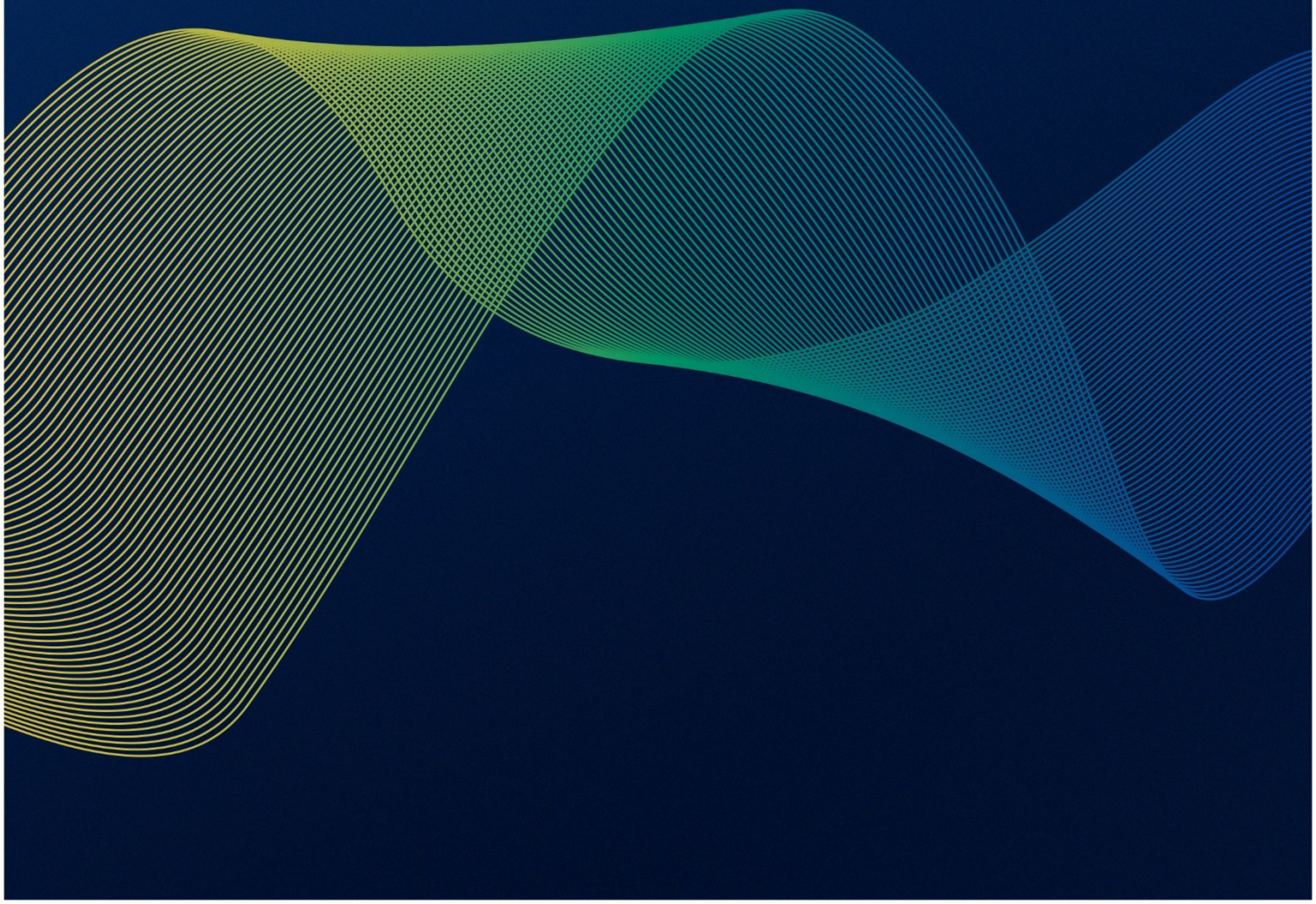
Australian Government

ATEC
Australian Tertiary
Education Commission

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

2027 mission based compact between the ATEC and the University of Sydney



Preface

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

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

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

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

Established by the Parliament of NSW in 1850 on the ancestral lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the University of Sydney is a secular, merit-based, public institution with a civic mission to serve Sydney, NSW and the national interest.

Our vision is to be a leading comprehensive research-intensive university, advancing knowledge and delivering impact in service of society. We create the conditions to realise our legislated function: **'the encouragement of the dissemination, advancement, development and application of knowledge informed by free inquiry'**, University of Sydney Act 1989 (NSW).

With campuses, teaching and research facilities across metropolitan and regional NSW (including Orange, Dubbo, Broken Hill, Lismore and Narrabri), we play a central role in educating adaptable, critical thinkers and future leaders, supporting diverse communities and delivering research aligned to NSW and national priorities.

We educate over 80,000 students from more than 130 countries, employ over 10,000 staff and have a global alumni network of 450,000. We make a distinctive contribution to most skills and workforce priority areas through our comprehensive range of professionally accredited courses, combined with the breadth of our curriculum and research training programs. With over 100 study areas, we equip graduates with multidisciplinary capabilities to address complex challenges, reflected in strong outcomes and employer demand.

Through our 2032 Strategy, we focus on five priorities: **transformational education; equity and diversity; excellent research; people and processes; and partnerships**. We work with government, industry and community partners to deliver shared outcomes at scale. Our guiding principle is that we will work with high trust and high accountability to deliver high performance.

Our One Sydney, Many People 2025-2032 Strategy sets a clear vision to lift outcomes for First Nations communities through Indigenous leadership, self-determination and co-governance.

Social equity is at the heart of our past and is core to our future success. Our vision is for every student to receive a transformational education, and we are committed to providing genuine opportunities for students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Improving the student learning experience is the centrepiece of our 2032 Strategy. We are focused on improving teaching quality and consistency, strengthening professional development for our educators, and ensuring our curriculum and assessments remain rigorous amid rapid technological change.

We have a growing presence in Western Sydney, which will absorb two-thirds of Sydney's future population growth. As a founding partner in Westmead Health Precinct at Camden and Nepean, next year we will open a new Conservatorium of Music facility in Parramatta and are planning, with the NSW Government, a major new campus at North Parramatta, supporting up to 25,000 students by 2055. Realising this aspiration depends on sustained Commonwealth support for additional CSPs and international students, and we look forward to progressing these plans with ATEC in the 2028-31 compact.

These priorities underpin our commitments across this compact's performance domains: **delivering capability in priority areas; widening access; strengthening teaching quality and research impact; and supporting a more diverse and harmonised Australian tertiary education system.**

Enrolment strategy and priorities

Our priority for 2027 is to stabilise commencing enrolments while seeking modest additional capacity to meet strong anticipated demand, particularly from NSW school leavers.

We will work towards converting existing student load to a fully funded CSP baseline while supporting growth in NSW and national priority workforce areas including health, teacher education, social work, engineering, construction, housing, agriculture, environment and sustainability.

Through the 2028-31 compact negotiations, we will continue to advance equitable participation and strategic growth in response to demographic change, particularly in Western Sydney.

Demand trends

From 2013 to 2024, our commencing CSP enrolments remained stable, before a step-change in 2025 driven by increased domestic demand and curriculum changes. This larger cohort has flowed into 2026, contributing to increased total load, alongside continued strong demand in engineering, science, education and health.

Locations

We will continue to optimise our footprint across NSW to support the needs of local communities, with a strategic focus on leveraging our strong presence at Westmead to establish a major new campus at North Parramatta (see Mission) and selective growth in areas aligned with national priorities. This approach reflects our commitment to widening access and responding to population changes.

Student mix and course profile

In response to shifting demand, we are rebalancing towards undergraduate enrolments, complemented by a strengthened focus on widening participation and success.

We maintain a balanced cohort profile across domestic and international students. In line with our policy settings, international students remain below 50% of the total cohort (48.5% projected for 2026 and around 48% for 2027), with a 45% international cap applied at the undergraduate level (currently 38%, June 2026).

We are reducing source country concentration through diversification strategies. Our Senate has committed to a achieving a 50% source country cap and the share from a single country fell from 71% to 65% between 2024 and 2026. We are supporting diversification through targeted fee relief and equity scholarships, transnational education and regional partnerships, alongside investment in student services and accommodation, with around 2,000 new beds planned by 2031.

Our course profile aligns with NSW and national skills priorities, with a focus in 2027 on sustaining and growing areas of high demand and skills shortage, including to support continuing and new health programs in nursing and biomedicine at Westmead, our generalist programs in the arts, humanities and sciences, engineering, education, early childhood, social work and undergraduate psychology.

Undergraduate delivery will remain predominantly on campus, complemented by expanded online and blended postgraduate offerings to support flexible access, scalability, and innovation in delivery.

Our postgraduate offerings continue to span a broad range of disciplines, designed to support upskilling and lifelong learning. Continued access to CSPs remains important for this cohort.

We are well placed to expand in many priority health fields, however, the availability of clinical placements remains a key barrier to growth. We are keen to work with ATEC and other stakeholders to expand placements in NSW, over the next decade, as a prerequisite for sustained enrolment growth in this critical workforce area.

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

We will advance NSW and national priorities through integrated teaching, and research and innovation that support workforce priorities, closing the gap, social cohesion, educational opportunity and sustainable economic growth.

In 2027, we will focus on building capacity in NSW priority occupations; First Nations access, success and self-determination; supporting Western Sydney's educational needs; streamlining credit recognition and pathways; expanding opportunity for other under-represented student cohorts; and translating our research for the benefit of communities across NSW. We will also continue to equip students with AI and human capabilities and strengthen sovereign capability in fields of priority to NSW and Australia.

Action

NSW priorities

Support NSW's prosperity and social cohesion.

- Grow capability in NSW priority workforce areas including health, teacher education, social work, engineering, construction, housing, agriculture, environment and sustainability.
- Strengthen pathways into our programs through targeted partnerships with TAFE NSW, other VET providers and employers.
- Expand educational opportunity and success for students from under-represented groups.
- Support Western Sydney's development through Westmead, a new Conservatorium facility in Parramatta and plans for a major North Parramatta campus.

Grow NSW's health workforce.

NSW needs 195,000 more health and social assistance workers by 2034, JSA (2024). With over 12,500 students enrolled across our medical, dentistry, nursing and allied health programs, we are helping meet this demand, but growth remains constrained by placements, infrastructure and funding.

- Work with NSW Health and universities to increase clinical placements and strengthen workforce planning.
- Increase enrolments at Westmead, including through the Bachelor of Biomedicine and Health and postgraduate nursing programs.
- Launch Australia's first part-time Doctor of Medicine and a new nuclear medicine program.
- Strengthen regional NSW's health care and workforce through our network of rural sites delivering our medical program in Dubbo and over 6,000 unique health student placement weeks each year.

National priorities

Strengthen sovereign capability by advancing critical technologies and skills.

- Commence our new Higher Degree by Research Strategy and target research investment in NSW and national priority areas.
- Grow undergraduate and HDR enrolments in engineering, AI, advanced manufacturing, quantum, autonomous systems, clean energy, defence and food security.
- Progress construction of the Sydney Biomedical Accelerator and partnerships in RNA, quantum and advanced manufacturing.
- Grow women STEM leaders through our Khuda Women in STEM and Women in Engineering programs.

Prepare students for an AI-enabled world while maintaining trust in our qualifications.

- Scale our response to AI, building on the award winning Cogniti AI teaching agent, our Two-Lane Assessment Approach and strengthened academic integrity framework.
- Equip students with AI fluency, critical judgement and other key human capabilities.
- Advance responsible AI through our Centre for AI, Trust and Governance, executive education and targeted short courses.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
03 Engineering and Related Technologies				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	3,599	>=4,400	Growth in line with/greater than domestic undergraduate (UG) enrolments to 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	94.69%	>=94.5%	>=94.5% by 2032
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	94.69%	>=94%	>=94% by 2032
0401 Architecture and Urban Environment				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	895	945	Growth in line with/greater than domestic UG enrolments to 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	95.69%	>=95%	>=95% by 2032
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	89.31%	>=90%	>=92% by 2032
07 Education				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	1,252	1,352	Growth in line with/greater than domestic UG enrolments to 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	96.90%	>=95%	>=95% by 2032
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	91.73%	>=92%	>=93% by 2032
090701 Psychology				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	893	946	Growth in line with/greater than domestic UG enrolments to 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	91.28%	>=92%	>=93% by 2032
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	93.16%	>=93%	>=94% by 2032

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

Our vision is to improve outcomes for First Nations communities through our One Sydney, Many People 2025-2032 (OSMP) Strategy aligned to NSW and national priorities for Closing the Gap.

In 2027, we will advance this vision through inclusive Indigenous leadership, self-determination and shared decision-making. We will strengthen pathways into and through tertiary education, deliver targeted support and culturally safe learning, and continue to embed Indigenous knowledges across our research and teaching. These actions will lift student access, belonging, success, graduate outcomes and community impact, and firmly establish us as the university of choice for First Nations students and staff.

Action

Self-determination

Indigenous self-determination is foundational to our OSMP Strategy and consists of enablers, including governance and decision making, student voice, education, research, and cultural safety.

- Continue to grow First Nations representation on the our governing bodies and leadership through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services), who leads implementation of OSMP and chairs the University Executive Indigenous Committee.
- Build on progress – including First Nations staff on both sides of enterprise bargaining – by increasing First Nations participation in governance and decision-making through targeted recruitment, mentoring and leadership development.
- Embed a First Nations Student Voice Committee within our governance structures.
- Increase First Nations employment, and monitor and report on the achievement of targets.
- Foster culturally safe workplaces, including through mandatory cultural competence and anti-racism training programs, and expanded cultural education for senior leaders.

Access, participation and success

Expand First Nations student access and success through sector-leading financial support and coordinated, culturally responsive outreach, recruitment and pathways programs.

- Offer every eligible First Nations undergraduate student an annual $8,500 scholarship for the duration of their degree under the MyGadigal program, integrated with targeted entry schemes and comprehensive academic, pastoral and cultural support.
- Partner with First Nations communities, schools and TAFE to support outreach, recruitment, mentoring and peer engagement.
- Open the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Facilitated Entry Scheme for Medicine and Dentistry applicants.
- Conduct a strategic review of outreach initiatives and continue to develop non-ATAR pathway options for First Nations students.
- Maintain and build on strong performance in First Nations student success and retention.
- Strengthen culturally safe support, frontline services and evidence-based interventions for student success through our Gadigal Centre.

Research and education

Elevate First Nations knowledges and community-led research and education.

- Promote and strengthen Indigenous research – nationally and internationally – by seeding Indigenous-led and Indigenous-focused research projects.

- Build research capacity and funding opportunities through new collaborative Indigenous research projects and the expansion of existing projects.
- Expand participation in our National Centre for Cultural Competence leadership programs.
- Align our Indigenous research strategy Ngarangun with the OSMP research goal.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
First Nations total enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	354	495	813 by 2032
First Nations success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	89.35%	>90%	>=90% by 2032
First Nations retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	88.37%	>90%	>=92% by 2032

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

As set out in our 2032 Strategy, our vision is for every student, regardless of background, to experience a transformational education that enables them to contribute fully to society. We are committed to providing genuine opportunity for students from regional and remote communities, low socioeconomic status (LSES) backgrounds, and those living with disability.

In 2027, we will continue to reduce structural barriers to access, participation and success through diverse pathways, evidence-based programs and targeted financial support.

Action

Low SES students

Expand access and success for domestic and international LSES students, and advocate for a more holistic measure of LSES than that currently used by the Australian Government, which does not reliably identify areas of material disadvantage and can misrepresent individual circumstances.

- Offer our flagship MySydney Scheme, which provides an entry pathway, whole-of-candidature scholarship and tailored support programs to domestic students from LSES areas. From 2026, we expanded the scheme to students in the bottom quartile of the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage.
- Develop and implement a revised transition support and advising model for commencing LSES students, addressing the disparity in first-semester success rates that underpins the gap between LSES and broader cohort outcomes.
- Increase use of alternative entry pathways including TAFE NSW's Tertiary Preparation Certificate Entry Scheme and our Skills for Tertiary Admission Test to widen access for mature-age learners and graduates of VET programs.
- Target fee reductions and equity scholarships to high-achieving students from Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific, as a key component of our international cohort diversification strategy.

Regional and remote students

Strengthen outreach and advising to improve access and retention for students from regional and remote communities.

- Expand outreach activities with regional schools, including roadshows and community engagement, alongside the existing Regional and Remote Entry Scheme to support improved access.
- Review our student advising model for regional and remote students to address lower retention rates.

Students with disability

Embed disability inclusion in teaching, learning and the broader student experience, improving access, retention and success for students with disability.

- Finalise our new Disability Inclusion Action Plan informed by extensive consultation with students, staff and community members.
- Support students with appropriate academic adjustments through our Inclusion and Disability Services team, which currently support over 3,000 students.
- Deliver our Designing for Diversity program to further embed Universal Design for Learning principles across our teaching, supporting improved success rates for all students.

Measure

Indicator	Cohort	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Total enrolments	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2025	4,243	4,600	5,700 by 2032
Total enrolments	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2025	2,130	2,324	2,600 by 2032 (not accounting for 2026 census impact)
Total enrolments	Regional	HESC – Verified 2025	1,607	1,640	1,900 by 2032
Total enrolments	Remote	HESC – Verified 2025	43	45	50 by 2032
Success	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	89.07%	Designing for Diversity Program delivered; success rate >=90%	>=91.5% by 2032
Success	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	92.93%	Revised transition support and advising model for commencing LSES students implemented in S1 2027; success rate >=93%	>=94% by 2032
Success	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	93.77%	>=93.5%	>=94% by 2032
Success	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	92.30%	>=92.5%	>=93% by 2032
Retention	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	89.95%	New Disability Inclusion Action Plan finalised and implementation commenced	>=91% by 2032
Retention	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	92.87%	>=93%	>=94% by 2032
Retention	Regional	HESC –Verified 2024	87.93%	Review of regional and remote student advising model completed; revising model in development	>=90% by 2032
Retention	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	66.67%	Review of regional and remote student advising model completed; revising model in development	>=88% by 2032

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

Our 2032 Strategy sets out our aspiration to be the best Australian university for teaching and learning, and to ensure that every student's education is transformational.

In 2027, we will strengthen the student voice and set clearer expectations for teaching quality. We will enhance professional development and recognition for all educators, and ensure our curriculum and assessments remain rigorous and relevant, given changing technology and professional practice.

Action

Teaching quality and accountability

Set clearer expectations for teaching quality, support professional development and drive improvement through better student feedback.

- Define the core teaching practices that students should experience in every unit and monitor their consistent delivery, strengthening accountability for teaching quality.
- Encourage and support staff to pursue and attain Advance HE Fellowships through our accredited fellowship scheme, building on the existing community of 871 expert practitioners to support peers within and beyond the University.
- Continue delivery of the Modular Professional Learning Framework (MPLF), which supported over 800 educators across almost 3,000 modules in 2025 with evidence-based professional development to all educators. MPLF modules provide structured support for educators including tutors and casual academic staff and provide a pathway to formal professional recognition.
- Implement a University-wide Student Experience of Teaching instrument, capturing feedback at both the unit and teacher level, providing more actionable evidence for continuous improvement.
- Embed the Teacher Check-In as a mid-semester feedback mechanism, providing tutors and teaching staff with timely insights to improve teaching during a semester.

Teaching in an AI-enabled learning environment

Ensure that teaching, assessment and feedback remain rigorous, meaningful and trusted in an AI-enabled learning environment, and equip graduates with the skills needed to succeed in a rapidly evolving workforce.

- Implement assessment plans that assure student learning outcomes through appropriately supervised tasks across all degrees, addressing the academic integrity threat of generative AI and maintaining confidence in academic standards.
- Provide structured guidance and training for educators and students on the effective and ethical use of AI in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Review and update course content and learning outcomes at the discipline level to reflect how AI is changing professional practice and graduate capabilities in relevant fields, embedding AI literacy, critical judgement and ethical practice where appropriate.

Curriculum quality and continuous improvement

Use data to identify and improve underperforming units

- Embed the Curriculum Quality and Sustainability Tool across faculties, drawing on student success and satisfaction data to identify units of study that require improvement, and to support evidence-based curriculum decisions.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Overall educational experience	QILT SES – Verified 2025	71.5%	>=73.5%	>=78% by 2032
Quality of teaching (QLTEACH)	QILT SES – Preliminary 2025	71.8%	>=73.5%	>=78% by 2032
Sense of Belonging (BELONG)	QILT SES – Preliminary 2025	42.9%	>=44%	>=47% by 2032

Joined-up tertiary system

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

Vision

We are committed to playing our distinct role in a more joined-up tertiary system, making it easier for students to move between vocational education and our programs, and deepening collaboration with TAFE NSW in line with our strengths and mission.

In 2027, we will work to support tertiary harmonisation reforms that foster:

- diversity, quality and distinct missions of different providers
- stronger, clearer pathways between VET and higher education
- streamlined credit recognition and learner mobility
- mission-aligned collaboration with TAFE, industry and government
- lifelong learning that responds to workforce needs.

Action

Admissions based on VET qualifications

Review admissions settings, communications and processes to improve the visibility, access and effectiveness of VET-based entry to our programs.

- Expand and promote VET entry pathways, including the Tertiary Preparation Certificate Entry Scheme, strengthen applicant advice, and identify courses where targeted action can responsibly increase TAFE and other VET-based admissions.

Collaboration with TAFE NSW

Mobilise our strengths in engineering, science, advanced manufacturing, robotics and AI to facilitate access to expertise and infrastructure, and explore new pathways, including to grow apprenticeships and traineeships across our facilities.

- Deepen strategic collaboration with TAFE NSW, including through:
- Exploring new pathway arrangements in early childhood education, nursing and social work.
- Partnering with the TAFE NSW Manufacturing Centres of Excellence.
- Exploring a potential lab technician partnership with TAFE NSW and industry.

Strategic equity-focused VET pathways

- Develop or expand targeted pathway models with TAFE NSW, building on successful programs such as our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dental Assistant Scholarship Pathway.
- Focus on priority fields with strong employer support for more joined-up tertiary education provision and targeted pathways to grow and widen participation.
- Review and strengthen support services for students admitted through VET pathways to improve success, retention and completion.

National Credit Recognition Framework

Contribute to the development of a National Credit Recognition Framework and prepare for its implementation.

- Work with the ATEC and other stakeholders to develop an evidence-based National Credit Recognition Framework, improving the clarity of information for students and strengthening the data available to support timely and consistent credit recognition decisions, while maintaining system quality and integrity.
- Participate in a state-wide working group with TAFE NSW, Department of Education and other universities to review and develop more consistent credit arrangements and pathways.

Lifelong learning

Support individuals and employers to upskill and reskill through postgraduate awards, short courses, microcredentials, continuing professional development and executive education.

- Grow enrolments in lifelong learning, including stackable postgraduate diplomas and certificates, and short courses offered by Sydney Executive Plus, our Centre for Continuing Education, Sydney Health Executive Education and Centre for Veterinary Education.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Domestic commencing students admitted to a bachelor course on the basis of VET	Student admissions data - 2025	56	72	90 by 2032
Retention rate of domestic bachelor students admitted on the basis of VET	Sydney Student System data - 2024	84.78%	>=86%	>=90% by 2032
Success rate of domestic bachelor students admitted on the basis of VET	Sydney Student System data - 2025	84.51%	>=86%	>=90% by 2032

Research

Sustaining national capability and supporting innovation through research and research training

Vision

We aspire to be Australia's leading research-intensive university, strengthening Australia's domestic postgraduate research pipeline, research workforce, the discovery and innovation ecosystem, in line with NSW and national priorities. Our researchers and students pursue bold ideas with integrity, translating discovery into solutions that enhance sovereign capability, national resilience and quality of life for all Australians.

In 2027, we will progress key enablers, including positioning the University as a global leader in graduate research through targeted growth and industry-engaged research training, creating a new $750 million facility to translate biomedical research into improved patient outcomes, and directing investment at national priority areas.

Action

Higher Degree by Research Strategy

Australia faces well-documented challenges sustaining its domestic Higher Degree by Research (HDR) pipeline, particularly in STEM and other national priority areas where demand from quality international candidates now often far exceeds domestic applications. HELP debt and cost-of-living pressures, concerns about the adequacy of the Research Training Program (RTP) Stipend rate, attractive graduate employment options, the opportunity cost of research training, and insecure academic career pathways continue to constrain domestic demand.

Launched in Q3 2026, our new HDR Strategy aims to increase domestic HDR enrolments and deliver transformative researcher training, contributing independent thinkers and innovators to the workforce.

- **Complete Graduate Research School implementation:** A more seamless recruitment, admissions and scholarships experience will lift Australia's research training capacity, advancing our ambitions to grow domestic HDRs by 12% over the next four years.
- **Focus on commercialisation and industry-engaged PhDs:** Contribute to Australia's workforce by scaling up industry engagement in PhDs, scoping an industry-focused PhD, and offering PhD students commercialisation training and industry internships.
- **Diversify the PhD cohort:** Continue our focus on increasing First Nations candidates and support other under-represented and priority cohorts.

Innovation and research impact

Leverage our comprehensiveness and partnerships to drive multidisciplinary problem-solving and accelerate translation to improve social, health, economic and environmental outcomes.

- Support new ventures from our research and explore a new initiative to support commercialising and scaling startups and spinouts, building on our Multidisciplinary Initiatives, Medical Research Partnerships and $25 million Pre-Seed Investment Fund.

Sovereign capability and national priorities

Contribute to NSW and national science and research priorities while maintaining a commitment to comprehensiveness.

- Provide targeted support over the next 4 years to grow impact and income generation in ten areas:
  - Addressing health outcome inequities
  - Aerospace and national security
  - Agriculture and food
  - AI, data science and autonomous systems
  - Biomedical solutions
  - Brain and mind
  - First Nations knowledge, culture and outcomes

- Health system transformation
- Sustainable technologies and the environment
- Quantum, photonics and electronics.

Sydney Biomedical Accelerator

Bring clinicians, scientists, engineers, students and industry together in one ecosystem by progressing the Sydney Biomedical Accelerator.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Total HERDC income	HERDC – 2024	$607.3 million	$673.8 million	$923.1 million by 2032
HDR domestic enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	3,026	3,116	3,388 by 2030
ROI (Record of Invention) submissions received per annum	Internal – 2025	175	180	200 by 2032

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.