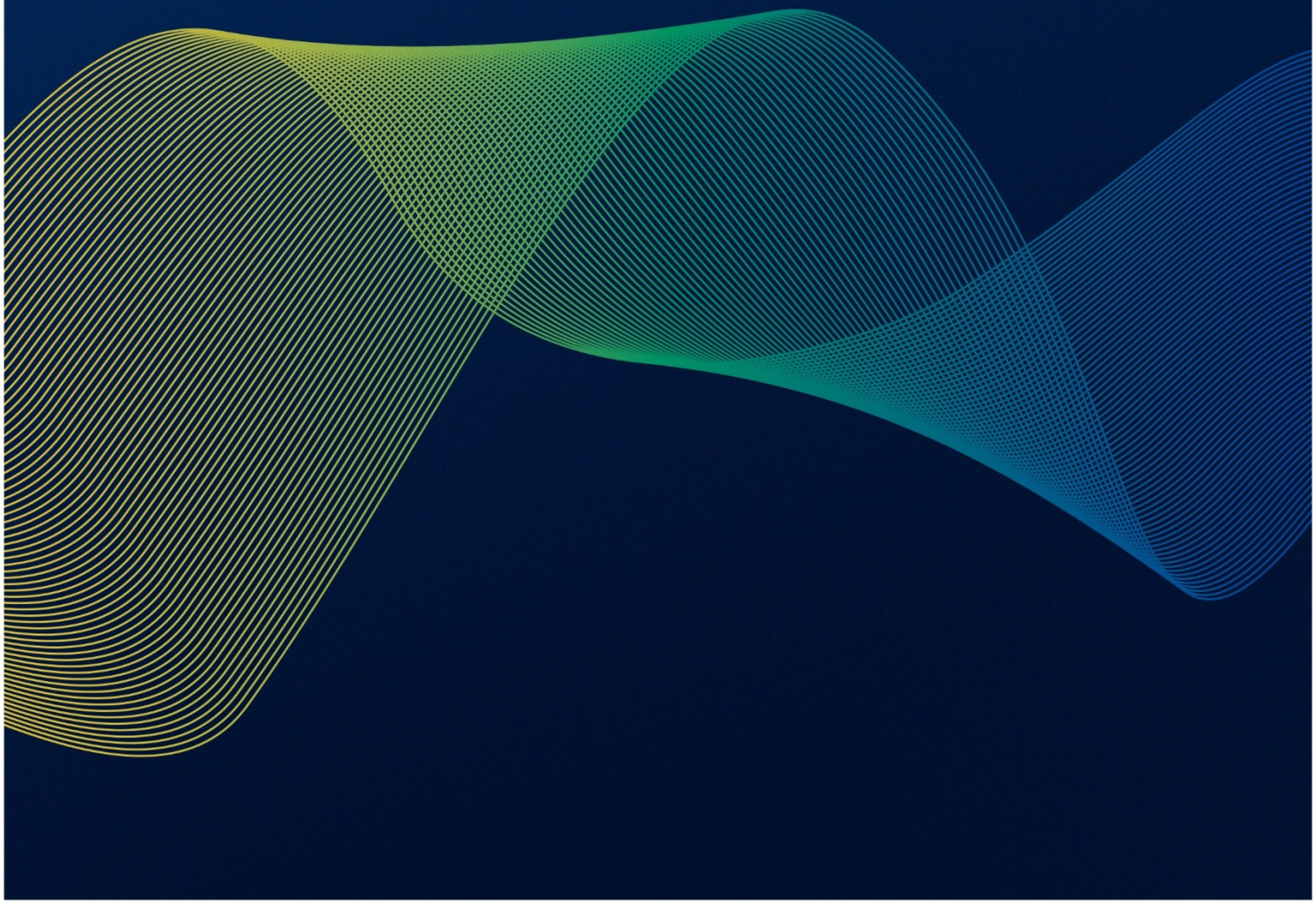
Australian Government

ATEC
Australian Tertiary Education Commission

UNSW SYDNEY

2027 mission based compact between the ATEC and the University of New South Wales



Preface

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

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

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

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

UNSW is a public university for NSW with a practical, nation-building purpose: to advance scholarship, research, teaching, and applied knowledge in ways that meet community need, and which support social, industrial, and economic progress. That founding purpose remains our mission. It is expressed through our 2035 Strategy Progress for All: transformative and inclusive education, research and translation with public benefit, and deep engagement with communities, industries, and governments.

In 2027, UNSW's compact commitments give practical effect to this purpose by aligning high-quality education, research, and partnership activities with national, state, and regional priorities in health, education, engineering, digital technologies, housing, net zero, sovereign capability and social inclusion.

UNSW excels in both education and research crucial to meeting the needs of NSW and Australia, including in health, engineering, science, design, law, business, and social sciences. AI, global perturbations, and economic and workforce transitions are creating a once-in-two-generations shift in the role that Australian universities must play. These changes are happening incredibly rapidly. UNSW's Strategy enables our mission, through:

- Excellence at scale: over 80,000 enrolled students and approximately 25,000 degrees conferred per year, with graduate outcomes amongst the best in the country
- A diverse student cohort mix: reflecting the composition of the secondary schooling system and broader community, enrolled across undergraduate, postgraduate, enabling, and short courses
- Industry-enabled work integrated learning (WIL) and industry experience at scale: embedded in our programs with more than 2800 WIL industry partners, including in data science, vaccine development, photovoltaics and advanced manufacturing
- Innovative new educational offerings via UNSW College, supporting lifelong learning and skills uplift through modular applied degrees in areas of state and national significance.

UNSW's research, industry and national impact is world-leading:

- Ranked the top Australian university, first in the world for social impact, and first in Australia for sustainability, in QS 2026
- Most entrepreneurial university in 2024, with 56 research centres, 277 spinouts and startups
- Thousands of partnerships with state and federal government agencies and community organisations, supporting our AFR Most Employable Students award achievement each year for almost a decade.

We play a pivotal role in Australia's defence ecosystem, including a long and proud ADFA legacy and through our strong defence research capabilities, contributing to sovereign capability.

UNSW is truly multicampus with its major campus precinct in Kensington, Sydney, specialist precincts in Paddington, Liverpool, Canberra, Wagga Wagga and Port Macquarie, and local Health facilities in Coffs Harbour, Albury and Griffith; and further campuses operations commencing at UNSW Bengaluru in 2026 and Parramatta in 2027.

The three triennials that comprise UNSW's decadal strategy enable articulation and achievement of medium- and long-term goals, supported by annual planning and reporting, to ensure operational achievement of our Strategy's vision. Recognising recent changes in Government's policy and priorities for the tertiary sector, UNSW is stabilising student load and course mix over the coming years, while meeting physical and digital infrastructure uplift and local delivery needs. We welcome the important stewardship role of ATEC and the Commissioners in supporting these aspirations.

Enrolment strategy and priorities

UNSW's enrolment strategy under Progress For All is inclusive and accessible high-quality education, backed in by real-world delivery. Our 2027 compact is centred on a stable, high-quality contribution to Australia's managed-growth tertiary transition: expanding access and success for under-represented students; strengthening regional, vocational, and lifelong learning pathways; and meeting workforce needs with highly capable graduates.

Where we have noted growth, it is in disciplines and for cohorts identified as national, NSW, and regional priorities. Strategic growth in identified disciplines triangulates national, state and regional need, to areas of strong discipline excellence and high student demand. This reflects growth in student demand across Sydney. We want to moderate demand in these areas, to support talented students' aspiration to study at UNSW and allow us to continue delivering against national and state priorities. Commencing places allocated to UNSW will enable us to stabilise high selection ranks, meet significant local demand and maintain our commitment to widening participation, equitable access, and support graduates in fields in areas of national and state priority.

Our goal is to mirror representation of the general population in our domestic student cohort, and continue to reflect the composition of the secondary school system in the state. One in four commencing domestic undergraduate students at UNSW are now from low socio-economic backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and Gateway partner schools. The cohort approach and longstanding school partnerships underpinning our Gateway program create communities of students, supporting stronger outcomes. With around a third of our students living in Greater Western Sydney, we will support local access opportunities in Liverpool and Parramatta.

Our leading retention and success rates are recognised by students and employers alike, with incredibly strong demand for entry complemented by the employment outcomes of our graduates. Equity and access goals, and innovative industry-ready delivery, are further supported through UNSW College, TAFE articulation pathways and innovative new programs. To complement regional and local skills needs and capabilities, we are also working to expand our lifelong learning offerings to meet emerging industry demand for upskilling and reskilling, particularly in AI and digital technologies.

UNSW's role in the tertiary system complements other providers. While Kensington campus offers our full suite of comprehensive degrees, place-based offerings include specialised, high demand and research-rich education in areas where our scale, disciplinary depth, clinical networks, industry partnerships and graduate outcomes add significant capacity to the system. In regional NSW this contribution is especially evident in health and professional education: rural clinical campuses, regional placements, GP workforce development, and pathways supporting both local students and regional development. Our place-based regional provision, through specialist programs and pathways, aligns to regional and state priorities.

We are balancing our domestic and international student mix, including between undergraduate and postgraduate programs, to stabilise and align the size and composition of our enrolments with our education offerings and strategy. Our international students come from diverse backgrounds, and more than 130 countries. We are supporting further diversity through our UNSW's International Student Award, a tuition fee award for students from approved developing countries. In line with strategic regional priorities, UNSW Bengaluru in India has welcomed its first cohort of local students in 2026.

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

UNSW's founding public purpose and Strategy directly align with national and NSW priorities. NSW and Australia needs more graduates and research capability in health, education, engineering, digital technologies, housing and construction, climate and net zero, advanced manufacturing, and the care economy. These are not peripheral for UNSW; they are central to our education profile, research strengths, industry partnerships, and place-based delivery.

UNSW represents excellence at scale, supporting many Australians to graduate from a global top 20 university with a high employability rate. Our high-demand, high-retention, industry-connected education in priority fields is strengthened by our research translation and partnerships.

UNSW's industry-connected degrees and partnership programs give graduates the skills and practical experience needed to build Australia's future.

Action

UNSW delivers for NSW, regional, and national priorities

UNSW's 2027 compact commitments are intentionally concentrated in fields where national and NSW priorities overlap with demonstrated student demand for our programs, strong student outcomes and continued place-based delivery.

Work integrated learning (WIL) and placement opportunities are embedded in courses and undertaken by over 12,600 students each year, ensuring industry-ready graduates.

UNSW supports health, aged care, disability support and regional health workforce:

- Medicine and Health programs partnered with Local Health Districts
- GP specialisation in metro and regional campuses
- Master of Nursing piloting in 2027 for full launch in 2028, with regional and metro delivery
- Regional clinical campuses and placement programs.

Education and social work:

- Strong and growing demand for initial teacher education programs at UNSW
- Links across NSW Education directorates to Gateway schools, including for placements and continuing professional development
- Strong uptake of TAFE pathway into social work bachelor's program.

Engineering, housing, construction, infrastructure and advanced manufacturing:

- Strong program offerings across all engineering disciplines, including civil engineering and construction management
- Complementary architecture and design programs, and research centres and labs, supporting city planning
- Place-based program prioritisation considers local needs and offerings and strengthens regional delivery.

Digital, technology, and AI-enabled workforce:

- Curriculum transformation embedding AI skills, guided by principles of responsible and human-centred adoption, in all UNSW programs
- Industry, research and spinouts align with education offerings including in clean energy, net zero.

UNSW College's innovative applied degrees, which are modular, industry-co-designed, and have multiple exit and entry points, will support more lifelong learners to engage in upskilling and reskilling in areas of shortage and demand.

Our expanding offerings in the national capital complement existing program strengths of other providers, and will enable more local professionals in Canberra and surrounding regions to undertake qualifications and lifelong learning that support the public service, advanced manufacturing, and industry needs of the ACT. UNSW's programs will help expand the existing local education ecosystem, further strengthening Canberra as a study destination for regional students.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
01 Natural and Physical Sciences				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	5,308	5,504	Further growth in future years is dependent on ATEC's priorities for the sector
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	91.84%	91.8%	Maintain nation-leading 91.8% ongoing
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	90.66%	90.7%	Maintain nation-leading 90.7% ongoing
03 Engineering and Related Technologies				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	7,521	7,800	Further growth in future years is dependent on ATEC's priorities for the sector
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	91.42%	91.4%	Maintain nation-leading 91.4% ongoing
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	93.15%	93.2%	Maintain nation-leading 93.2% ongoing
06 Health				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	2,616	2,732	Further growth in future years is dependent on ATEC's priorities for the sector
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	98.23%	98.2%	Maintain nation-leading 98.2% ongoing
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	94.72%	94.7%	Maintain nation-leading 94.7% ongoing
07 Education				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	944	979	Further growth in future years is dependent on ATEC's priorities for the sector
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	93.46%	93.5%	Maintain nation-leading 93.5% ongoing
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	87.57%	87.6%	Maintain nation-leading 87.6% ongoing

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

UNSW will deliver sustained improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access, participation, completion and post-university outcomes by embedding Indigenous success and self-determination as a core institutional responsibility across all faculties and portfolios. Through a whole-of-university approach supported by our Indigenous leadership team, and in partnership with UNSW College, Indigenous Studies, student services, our Faculties and external communities, UNSW will strengthen pathways from school and vocational education to higher education, research, professions and leadership, contributing to stronger community outcomes, national workforce capability, Indigenous leadership, research excellence and long-term social and economic impact across local, regional and national contexts. UNSW aims to increase the Indigenous student access rate to 3% by 2035.

Action

Self-determination

Indigenous self-determination at UNSW is represented through its strong commitment to the principles of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, across strategy, leadership, community agency and voice. Our micro-treaty approach provides the opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to determine the commitments of UNSW, including Indigenous societal impact. The micro-treaty will strengthen Indigenous governance and embed shared decision-making with these communities, and support greater institutional accountability and alignment between university priorities and communities' aspirations.

Indigenous Knowledges are at the centre of the Societal Impact Framework, which is central to the University's strategy, and is supported by the opening of an Indigenous Societal Impact Academy. The Academy will bring together a coalition of staff, students, Communities, organisations, industry, government and stakeholders, to deliver Indigenous-led solutions and opportunities that advance outcomes for Indigenous peoples and Communities.

Indigenous leadership is embedded across UNSW. The DVCI division includes a PVC Indigenous Engagement and Research, PVC Society, PVC Indigenous Education, Executive Director Indigenous Students, and Deputy and Associate Dean Indigenous roles across faculties. This leadership ensures a consolidated and shared vision of Indigenous outcomes across all parts of UNSW, including evaluation and distribution of funding and resources.

Consolidate and strengthen the whole-of-university Indigenous Student Success model through:

- Improved student lifecycle coordination
- Faculty accountability for academic advancement programs
- Early intervention processes
- Enhanced data capability.

Our reimagined Nura Gili provides transformational student experiences through specialised programs, internal and external connections. This will improve consistency of student experience, strengthen academic outcomes and increase retention and completion.

We will strengthen outreach, admissions and pathway programs integrations, refine application and offer processes, and improve conversion from application to enrolment. Our 'one application; many pathways' approach through the Gateway Indigenous program will reduce fragmentation and improve transparency and coordination. Implementation of the Indigenous Student Success Strategy 2026-2030 will improve student lifecycle data capability, early intervention processes and transparent reporting of Indigenous student outcomes, strengthening institutional accountability and evidence-informed decision-making.

Indigenous Knowledges and curriculum framework

Implementation is progressing through faculty-based curriculum initiatives, staff capability development and culturally responsive teaching practices. This will strengthen culturally affirming learning and improve student engagement and success.

Funding ecosystem

Mapping the ecosystem of programs and opportunities will ensure all funding measures (Indigenous Student Success Program, Needs-based Funding, demand-driven funding for all First Nations students, Fee-Free Uni Ready and operational funding) complement each other to achieve the best impact for investment.

Knowledge to Practice (K2P) program

The K2P program, connecting Indigenous student research and literature to practice through Nura Gili, will enhance student success and experience outcomes and build Indigenous staff capacity.

Together, these actions will contribute to Indigenous student participation, retention, completion and post-university outcomes, while strengthening Indigenous leadership, workforce capability and community impact.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
First Nations total enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	282	330	340 by 2028
First Nations success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	84.76%	86%	87%
First Nations retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	91.43%	Maintain nation-leading retention rate, and within 10 percentage points of UNSW's overall retention rate	Maintain nation-leading retention rate, and within 5 percentage points of UNSW's overall retention rate by 2030.

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

A year ahead of target, UNSW met its Widening Participation Target in 2026 – that 25% of the domestic undergraduate commencements are from low-SES and regional backgrounds, and educationally disadvantaged schools (our Gateway partner schools). This shows how powerful and effective our cohort-based Gateway approach is for students.

UNSW's Widening Participation Strategy outlines an ambition to maintain the combined access rate for these underrepresented groups at 25% of the commencing domestic undergraduate population, while increasing the access rate for students from low SES backgrounds to 15% and maintain sector-leading retention and success outcomes. This is educational excellence at scale.

Action

UNSW Gateway – a powerful cohort-based approach to uplifting access and success

UNSW Gateway is an educational outreach and linked admission pathway that supports more than 90% of students from underrepresented backgrounds into the university. UNSW Gateway adopts a cohort-based approach to widening participation, working with partner Gateway schools to deliver workshops, campus days and tailored support for prospective students. Student belonging is a critical driver of student retention and success, and diverse learning environments build critical thinking, and civic and democratic capability for more students.

UNSW extends pathway access for students from Gateway partner schools not just students from low SES backgrounds (fourth SES quartile), but also the neglected third SES quartile, for which there are no funding incentives or additional supports. Gateway partner schools are disadvantaged schools as determined through the Australian Government's ICSEA school ranking – a measure of the socio-educational advantage of a school's student community. Of all Gateway entrants in 2025, 55% of the students were from the fourth SES quartile; 24% from the third quartile and 15% from the second quartile. Our approach improves opportunity and mobility for these students.

UNSW will explore further redesign of the University Preparation Program (FFUR), to better support students from low SES backgrounds accessing pathways into bachelor courses.

Embedding Universal Design for Learning (UDL) across all programs

Universal design enables all students to engage with their learning and be supported to succeed. Universal design benefits every student, not just equity students, and we are embedding UDL into every program. Staff capability for UDL will be supported through resources, professional development and one-to-one support to course authorities and unit convenors. This will strengthen student outcomes and enhance curricula.

Supporting regional students

UNSW will continue to support regional students through outreach, access and our nation-leading success rates; transition and belonging; financial assistance including scholarships; regional study and placements; and pathways back into regional employment and community leadership. As well as other student supports more generally available, regional UNSW students are also supported through alternative admissions and entry schemes, accommodation support, mentoring programs and career development support, as well as regional training hubs and workforce partnerships, and employer connected career programs that support both student success and regional workforce outcomes.

Measure

Indicator	Cohort	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Total enrolments	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2025	4,045	4,083	4,150 by 2031
Total enrolments	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2025	2,429	2,756	2,800 by 2031
Total enrolments	Regional	HESC – Verified 2025	1,661	1,713	1,740 by 2031
Total enrolments	Remote	HESC – Verified 2025	26	28	30 by 2031
Success	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	88.39%	88.4%	Maintain at 88.4%
Success	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	91.32%	91.7%	92% by 2031
Success	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	94.83%	94.8%	Maintain at 94.8%
Success	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	98.54%	Maintain within 10 percentage points of UNSW's overall success rate	Maintain within 10 percentage points of UNSW's overall success rate
Retention	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	88.37%	88.4%	Maintain at 88.4%
Retention	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	90.92%	91%	91.5% by 2031
Retention	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	93.18%	Maintain within 10 percentage points of UNSW's overall retention rate	Maintain within 10 percentage points of UNSW's overall retention rate
Retention	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	91.67%	Maintain within 10 percentage points of UNSW's overall retention rate	Maintain within 10 percentage points of UNSW's overall retention rate

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

UNSW is recognised for teaching excellence, empowering current and future generations to thrive and contribute to society, with a highly skilled and adaptive teaching workforce and pedagogical approach. In a time of huge changes, through evidence-based practice, UNSW delivers outstanding learning experiences that foster belonging, wellbeing, future-focused skills development and lifelong learning, preparing graduates for diverse and challenging careers. Our academics are supported and rewarded for teaching excellence through scaffolded professional development and accreditation, best-practice sharing, and curriculum transformation to reimagine course design and delivery, driving impactful outcomes for students, graduates and the communities we serve.

Action

We are expanding teaching capability and professional accreditation

UNSW will deliver a suite of professional development programs for new and experienced teaching staff, improving course design, delivery skills, and teaching practice. This includes Foundations of University Learning and Teaching, accredited by Advance HE for Associate Fellowship. Workshops for Fellowships and Senior Fellowships in 2027 aim to increase the number of UNSW fellows to more than 650.

The UNSW Scientia Education Academy will drive research-informed teaching practice through its Fellows, who are among the most outstanding and experienced educators at UNSW. Our Education Focused staff and Communities of Practice support collaboration, peer mentoring, and best-practice sharing to build teaching capability and evidence-based practice. The effectiveness of this approach can be seen in our success and retention rates, however it is important to have a framework that enables recognition of the professional experience and capability of our staff complementary to student-level success measures. UNSW will develop this work from 2027.

To improve curriculum design, role-specific professional development for course and unit authorities will focus on embedding institutional pedagogical principles and advancing assessment and feedback transformation to assure learning outcomes at program level.

Comprehensive curriculum transformation driving impact for staff and students

This 2026-2028 program will embed transformed future-focused and evidence-informed inclusive education, ensuring high-quality teaching translates into demonstrable student capability, graduate outcomes, and societal impact. Our program-level design ensures coherent, flexible learning aligned to evolving employment skills needs. This includes embedding universal, discipline-specific future-focused, AI-relevant skills into all educational offerings, clearly scaffolded for students. A skills passport will enable students to track and articulate skills gained from coursework, cocurricular and extracurricular activities, to employers and the broader community.

Our distinct societal impact-focused education will scaffold learning throughout every degree, empowering students to become changemakers in societal impact challenge projects. These projects align with UNSW's Societal Impact Focus Areas; involve a learning partner (industry, community, research or government); address a live challenge; and are inherently interdisciplinary in nature.

Amplifying educational innovation

Building on the Nexus Program and Education Innovation Incubator, Nexus 2.0 will connect inter-faculty academic innovation with university-level priorities to accelerate innovation, societal impact pedagogy, and practice-sharing across disciplines.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Teaching quality and engagement	QILT SES – Verified 2025	79.4%	80%	82% by 2030
UNSW overall success rate	UNSW student data (STU009)	93.23%	Maintain sector-leading success rates and remain within the top 6 Table A providers	Maintain sector-leading success rates and remain within the top 6 Table A providers
Domestic UG full-time employment outcomes	2024 GOS	77.8%	Maintain sector leading rates	Maintain sector leading rates

Joined-up tertiary system

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

Vision

UNSW provides seamless learner pathways, equitable access, codesigned student support, and workforce-aligned learning. UNSW College develops innovative new industry-ready associate degrees which rapidly respond to evolving demand, and equip lifelong learners with the practical skills they need grounded in pedagogical excellence.

New offerings with Canberra partners deliver complementary courses to meet Accord participation targets. All of our students can easily find the information they need to support their goals and ambitions, and our systems enable seamless navigation.

Our integrated pathways, partnerships, and learner-centred support means UNSW improves educational mobility, retention, attainment, and graduate outcomes for more diverse students.

Action

UNSW College Applied Degrees support critical needs for more learners

These currently include:

- Applied Business (Business Management)
- Information Technology (Cyber Defence and Networking)
- Information Technology (Software Development)

These stackable qualifications mean students can complete a three-year bachelor degree, but include multiple qualifications exit points including at diploma and associate degree level. Programs are co-designed with industry and incorporate work-integrated learning from day one. Applied Degrees give blanket recognition of prior learning to TAFE diploma graduates, so they can enter at second year.

These offerings target critical skills gaps across high-demand sectors and occupations, aligned with NSW and national needs. Australia's National Skills Agreement notes 'Australia's digital and technology capability' is increasingly important as AI reshapes the digital ecosystem. Essential skills that support this national capability include cybersecurity, AI, data analysis, software development and cloud computing. JSA's 2025 Occupation Shortage List finds cybersecurity governance, risk and compliance specialists remain in shortage nationally, with estimates that 85,000 dedicated cybersecurity roles will need to be filled by 2030.

Critically, applied business and IT skills do not apply to single occupations. They cut across multiple industries and roles, and Australia's employment projections for the decade ahead confirm they remain central to workforce growth across all sectors.

UNSW College will launch an Applied Degree in Engineering Technology, focusing on energy. This directly addresses the specific workforce needs of Australia's clean energy transformation, an area of significant sovereign skills shortage. JSA's landmark Clean Energy Capacity Study calls for a whole-of-government approach built on cooperative partnerships between business, the VET sector and universities: precisely the model UNSW College's Applied Degree in Engineering Technology is designed to deliver.

TAFE/VET Pathway will expand seamless transitions for vocational graduates

The TAFE/VET Pathway maps students' eligibility for between 24 and 72 units of credit; equivalent to 6-18 months of full-time study. Current pathways include social work, engineering, information systems, civil engineering, science, and environmental management.

UNSW will expand pathways to an additional six degrees, including Bachelor of Cyber Security, bringing the total number of degrees available through the UNSW TAFE Pathway to 27. This will assist more students entering UNSW from TAFE and VET backgrounds and support UNSW's widening participation targets, including students from low SES and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

Partnership with Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) will increase the pipeline of engineers

New engineering courses will be developed and delivered by UNSW in Canberra. Discussions with CIT include potential delivery cooperation in skill-centric components of courses and WIL through cooperative internships. Facilitated articulation for CIT graduates with advanced standing into an Engineering Australia accredited course is part of the design.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Domestic students admitted to a bachelor course on the basis of VET	UNSW actuals, 2025	97	117	130 by 2031
Number of Applied Degrees developed by UNSW College, and enrolments in them	UNSW College enrolment data, 2026	The first 2 applied degrees launched in 2026	120 students enrolled across three new applied degrees to go live in 2027	750 students enrolled across seven applied degrees by 2029

Research

Sustaining national capability and supporting innovation through research and research training

Vision

UNSW excels in research, including knowledge development, innovation, entrepreneurship, and translation.

Our research ecosystem, training, and strategic national and global collaborations, enables UNSW to sustain national capability and support innovation through research and research training. UNSW's integrated infrastructure ecosystem and research training approach, particularly in science and engineering (including defence), health and medicine, enables us to build Australia's pipeline of higher degree research graduates.

Research inspired teaching informs our student experience and graduate employment outcomes. The research nexus is crucial to our enhanced education approach in a digital and AI world, with distinct value for students which cannot be replicated through other forms of education.

Action

UNSW's globally competitive programs support the national researcher pipeline

UNSW is growing the research talent pipeline, including for HDR students. Our Scientia PhDs include a 4 year scholarship package including a professional development allowance, roughly doubling the typical stipend. Candidates work with leading UNSW researchers on projects aligned with strategic research areas, including a career mentor supervisor supporting continued engagement through a structured, cohort-based development program through the 4 years.

- 405 candidates enrolled over the life of the scheme
- 2,057 publications
- 85% of candidates globally engaged
- 58% of outputs with global collaborators
- 86% completion rate, with 65% employed at universities, 16% in research organisations and government, and 13% in business.

Our strategic recruitment and retention programs for world-leading researchers also include Industry PhDs, Green Fellowships, and Scientia Academics. UNSW will strengthen Indigenous HDR recruitment and expand global engagement opportunities through student mobility, joint PhDs, and strategic international partnerships, including the Horizon Program.

UNSW's unified Researcher Capability Framework will support consistent standards and pathways across career lifecycles, with AI literacy, industry engagement, and diverse career pathways as core capabilities. This will further strengthen Australia's domestic HDR pipeline, research training capacity, and industry-engaged research workforce.

Build collaboration and interdisciplinary partnerships

UNSW will launch two large-scale, multi-partner Missions in 2027 that address national and global challenges and sovereign priorities. Multidisciplinary, trans-institutional teams, including students and HDR, in collaboration with industry, government and international partners, will be supported by major infrastructure including the Health Translation Hub and Integrated Acute Services Building.

Accelerate research translation, commercial impact, and entrepreneurship

UNSW will expand commercialisation initiatives including UNSW Founders Startup Accelerators, increasing expansion in Western Sydney, the Trailblazer for Recycling and Clean Energy, and strengthened investment pathways via High Street Ventures and Barker Street Ventures.

Strengthen a future-ready research infrastructure ecosystem

UNSW's shared facility principles will be embedded across research infrastructure. The Research Data Experience program will ensure secure, efficient data storage. UNSW will deliver a GPU roadmap and investment plan for secure, scalable, future-ready research capability across priority national research domains.

Teaching and entrepreneurship research-informed infrastructure

Expand and maintain our extensive high-quality research, workplace simulations, and makerspaces to support evolution in research-informed teaching, and student entrepreneurship at scale - currently around 12,000 students per year.

These will be enabled through targeted investments in research systems, digital capability, and operational infrastructure to improve research effectiveness, collaboration, and data management.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
HDR completions	UNSW supplied, 2025	925	805	945 in 2028
Number of startups supported	UNSW supplied, 2025	252	275	290 in 2028
Total HERDC income per academic full-time equivalent ($K)	UNSW supplied (2025, using 2024 HERDC data)	314.8	313.5 *Note: targets are pre-set based on year on year % growth. Baseline data is based on a particularly strong year.*	329.2 in 2027 HERDC data, to be finalised in July 2028

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.