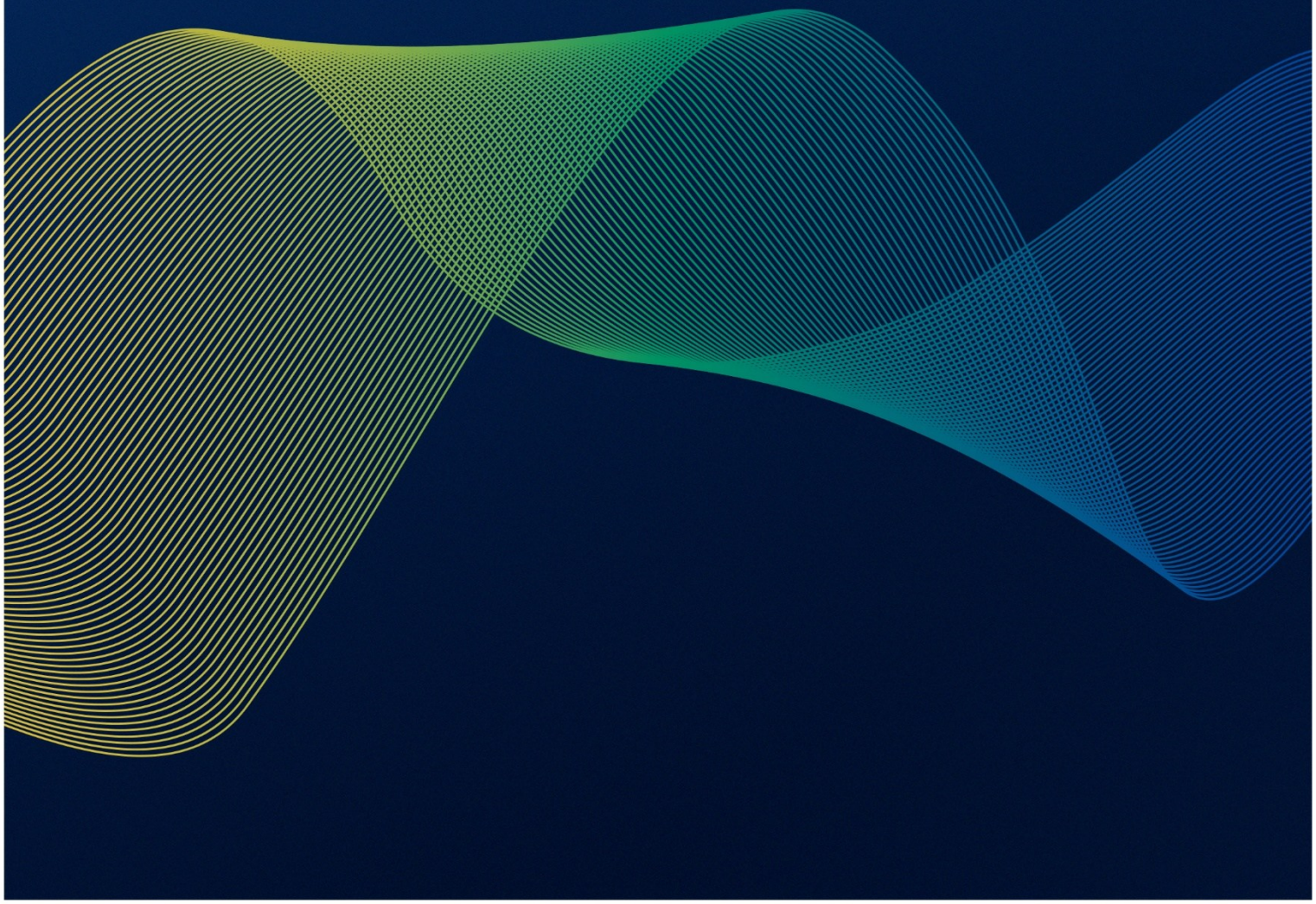
Australian Government

ATEC
Australian Tertiary
Education Commission

Federation University

2027 mission based compact between the ATEC and Federation University Australia



Preface

This mission based compact is established between the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) and Federation University Australia in accordance with the *Universities Accord (Australian Tertiary Education Commission) Act 2026* (ATEC Act). This mission based compact highlights the significant contributions Federation University Australia 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 Federation University Australia. 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 Federation University Australia's goals, missions and strategic plan, geographic location and local community, as well as the effect (if any) the proposed terms may have on Federation University Australia's academic freedom.

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

The ATEC must assess Federation University Australia'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 Federation University Australia 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 Federation University Australia 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 Federation University Australia'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 Federation University Australia to provide relevant information consistent with subsection 30(2) of the ATEC Act.

The ATEC may conduct annual check-in meetings with Federation University Australia as needed, to discuss Federation University Australia's progress towards meeting the terms of this compact. If Federation University Australia has any concerns about their ability to meet the agreed terms of this compact, including as a result of matters reasonably outside Federation University Australia's control, Federation University Australia 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

Federation University Australia's (Federation) Strategic Plan aims to deliver the transformative education, training and research that our regions need to thrive.

Australia's equity university

The only university headquartered in regional Victoria, we serve communities from Wimmera to Gippsland. We pride ourselves on being Australia's equity university:

- 66% students meet at least one equity criterion
- 39% first-in-family
- two-thirds are women
- over half study part-time while balancing work, family and other responsibilities

Federation is also first nationally for TAFE-to-university pathways, with 26.5% of our higher education learners progressing from TAFE in 2024. But genuine equity isn't just a place at university – it's support to succeed. We're ranked first in Victoria for undergraduate support (QILT), with:

- a data-informed approach to identify and support at-risk students early
- wraparound academic success support, through Federation Access Studies
- community-led wellbeing and success support through our First Peoples Education Centre
- cost-of-living help, including free breakfasts, food pantry and professional clothing, scholarships and paid Co-op placements on campus.

Together, this approach has reduced attrition from 27% to 18.7% in 3 years.

Industry-connected education

Industry-connected education delivers job-ready graduates – and helps generate good jobs for our regions. Our Co-operative Model ('Co-op') has been developed with over 1,800 industry partners and embeds real-world experience:

- courses are co-designed with industry
- learning is co-delivered with industry
- placements offer credit-bearing real-world workplace experience, often paid. Importantly, we actively secure placements for every student – ensuring equitable opportunity.

In 2026, every Federation course – from certificate to PhD – includes at least one industry-connected element, with a five-year plan for full Co-op integration.

Federation anchors Australia's largest regional technology park, supporting 64 companies, 2,200 jobs and over $700 million in annual economic activity – making Ballarat the only regional net exporter of tech services. We've expanded this model across Gippsland and Horsham, with parks promoting direct industry-university collaboration while supporting local jobs.

The result: Federation ranks number one and two for Victorian postgraduates and undergraduate employment (QILT).

Strong communities

Regional universities play a critical workforce role, with almost 70% of bachelor-level graduates from Regional Universities Network institutions going on to work in regional Australia. This contribution is increasingly important given Jobs and Skills Australia's identification of persistent skills shortages and workforce constraints across regional communities. Yet ongoing extraction of talent to metropolitan areas continues to drain regional communities of skilled graduates.

By 2034, Federation's regions will require an additional 280,000 workers, including thousands of nurses, teachers and allied health professionals. Meeting this demand requires accessible opportunity that keeps talent local.

We're taking innovative approaches to help address these gaps, including our 'earn and learn' E-BITE program, which fast-tracks education support staff currently employed in schools to become qualified teachers. Similarly, our community health clinics are student-led and offer low-cost services in physiotherapy, psychology and speech pathology to over 2,500 patients – directly reducing long wait-times for care. We're also progressing a new Medical School, supported by flexible delivery and GP practice placements in underserved communities.

Federation's connection to its communities is reflected with an estimated $1.72 billion in economic impact every year, encompassing both direct and skills-based contributions.

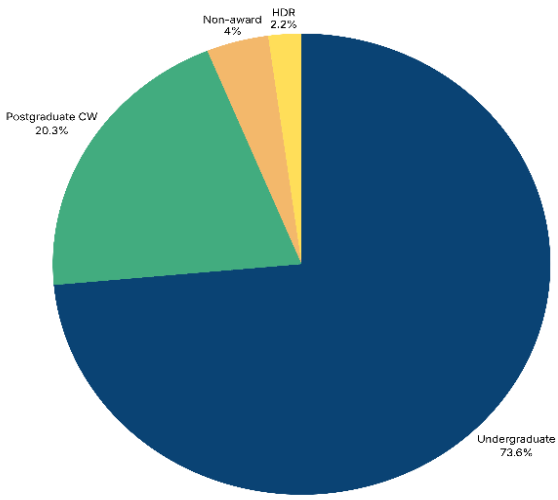
Enrolment strategy and priorities

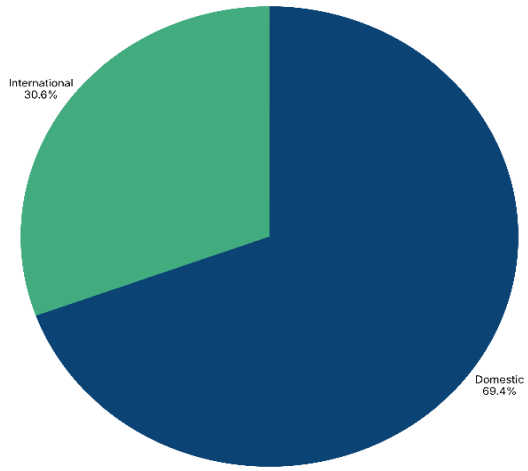
Our students

Reflecting our equity focus, 85% of students are direct application, returning to study, while balancing work and caring responsibilities – particularly women. Their course choices reflect this local focus, with strong enrolments in health, education and social services. IT and science are also popular, supported by Co-op placements providing employment pathways within Federation's Technology Parks, which support 2,200 plus jobs, with global digital technology, advanced manufacturing companies

Figure 1: Student mix – study level, 2025.

Figure 2: Student mix – domestic and international, 2025.



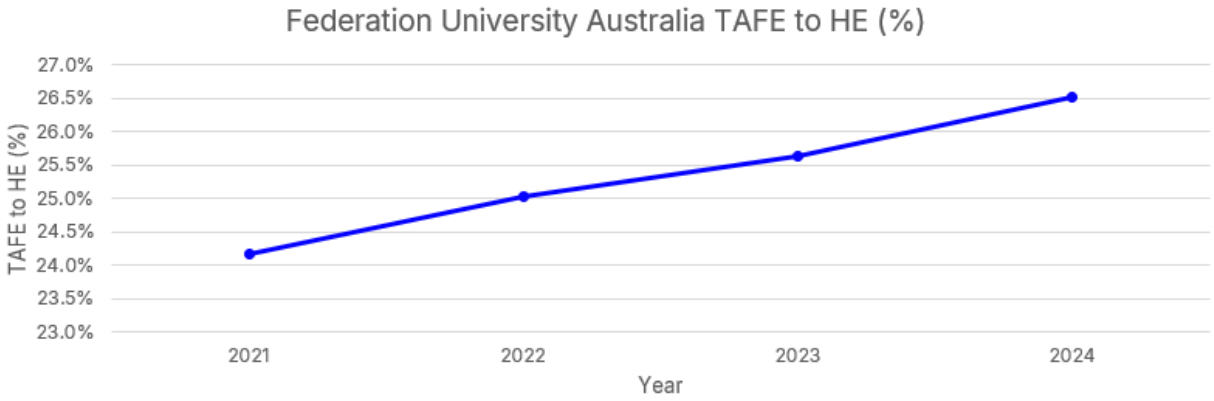


Note: Non-award largely encompasses our Federation Access Studies (FAST) enabling course.

Table 1: Top higher education courses, 2025. Further detail on top courses and workforce connection can be found in Attachment 1: Projected Workforce Demand and Priority Occupations.

Top Ten Higher Education Courses
Bachelor of Nursing
Bachelor of Education
Bachelor of Information Technology
Bachelor of Psychological Science
Bachelor of Science
Master of Social Work
Master of Technology
Bachelor of Engineering Technology
Bachelor of Business
Federation Access Studies (FAST) – academic enabling course for students entering university

Figure 3: Percentage of students admitted to HE with prior TAFE qualification. Data source: Department of Education.



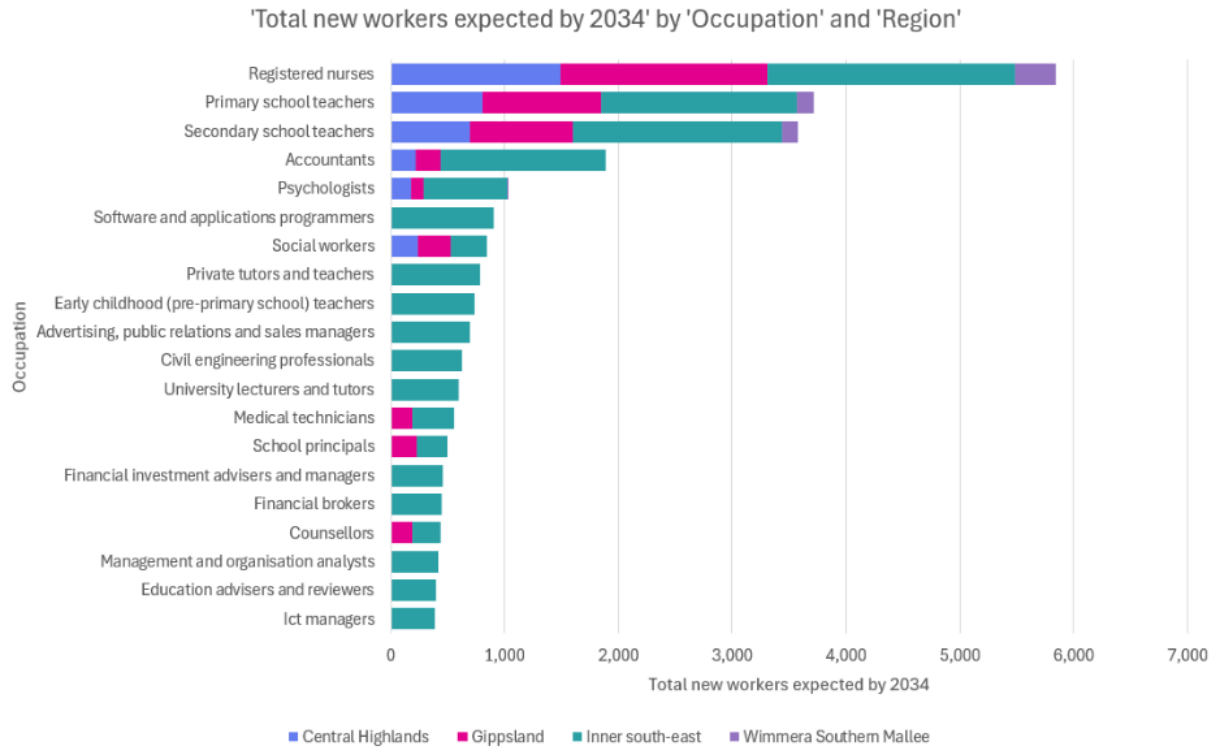
This alignment between student and workforce needs shapes where and how we deliver education. We have campuses in Ballarat, Horsham, Ararat, Gippsland, Melbourne and Berwick. Through our Campus Vision 2023-2030, we'll continue serving these regions while concentrating more high-enrolment activity into key population areas like Ballarat CBD and Traralgon – improving access while strengthening regional economies. In parallel, our partnership with Online Education Services expands access through high-quality online delivery for rural and remote learners beyond our campuses.

Domestic growth

Federation's enrolment strategy is ambitious yet evidence-based, with growth aligned to workforce demand and increased participation – consistent with this compact's aims.

Jobs and Skills Australia projections show sustained local demand across priority sectors, alongside a widening gap in graduate supply. This is reinforced by our Co-op Industry Advisory Boards, which provide direct insight into current and emerging gaps, including technology services growth above Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) trends in our Tech Parks.

Figure 4: Total new workers required by 2034, Jobs Skills Australia.



Federation's enrolment priorities are explicitly targeted toward addressing these gaps. This is supported by strong domestic growth, with university commencements up 8.44% in 2025.

This growth is underpinned by improved student success, alongside unmet demand in regional and outer-metropolitan areas – demonstrating when opportunities and support are available locally, students respond.

We aim to grow university places from 21,000 by 2030, ensuring we can continue to deliver the skilled workers our communities urgently need. This will help lift post-secondary participation in our regions from 25% to 32% in the shorter-term, supporting the Government's ambition of 80% by 2050. It'll also secure the long-term stability of critical programs in thin markets like mining engineering (408% growth in enrolment in 5 years) – the only qualification of its kind in Victoria – and mainframe systems, Australia's sole pipeline for banks and large-scale hardware operators. As the only higher education provider in many of our communities, Federation is critical to expanding local opportunity, addressing workforce shortages and driving long-term regional prosperity.

International education

Federation's international strategy encompasses modest growth aligned with local needs. Our goal is not significant expansion but rebuilding our international cohort in ways that support our regional mission, including sustaining the revenue base needed to support our domestic students.

We've set an internal cap on international students to 35% or less – designed to limit reliance on international revenue while ensuring student outcomes and local labour market integration.

In recent years, Federation has significantly strengthened quality and compliance, ensuring a focus on genuine students. In response to recent changes to visa settings, Federation will further diversify – expanding transnational partnerships and refining onshore recruitment. This includes prioritising courses with critical skills shortages and working with high-quality agents in South-East Asia.

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

Our 2040 Strategic Plan will deliver long-term prosperity for the communities we proudly serve. Through accessible education we are expanding industry aligned training and boosting applied research capacity, giving employers direct pathways to talent, technology and innovation.

Through our Co-op model, we'll further integrate learning and work, ensuring students graduate work-ready. This approach will help meet the projected demand for 280,000 additional workers in our regions by 2034, an essential contribution in achieving State and Federal Government economic goals and stronger gross regional product outcomes.

Action

Education aligned to local needs

We will continue to align all course development and delivery with national and state priorities, Victorian Skills Plan and Jobs and Skills Australia data (lag data), complemented by engagement with our Industry Advisory Boards in health, education, energy and technology (lead data) – helping build the skilled workforce our regions require to grow and prosper. 80.3% of our graduates are aligned with priority workforce fields, from healthcare and education to engineering, digital technologies, business and clean energy.

Impact: Course offerings are closely aligned to workforce needs, supporting national priorities and addressing local skills gaps.

Stronger workforce readiness with industry-connected learning

We'll scale Federation's Co-operative Education Model (Co-op) to strengthen alignment between education and workforce demand. Through co-design and co-delivery with industry, and expanded access to paid, credit-bearing placements, we'll ensure more students gain workplace experience while developing the skills employers want. Federation recorded 86.0% overall employer satisfaction in the latest QILT university benchmark, ranking us #1 against the Regional Universities Network (RUN).

Impact: A stronger pipeline of work-ready graduates with the skills and experience employers need.

Stronger workforce readiness with industry-connected learning

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Impact: A stronger pipeline of work-ready graduates with the skills and experience employers need.

Expand innovative approaches to workforce shortages

We will create more opportunities for people to skill and reskill in areas of workforce need – expanding innovative pathways including E-BITE and the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education. Designed for people already working in education and care settings, these programs enable participants to qualify as teachers and educators while continuing employment. Additionally, our community allied health clinics are skilling future practitioners while reducing wait-times for local patients, having already delivered over 5,000 appointments in 2026.

Impact: More people equipped to fill critical workforce gaps, improving access to essential services and supporting the long-term sustainability of our communities.

Research that delivers regional impact

We'll continue to focus our research on the distinct needs and opportunities of our communities. Through the Australian-first Centre for Regional Education, Research and Development, the Health Innovation and Transformation Centre, and the Centre for New Energy Transition Research among others, we'll generate evidence-based solutions that support stronger local communities and industries.

Impact: Research that delivers tangible benefits for our regions in national priority areas.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
06 Health				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	2,742	3,291	Continued growth in healthcare enrolments, in line with our domestic enrolment targets set out in our Growth Plan 2026-2030.
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	93.54%	95.00%	Improved student success in health programs – in line with our broader success rate targets – supporting stronger academic outcomes and a more capable future health workforce.
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	78.90%	80.00%	Improved student retention in health programs – in line with our broader retention targets – supporting more students to complete, and building a strong local workforce.
07 Education				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	1,796	2,100	Continued growth in education enrolments, in line with our domestic enrolment targets set out in our Growth Plan 2026-2030.
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	88.59%	90.00%	Improved student success in education programs – in line with our broader success rate targets – supporting stronger academic outcomes and a more capable future health workforce.
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	79.52%	82.00%	Improved student retention in education programs – in line with our broader retention targets – supporting more students to complete, and building a strong local workforce.
01 Natural and Physical Sciences				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	473	520	Continued growth in natural and physical science enrolments, in line with our domestic enrolment targets set out in our Growth Plan 2026-2030.
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	80.88%	85.00%	Improved student success in natural and physical science programs – in line with our broader success rate targets – supporting stronger academic outcomes and a more capable future health workforce.
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	63.64%	75.00%	Improved student retention in natural and physical science programs – in line with our broader retention targets – supporting more students to complete, and building a strong local workforce.

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

To ensure First Peoples' regional learners and communities are empowered from aspiration to graduation and beyond, through First Peoples' leadership, self-determination, inclusive learning and community collaboration with a whole-of-university approach.

We aim to achieve this through strong First Peoples' leadership and governance, prioritising First Peoples' voices in strategic planning, reciprocal community partnerships, culturally enriched and immersive teaching, learning and physical environments.

These approaches will enable individuals and communities in our regions to thrive – achieving their educational, professional and personal goals through empowerment and access to quality TAFE and higher education.

Action

Our First Peoples' Strategy is guided by 7 principles that embed First Peoples' self-determination, and reconciliation across Federation.

Governance, leadership and whole-of-university approach

Place self-determination at the centre of decision-making, strengthening First Peoples' leadership at all levels and supporting community-led governance:

- Establish First Peoples' Advisory Board to strengthen accountability and partnership.
- Maintain First Peoples representation on University Council.
- Maintain Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor, First Peoples.

Community, partnerships and culture

Advance self-determination and partnerships with communities, strengthening cultural immersion across learning and teaching with respect for community knowledge, leadership and data sovereignty:

- Establish First Peoples Advisory Board.
- Maintain First Peoples Community and Industry Partnership Broker.
- Strengthen partnerships with key First Peoples' organisations and communities.

Students

Prioritise First Peoples' engagement and success through culturally-immersive and student-centred approaches:

- Maintain First Peoples Education Centres across Horsham, Ballarat, Berwick and Gippsland.
- Continue dedicated camps and aspiration days for young First Peoples to connect to community, and explore post-school pathways.
- Continue delivering programs reflecting community priorities and aspirations, for example the Graduate certificate in social and community services which has increased to 52 postgraduate coursework First Peoples' enrolments in 2026.

Workforce

A strong First Peoples workforce, increasing recruitment, retention and leadership, supported by culturally-rich workplaces and pathways grounded in self-determination and professional excellence:

- Maintain First Peoples Workforce Partner.
- Continue implementing First Peoples Workforce Sub-Strategy.

Teaching and learning

Continue embedding First Peoples' knowledges and pedagogies across curriculum, building staff capability and partnering with communities to co-design learning that advances self-determination and reconciliation, while increasing First Peoples academic numbers, helping close the city-regional gap:

- Establish a Cultural Inclusion and Capability Framework.
- Maintain Senior Lecturer, First Peoples Cultural Capabilities.
- Implementation of First Peoples' Teaching and Learning Sub-Strategy.
- Continue providing targeted community-based learning tailored to our regions and context.

Impact: First Peoples success increased from 64.0% in 2024 to 81.1% in 2025 for undergraduate students.

Research and innovation

Advance First Peoples' leadership, knowledge systems and innovation through self-determined and community-led research:

- Maintain First Peoples Research and Innovation Committee.
- Implement First Peoples Research Sub-Strategy.

Reconciliation and truth telling

- Advance meaningful reconciliation centred on truth-telling and partnership, actively contributing to justice, equity and Treaty.

Impact: First Peoples' leadership and self-determination are embedded across Federation, strengthening participation, success and long-term outcomes.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
First Nations total enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	115	185	Aim to increase First Peoples enrolments by 5%-10% each year.
First Nations success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	74.27%	80.00%	Aim to increase First Peoples success rate by 1%-2% each year.
First Nations retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	68.42%	70.00%	Aim to increase First Peoples retention rate by 1%-2% each year.

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

To expand opportunity and unlock potential for more underrepresented students, with a strong focus on learners from regional and remote communities, low socioeconomic backgrounds and learners with disability.

As a proudly regional university, we deliver an inclusive, connected and student-centred experience that ensures more learners can study locally.

Through a coordinated and evidence-informed approach, Federation removes barriers to participation, strengthens belonging and early engagement, while delivering proactive, personalised support across the student lifecycle.

In doing so, we will improve access, retention and success for equity cohorts in regional areas to enable stronger communities and regional prosperity.

Action

Expanding access through inclusive pathways

We will expand alternative and enabling pathways for regional and remote learners, students from low SES backgrounds and students with disability. With 40% of undergraduate students the first in their family to attend university and 44% studying part-time, we will strengthen targeted outreach with schools, TAFEs and community partners, provide more flexible applications for non-scored learners, and improve pathway visibility, navigation and decision-making through enhanced digital tools and student support.

Impact: Greater participation and success among priority equity cohorts, expanding opportunity for individuals and communities.

Enhance onboarding and first-year transition

We will strengthen onboarding and first-year transition by streamlining application and enrolment processes, fostering early connection with peers and staff through structured transition activities, and embedding culturally safe and inclusive practices across transition programs.

Impact: More students successfully progressing confidentially through their first year with a stronger sense of connection.

Improving student success through proactive support

We are amplifying the speed of early intervention through the innovation of our internally developed AI tool flagging students at risk delivering proactive support for students at risk of disengaging, including targeted pre census outreach, and progressing coordinated, culturally responsive intervention. By providing timely and tailored support, including intensive case management where needed, we'll help more students stay on track and achieve their goals. We will strengthen flexible and inclusive support for students with disability and neurodiverse learners, delivering targeted, culturally responsive support models.

Impact: Reduced student attrition and improved student success.

An empowering digital experience that enables student success

We will establish a personalised digital experience that prioritises the information most relevant to each student, making support easier to find, understand and use. By guiding students to the right support at the right time, we'll help strengthen confidence, connection and belonging. Recognising access depends not only on services available, but on how easily students can navigate them, we'll improve the visibility, coherence and usefulness of support, services and opportunities across the student lifecycle, focusing on scalable, high-impact digital solutions that reduce complexity and extend reach.

Impact: Improved student success through earlier engagement with support, reduced barriers to access and greater confidence in navigating services.

Measure

Indicator	Cohort	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Total enrolments	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2025	1,301	1,576	Equity cohorts are expected to grow in line with our domestic enrolment targets set out in our Growth Plan 2026-2030.
Total enrolments	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2025	1,923	2,375	Equity cohorts are expected to grow in line with our domestic enrolment targets set out in our Growth Plan 2026-2030.
Total enrolments	Regional	HESC – Verified 2025	3,357	4,065	Equity cohorts are expected to grow in line with our domestic enrolment targets set out in our Growth Plan 2026-2030.
Total enrolments	Remote	HESC – Verified 2025	26	33	Equity cohorts are expected to grow in line with our domestic enrolment targets set out in our Growth Plan 2026-2030.
Success	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	85.76%	90.00%	By 2030, we expect there will be no measurable gap in success rates between equity groups and the overall cohort.
Success	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	87.64%	90.00%	By 2030, we expect there will be no measurable gap in success rates between equity groups and the overall cohort.
Success	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	89.57%	90.00%	By 2030, we expect there will be no measurable gap in success rates between equity groups and the overall cohort.
Success	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	86.44%	90.0%	By 2030, we expect there will be no measurable gap in success rates between equity groups and the overall cohort.
Retention	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	72.70%	85.80%	By 2030, we expect there will be no measurable gap in retention rates between equity groups and the overall cohort.
Retention	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	77.99%	85.80%	By 2030, we expect there will be no measurable gap in retention rates between equity groups and the overall cohort.
Retention	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	77.81%	85.80%	By 2030, we expect there will be no measurable gap in retention rates between equity groups and the overall cohort.
Retention	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	100%	85.80%	By 2030, we expect there will be no measurable gap in retention rates between equity groups and the overall cohort.

All 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

Federation has built a distinctive quality teaching model to deliver learning to regional and disadvantaged students that recognises, rewards and develops excellent teaching as a professional endeavour. It combines education-focused promotion to Level E, mandatory (Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Education) and targeted professional learning, scholarship projects, Scholarship of Learning and Teaching (SoLT) capability building, student partnership, GenAI-enabled innovation and co-operative education. This approach has strengthened staff attraction, retention and recognition while improving the student experience. It links teaching excellence to course quality, industry relevance and student success, positioning Federation as a small regional university with a university-wide, evidence-informed model for contemporary teaching capability.

Action

We have strengthened teaching quality by making recognition, capability and evidence explicit.

We established an education-focused promotion pathway, with the first two promotions to Level E in 2025, creating visible career progression for excellent educators. We launched an Advance HE Fellowship pilot, support university, national and RUN teaching award pathways, and use student experience and unit feedback evidence to identify and recognise excellent teaching practice. These initiatives make teaching excellence professionally valued, externally recognisable and aligned with academic career progression.

We reset the Student Feedback Survey with students, turning it into a sharper improvement tool and lead indicator, which is vital in serving regional and low-SES learners pathwaying through our dual-sector model. This lifted acceptable teaching quality thresholds, and introduced accountability for low response rates and completions of action plans. The impact has been strong: Semester 1 2026 recorded a high 35% response rate, and the related institution level student experience scores improved from 4.15 to 4.25. Discipline targets set in mid-2025 were exceeded within 12 months.

The 2026–2030 Learning and Teaching Strategy has been translated into practical capability building. Academic workloads are redirected towards scholarship projects that give excellent teachers leadership opportunities, develop evidence for promotion and deliver institutionally significant teaching initiatives, including an internal teaching mentoring program. A Scholarship of Learning and Teaching (SoLT) community of practice and structured writing program are building publication capability in SoLT article development. Annual professional learning, just-in-time connected classroom training, institute and university showcases, and co-op sabbaticals have further strengthened teaching capability and shared effective practice.

We have also advanced contemporary assessment and responsible GenAI practice through the Assessment Redesign Project and are moving Cogniti from pilot to production to support teaching innovation. Our GenAI-first Maths Support Centre is a case study in AMSI's national report on mathematics support. Quality teaching is further assured by mapping our courses against the Co-operative Education Quality Framework, which we have developed to guide our distinctive co-operative education offer, as co-op is new to the Australian context. Partner-informed course improvement connects teaching quality with industry relevance, academic rigour, student retention and growth, particularly serving regional and lower socio-economic learners.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Overall educational experience	QILT SES – Verified 2025	79.8%	80.5%	2030 target to be in top 20% (5 star rating) ~ 82%
Teaching quality and engagement	QILT SES – Verified 2025	82.9%	84%	2030 target to be in top 20% (5 star rating) ~ 85%

Joined-up tertiary system

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

Vision

To help achieve a genuinely connected system where every learner can get to where they want to go – moving seamlessly into and through vocational and higher education.

Federation will build on its work as the number one university for pathways in Australia, expanding and formalising additional clear, credit recognised pathways from VET, aligned to regional workforce needs.

Through improved pre-enrolment advice and promotion of available pathways, we will give students clarity and confidence in their choices. Strong academic support and data informed intervention will ensure even more students succeed and progress.

Action

In 2026, Federation appointed its first-ever Associate Professor, Pathways – establishing a dedicated focus across our TAFE and university. In 2027, we'll continue this work – further mapping pathways, building on agreements with external TAFE providers and giving students clearer visibility of their options.

This work positions Federation to align with, support and implement the National Credit Recognition Framework being developed by ATEC.

Expand VET to HE pathways and sector harmonisation

We will expand pathways with defined credit outcomes from VET and higher education diplomas into degrees in priority workforce areas – including health, early education and renewable energy. These mapped pathways will have clearly defined, credit bearing outcomes and build on established, industry embedded 'earn and learn' models that enable learners to combine employment with structured study.

Impact: More learners progressing through seamless pathways across all AQF levels.

Strengthen equity focused success

We'll continue to enhance enabling programs as structured entry points for underrepresented learners. In 2027, this includes:

- targeted language, literacy and numeracy support for students to transition successfully into bachelor study
- embedding numeracy support into first-year STEM programs to enhance success for students
- strengthened evidence-based interventions for transitioning students, building on proven approaches that reduced pre-census loss between Diploma and second-year Bachelor of Nursing by 4.5% (2025 to 2026)
- positioning Free TAFE qualifications as a critical access mechanism for equity learners, including a credit bearing entry-point into bachelor degrees aligned with priority workforce needs.

Impact: More students from underrepresented backgrounds successfully progressing through higher education, supported by targeted assistance.

Improve pathway visibility

We'll improve the visibility of pathways across vocational and higher education, helping students pursue their passion with confidence. This includes early exposure through programs like Vocational Tasters, which helps high-school students explore future career pathways in areas like health and renewable energy, alongside VET in schools.

We'll also enhance pre-enrolment advice and digital information, supported by joined-up recruitment. The development of packaged offers and pathways kits, provides prospective students with clear information on credit outcomes, entry-points and time-to-completion, enabling informed decision-making. In 2026, 90.4% of domestic commencing Bachelor students with a prior completed Federation TAFE Diploma had transferred credit recorded.

Impact: More students navigating into and through tertiary education, with clarity and confidence.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Average credit granted to domestic bachelor students admitted via Federation TAFE Diplomas	Federation credit precedent database and admissions records – 2026	Guaranteed 90-150 credit points (0.75-1.25 EFTSL), depending on pathway	Increase courses with guaranteed 90-150 credit points across all articulated TAFE > bachelor pathways	More opportunities for learners to move between VET and higher education.
Domestic students admitted to a bachelor course on the basis of VET	Federation admissions data, commencing domestic bachelor students – 2026	29.80%	35%	Increased number of students moving between VET and higher education – providing new access and opportunity.
Attrition rate of domestic bachelor students admitted on the basis of VET	Federation student lifecycle/ retention data – 2026	18.30% (tracked relative to overall bachelor cohort)	1–2% improvement on 2026 baseline	More students are supported to continue their studies, recognising the increased barriers for many in this cohort. Longer-term outcome is to achieve parity or better than institutional bachelor average by 2030.

Research

Sustaining national capability and supporting innovation through research and research training

Vision

We'll grow our international research collaborations and reputation for solving regional challenges by partnering with leading institutions and expanding our cohort of globally engaged higher degree by research candidates.

Students will be prepared for independent research through strong supervision and opportunities to engage with real-world challenges – delivering meaningful impact for the communities we serve.

Federation will be home to a broader and more capable research workforce, with staff and students contributing meaningfully to research that addresses priority challenges and creates measurable impact beyond the University.

Action

Build the Higher Degree by Research (HDR) pipeline

We will build Federation's HDR pipeline through more active project development, strong supervisor-led recruitment, clear alignment between candidates, projects and research centres, and targeted scholarship and partnership activity, building on the strong industry engagement reflected in 23% of HDR students being industry funded in 2025. We'll continue to strengthen the Graduate Research School model, enhancing the candidature experience, monitoring academic progression and expanding opportunities for HDR candidates.

Impact: A stronger HDR pipeline, with alignment between candidates and projects, improved candidate experience, meaningful employment opportunities and greater real-world research impact.

Expand research pathways to a broader range of students

We'll increase visibility of the University's Graduate Certificate in Research as an alternative entry pathway to HDR, alongside our traditional Honours degrees. This supports access for a wider cohort of students and ensure they're supported to succeed.

Impact: A more diverse and inclusive cohort, with increased participation from students with varied experiences, strengthening the quality and relevance of research.

Strengthen industry-engaged research

We'll increase awareness, availability and uptake of Co-op research projects, enabling more HDR and post-doctoral candidates to undertake co-designed, industry-connected research in partnership with external organisations, including through APRETC, which connects research, training and industry across Victoria's renewable energy transition.

Impact: Stronger industry-linked research that delivers outcomes for partners and communities.

Increased research output and impact

We'll build a more capable research workforce, with a larger proportion of staff contributing meaningfully to research performance through publications, grant activity, supervision, engagement and impact in areas critical to regional productivity and transformation, including Net Zero, circular economy, agriculture and digital technologies. This includes lifting the proportion of staff meeting Federation's research expectations by combining clearer performance expectations with practical capability-building support. This will include mentoring, targeted development for early and mid-career researchers, support for publication and grant planning and stronger alignment of staff activity with research centre priorities and strategic themes.

Impact: A stronger research culture, with more staff actively contributing to research performance – delivering more impact for our regions.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
HDR domestic enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	218	250	10% increase in new enrolments each year

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.