous governance, policy oversight, accountability and institution-wide coordination. In 2027, CQUniversity will strengthen self-determination by increasing First Nations influence over decisions, priorities and investment affecting First Nations students and communities, including governance of Indigenous Student Success Program priorities and outcomes.

The University will establish an Indigenous Centre and progress development of a First Nations Coursework Academy, supported by the Yirragu Nulu Nhugul First Nations Precinct, to strengthen culturally responsive pathways, student support, retention and community engagement.

The following targeted actions will be progressed in 2027:

Strengthen First Nations governance and self-determination

- Embed First Nations representation and leadership across relevant University governance, policy and decision-making.
- Strengthen First Nations-led governance of ISSP priorities, investment and evaluation.
- Engage directly with First Nations communities and organisations, recognising that internal representation does not replace community voice, and use consultation and co-design where decisions affect particular communities.

Deliver enrolment growth through community partnerships and a coordinated tertiary education system

- Expand outreach linking schools, communities, First Nations organisations to tertiary education.
- Expand place-based cohort models that support facilitated admissions, coordinated student support and harmonised VET–higher education pathways aligned to community aspirations and workforce need.
- Strengthen pathways into priority workforce areas, particularly health and education, including through the First Nations Coursework Academy.

Improve retention through relational advising

- Redesign onboarding and transition processes for First Nations learners to improve communication, engagement and long-term success planning.
- Implement a co-designed relational student advising model through the Indigenous Centre, reducing administrative burden and increasing meaningful student engagement.
- Monitor participation, retention, progression and completion to identify where targeted intervention is required.

Drive success through integrated academic support and curriculum transformation

- Expand Indigenous Collaborative and Embedded Tutoring across priority units and cohort.
- Strengthen coordination between academic and student-support teams. Build dedicated Indigenous academic capability and strengthen First Nations curriculum and pedagogy to embed culturally responsive practice across learning and teaching.

By 2030, CQUniversity will seek measurable improvement in First Nations participation, retention, progression and attainment, supported by stronger First Nations governance, community partnership and culturally responsive student success.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
First Nations total enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	741	Increase by up to 1.5%	Increased participation of First Nations students through culturally responsive pathways and community engagement, supporting workforce participation and community outcomes, by December 2027.
First Nations success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	77.04%	Increase by up to 1.5%	Improved success outcomes for First Nations students through culturally safe, coordinated academic and student support models, by December 2027.
First Nations retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	71.07%	Increase by up to 1%	Improved retention of First Nations students, reflecting strengthened engagement, support and belonging across the student lifecycle by 2027.

Indicators are for the domestic undergraduate student cohort. Success rate includes both commencing and continuing students.

Equity

Increasing access, participation and attainment of under-represented groups and priority cohorts

Vision

CQUniversity will improve access, participation, retention, success and attainment for priority equity cohorts, including First Nations students, low SES students, regional and remote learners, students with disability, first-in-family students and women in non-traditional fields.

Through flexible delivery, dual-sector pathways, culturally responsive support and student-centred interventions, CQUniversity will continue to reduce participation and attainment gaps and strengthen outcomes for students and communities across its regional footprint. This includes expanding pathway and enabling programs that support participation in professional disciplines, including law and legal practice, contributing to social mobility, community capability, and national workforce objectives.

Action

CQUniversity will deliver evidence-based interventions to improve access, retention, progression and attainment for equity cohorts. Leveraging dual-sector capability, regional campuses, and multimodal delivery, CQUniversity will reduce barriers and improve outcomes at scale. With a high equity-weighted student cohort including regional, remote, first-in-family, low SES and online learners, CQUniversity has historically experienced retention rates below the sector average, particularly among commencing, remote and online students.

The Retention Equity Program (REP) brings together curriculum design, data-led early intervention, coordinated advising and integrated student support. Lead indicators show improving retention:

- Term 1-to-Term 2 re-enrolment for commencing domestic students increasing by nearly 4 percentage points since 2022.
- Term 1-to-next-Term 1 re-enrolment increasing by nearly 7 percentage points since 2021.

Recognising that regional and remote students experience different barriers and outcomes, CQUniversity will monitor these cohorts separately and tailor interventions accordingly.

By 2030, CQUniversity aims to narrow retention, progression and attainment gaps, with retention for each equity cohort at or above the sector average for comparable cohorts.

To support this vision, the following targeted actions will be progressed in 2027:

Deliver integrated equity retention and student success initiatives

- Continue the REP as the framework coordinating retention, progression and completion initiatives.
- Use data-informed approaches, to identify at-risk students early and support intervention.
- Align academic, student support and administrative reforms to improve equity outcomes.

Expand personalised advising and transition support

- Scale a coordinated academic, wellbeing and transition advising.
- Strengthen early identification support for equity and pathway-entry students.
- Expand onboarding, transition first-year and readiness initiatives.
- Continue outreach and pathway programs, to improve participation among regional, remote and under-represented communities.

Strengthen accessible, inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments

- Implement the One University Accessibility and Inclusion Plan to embed Universal Design for Learning principles across curriculum and delivery.
- Reduce structural barriers for students with diverse learning needs through curriculum renewal, accessible design and targeted academic skill development.
- Strengthen culturally responsive teaching practices and alignment with First Nations success strategies across learning and support environments.

Expand holistic support and strategic equity investment

- Expand academic, financial and wellbeing supports, including peer learning, mental health initiatives and targeted scholarships.
- Use needs-based and equity funding programs to scale evidence based- initiatives.
- Monitor student engagement, retention, success and satisfaction outcomes to inform continuous improvement and strengthen institutional accountability.

Measure

Indicator	Cohort	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Total enrolments	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2025	1,108	Increase by up to 1%	Increased participation of equity cohorts, improving access to tertiary education and supporting national participation targets, by December 2027.
Total enrolments	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2025	5,433	Increase by up to 1.5%	Increased participation of equity cohorts, improving access to tertiary education and supporting national participation targets, by December 2027.
Total enrolments	Regional	HESC – Verified 2025	8,279	Increase by up to 1%	Increased participation of equity cohorts, improving access to tertiary education and supporting national participation targets, by December 2027.
Total enrolments	Remote	HESC – Verified 2025	462	Increase by up to 2%	Increased participation of equity cohorts, improving access to tertiary education and supporting national participation targets, by December 2027.
Success	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	80.78%	Improvement of up to 1%	Improved success rates for equity cohorts, reducing attainment gaps and supporting progression and completion outcomes, by December 2027.
Success	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	86.42%	Improvement of up to 1%	Improved success rates for equity cohorts, reducing attainment gaps and supporting progression and completion outcomes, by December 2027.
Success	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	87.71%	Improvement of up to 1%	Improved success rates for equity cohorts, reducing attainment gaps and supporting progression and completion outcomes, by December 2027.

Indicator	Cohort	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Success	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	87.44%	Improvement of up to 1%	Improved success rates for equity cohorts, reducing attainment gaps and supporting progression and completion outcomes, by December 2027.
Retention	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	70.85%	Improvement of up to 1%	Improved retention for equity cohorts, contributing to reduced equity gaps and stronger completion outcomes, by December 2027.
Retention	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	72.87%	Improvement of up to 2%	Improved retention for equity cohorts, contributing to reduced equity gaps and stronger completion outcomes, by December 2027.
Retention	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	73.75%	Improvement of up to 1%	Improved retention for equity cohorts, contributing to reduced equity gaps and stronger completion outcomes, by December 2027.
Retention	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	69.53%	1% improvement	Improved retention for equity cohorts, contributing to reduced equity gaps and stronger completion outcomes, by December 2027.

Indicators are for the domestic undergraduate student cohort. Success rate includes both commencing and continuing students.

Quality teaching

Raising the quality and recognition of higher education teaching

Vision

CQUniversity will deliver high-quality, inclusive and student-centred teaching to support success for a diverse, regionally dispersed, equity-focused student cohort, including pathway-entry and non-traditional learners.

Through flexible, digitally enabled, applied and work-integrated learning, CQUniversity will provide connected pathways across VET and higher education, expanding access, participation and lifelong learning.

Curriculum and learning experiences will develop technical, professional and transferable capabilities aligned to priority workforce needs, enabling career readiness, mobility and ongoing skills development. CQUniversity will foster educational excellence through evidence informed and culturally responsive teaching, First Nations perspectives, student partnerships and co-creation, responsible AI and emerging technologies, and academic integrity.

Teaching quality and innovation will be strengthened through scholarly practice, learning analytics, student outcomes and continuous improvement, ensuring educational impact is demonstrated, recognised and amplified.

Action

CQUniversity will build on its strengths in blended delivery, dual sector education and regional access to enhance teaching quality, student success, belonging and workforce outcomes.

Enhance student-centred, inclusive and workforce-aligned curriculum design

- Embed contemporary curriculum design and renewal across VET and HE, informed by students, industry, communities and workforce needs.
- Expand work integrated learning (WIL), authentic assessment and industry co-design, connecting learning with contemporary workplace practice.
- Embed transferable capabilities, including communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, digital capability and AI literacy, supporting career adaptability and lifelong learning.
- Embed First Nations knowledges and perspectives, culturally responsive practice and inclusive pedagogies.
- Scale stackable credentials, RPL and credit recognition, enabling seamless VET-HE pathways.

Scale student success and support

- Expand proactive personalised support for first-year, online, First Nations, equity, pathway and VET students.
- Strengthen transition and early intervention and progression to improve retention, completion, belonging and student success.

Optimise digital, multimodal and AI-enabled delivery

- Advance digital learning and analytics to enhance online and blended learning, early intervention and outcomes for regional, remote and diverse learners.
- Embed responsible AI and emerging technologies across learning and assessment to strengthen academic integrity, innovation and workforce readiness.
- Leverage national online delivery to expand equitable access, participation and success.

Strengthen educational excellence and professional practice

- Build educator capability in inclusive pedagogy, assessment, multimodal delivery, learning analytics and responsible AI.
- Embed evidence-informed practice, critical reflection and innovation through scholarship of learning and teaching.

- Recognise and amplify teaching excellence, educational leadership and demonstrated impact through fellowships, awards and evidence-based recognition.

Drive continuous improvement

- Use student feedback, learning analytics and outcomes data to evaluate impact, refine teaching and improve student success.
- Strengthen evidence-informed assurance and review to improve student outcomes, workforce relevance, equity and teaching quality.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Overall educational experience	QILT SES – Verified 2025	78.1%	Maintain or increase by up to 1%	Sustained improvement in student-reported teaching quality and experience, supporting stronger engagement, retention and completion, by December 2027.
Skills development	QILT SES – Verified 2025	79.4%	Maintain or increase by up to 1%	Improved development of transferable and workforce-aligned skills, supporting graduate readiness and employability, by December 2027.
Teaching quality and engagement	QILT SES – Verified 2025	78.5%	Maintain or increase by up to 1%	Improved consistency of teaching quality across delivery modes and student cohorts, contributing to enhanced student engagement, satisfaction and learning outcomes, by December 2027.
Student support and services	QILT SES – Verified 2025	74.9%	Maintain or increase by up to 1%	Strengthened student support and service provision, contributing to improved retention, success and student experience outcomes, particularly for regional and equity cohorts, by December 2027.

Joined-up tertiary system

Strengthening collaboration and coordination between vocational education and training (VET) and higher education

Vision

CQUniversity will leverage its dual-sector model and regional footprint to lead a more joined-up tertiary system, strengthening collaboration and coordination between VET and higher education to enable seamless, student-centred movement across qualifications and throughout a working life.

By 2030, CQUniversity will expand integrated and stackable pathways, including qualifications uniquely enabled by dual-sector provision: VET qualifications embedded within undergraduate and postgraduate awards, integrated diplomas to degree models, and degree apprenticeships co designed with employers.

Through transparent credit, RPL, reverse articulation, place-based partnerships and targeted transition support, CQUniversity will reduce duplication and barriers to participation for regional, remote, First Nations, migrant, equity and working learners.

CQUniversity will align curriculum, pathways and support with industry, communities and government to meet regional and national workforce priorities, strengthen lifelong learning and demonstrate approaches to national tertiary reform.

Action

Through its dual-sector model and regional reach, CQUniversity will scale a joined up tertiary system that connects VET and HE, reduces duplication and enables learners to move efficiently between education, training and work.

Build connected pathways

- Scale transparent credit, RPL and advanced standing across priority disciplines, reducing duplication and time to completion.
- Expand published credit precedents and articulation arrangements, building on established agreements commonly providing 6-8 units of credit, providing a minimum of one-year advanced standing.
- Grow bidirectional pathways, including reverse articulation Trade Practice qualification: recognising HE learning towards VET qualifications.
- Expand RPL for migrants and newcomers, recognising overseas skills, industry experience and prior learning where Australian qualifications are absent, accelerating pathways to qualifications and employment.

Grow dual-sector and integrated offerings

- Pilot integrated foundation models where first-year study contributes simultaneously to a VET diploma and bachelor degree, enabling students to exit with a qualification or progress directly into second year. Initial pilots will include Business and Renewable Energy Management and Sustainability.
- Develop degree apprenticeships with employer partners in priority sectors, combining paid work with higher education.
- Expand embedded VET qualifications across undergraduate and postgraduate awards.
- Increase nested and stackable qualifications with flexible entry and exit points supporting lifelong learning, upskilling and reskilling.

Strengthen transitions, success and attainment

- Provide targeted transition, academic and peer support for pathway entry, vocational and non-traditional learners across regional, online and blended environments.
- Embed academic, digital and learning capabilities to strengthen progression, retention and completion.

- Monitor pathway participation, credit and RPL uptake, retention, completion and time to qualification to target intervention and demonstrate impact

Deepen place-based partnerships and workforce alignment

- Strengthen partnerships with schools, TAFEs, industry and communities to expand participation and progress.
- Develop and enhance pathway agreements aligned with regional workforce priorities across regional Queensland.
- Align institutional pathway and credit recognition approaches with national tertiary reform, demonstrating scalable models for a connected Australian tertiary system.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Student participation Number of students entering Bachelor of Nursing through a VET pathway	CQU internal data – 2025	413	Increase pathway commencements by up to 5%	Increased participation of regional, First Nations, and equity learners entering nursing through alternative entry pathways, by December 2027
Scale and transferability Number of additional disciplines with VET-HE pathway models based on the Nursing pathway framework	CQU internal data – 2025	4 disciplines (Nursing, Education, Business, Information Technology)	At least 2 additional disciplines ready for implementation	Creation of a scalable institutional framework for joined-up tertiary pathways capable of expansion into other workforce priority disciplines, by December 2027

Research

Sustaining national capability and supporting innovation through research and research training

Vision

CQUniversity will strengthen national capability and regional innovation through applied, industry-connected and community-engaged research that delivers impact for regional, rural and remote Australia. Research activity will focus on strategic priorities including regional health and wellbeing, education systems, workforce development, sustainable agriculture and food systems, energy transition, environmental resilience, and digitally enabled regional development. Our research positions the university strongly in international impact measures, such as THE University Impact Rankings.

CQUniversity has a distinct focus on applied regional research delivered via strong partnerships with industry, government, communities and First Nations stakeholders, to enhance workforce capability, regional development and quality of life. CQUniversity is building research workforce capacity through an innovative system of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) curriculum pathways and industry co-investment models that enable more Australians to participate in research training.

Action

CQUniversity will strengthen its position as a leading regional university for applied, industry-connected and community-engaged research that delivers measurable social, economic and environmental outcomes. Through strategic research themes, CQUniversity will strengthen research excellence, research training, regional partnerships and innovation aligned to national and regional priorities.

The following targeted actions will be progressed in 2027:

Strengthen regional research partnerships and translation

- Expand collaboration with industry, government agencies, health services, Cooperative Research Centres, agricultural producers and resource sector organisations to support applied research, innovation and real-world impact.
- Increase research translation and engagement activities that strengthen workforce capability, regional productivity and community outcomes, linking research outcomes to practice and service delivery.
- Support place-based research partnerships that respond to regional challenges and emerging economic opportunities.

Focus research capability and strategic investment

- Align research co-investment and capability development to CQUniversity's strategic research themes, including regional health and wellbeing, sustainable agriculture and food systems, energy transition and environmental resilience.
- Build cross-cutting capability in digital technologies, data, interdisciplinary research and regional collaboration to support innovation and sustainable regional development.
- Strengthen institutional research capability, collaboration and impact through targeted infrastructure, partnerships and workforce development.

Expand research training and HDR pathways

- Our applied, regionally focussed research is attractive to non-traditional, domestic HDR students (e.g. matured aged, industry professionals). To facilitate greater participation in research training, we will expand places in novel curriculum pathways such as the six-month introductory Graduate Certificate of Research qualification and PhD (Industry) degree, and co-funded industry scholarships through the Elevate the Regions program.
- Continue to improve HDR supervision, cohort-based training, thesis completion support and industry-connected research experiences aligned to workforce and community priorities.

Advance First Nations-led and community-engaged research

- Implement the University's First Nations Research Strategy to strengthen co-designed research, Indigenous knowledge, self-determination and inclusive regional development.
- Expand community-engaged research approaches that strengthen collaboration, participation and benefit-sharing with First Nations communities and regional stakeholders.
- Expand the Jilbay HDR Academy for First Nations research training pathways.

Through these actions, CQUniversity will strengthen research capability, regional innovation and research training outcomes that contribute to Australia's future prosperity, resilience and wellbeing.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
HDR domestic enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	476	Increase by up to 1%	Increased participation of domestic candidates in HDR programs, particularly in priority research areas and regional contexts, by December 2027
HDR domestic completions	HESC – Verified 2024	53	Increase by up to 1%	Sustained growth in HDR completions, contributing to a stronger pipeline of regionally focused research graduates aligned with workforce and industry needs, by December 2027
Graduate Certificate Research domestic completions	HESC – Verified 2025	31	Increase by up to 5%	Sustained growth in GCR completions, enabling more Australians to qualify for entry into doctoral research programs by December 2027

Section 3: Course and campus changes

Course closures

Before closing any undergraduate or postgraduate course of study in which Commonwealth supported students have been enrolled for more than two years without its immediate replacement by a course of study that leads to the same occupation or provides a similar specialised skill (including any suspension of intake of students for more than one consecutive academic year), the provider must notify the ATEC of its plans in writing.

Notification of actual or potential closures must occur as soon as reasonably possible before final decisions to close courses are made, or before any information on the potential course closure is made public (whichever comes first). Notification must occur via email to studentprofiles@atec.gov.au as information on proposed course closures becomes available.

Providers must provide a list of all courses proposed for closure and a short justification (e.g. low student demand).

Where a proposed course closure falls within one or more of the areas of Commonwealth concern, providers must identify the relevant courses and provide additional information. Areas of Commonwealth concern include whether the course:

- prepares students for an occupation experiencing a skills shortage
- is in a field where closure may create a skills shortage, including where the provider is the sole or dominant national provider
- is a specialised course linked to a regional economy
- is in a field identified as an ATEC priority in the interim SSP:
  - health, aged care and disability support
  - education, including early childhood education and care
  - sovereign capability and food security, including advanced manufacturing and critical minerals
  - digital and technology
  - housing and construction
  - climate change and Net Zero transformation
- is funded under a specific Commonwealth initiative such as Nuclear-Powered Submarine places.

Where a closure relates to one or more Commonwealth concerns as listed above, the provider must provide information on:

- the expected high-level impacts on staff and students arising from the closures, including numbers of students and staff affected, and how these impacts are being mitigated including alternative options available for students
- the consultation undertaken with staff, students, community and other stakeholders
- how the provider is meeting relevant requirements under the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, including the proposed teach out provisions to ensure existing students can complete their chosen course of study
- potential options to retain the course, including through cooperation with another provider or the movement of Commonwealth supported places to another provider (where applicable).

If the ATEC has any concerns about the potential course closure based on the information provided, the provider must engage with any discussions that the ATEC may seek to have, to reach a mutually agreeable arrangement with the provider regarding the course closure.

Where a provider determines that a closure does not relate to any identified Commonwealth concerns, they are only required to notify ATEC of the name of the course being closed via email to studentprofiles@atec.gov.au and classify it as a routine/low concern closure.

Campus changes

Providers must notify the ATEC if the provider proposes to enrol Commonwealth supported students in a course of study at a new campus or educational facility, or if the provider proposes to close a campus where Commonwealth supported students are enrolled.