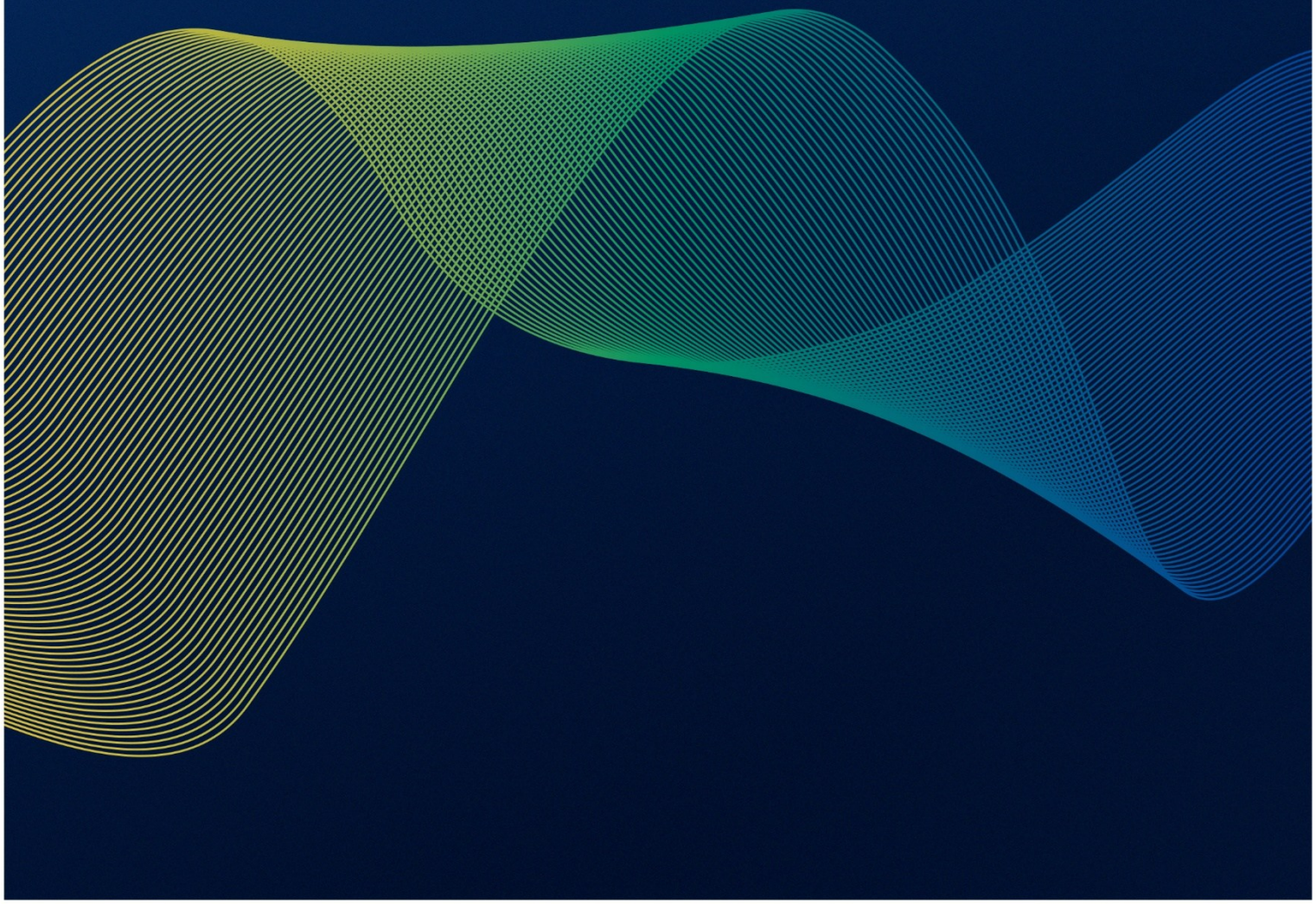
Australian Government

ATEC
Australian Tertiary Education Commission

University of Southern Queensland

2027 mission based compact between the ATEC and University of Southern Queensland



Preface

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

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

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

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

Contents

Preface **2**

Section 1: Context **4**

Mission statement 4

Enrolment strategy and priorities 5

Section 2: Performance domains **7**

National, State/territory and regional priorities 7

First Nations 9

Equity 11

Quality teaching 13

Joined-up tertiary system 15

Research 17

Section 3: Course and campus changes **19**

Section 1: Context

Mission statement

UniSQ was established nearly 60 years ago in response to a push from the people of Toowoomba to have their own higher education organisation. Today we serve the communities of Ipswich and West Moreton, Toowoomba, the Darling Downs, and South West Queensland. Our success is chiefly measured by what we deliver for these communities, although we educate students and deliver research impact across a much greater geographic footprint.

Our communities are experiencing significant growth, but participation in higher education remains low across the region. For example, the Ipswich population increased from 358,440 to 408,779 between 2019 and 2024, while bachelor-level attainment remains low across our catchments.

We work alongside communities, industries, and governments to support regional prosperity. Through our campuses at Ipswich, Toowoomba and Springfield, and our broader regional footprint, we strengthen local economies, build capability, and enhance quality of life. Our work is enabled through integrated, place-based initiatives such as the Southern Queensland Education Alliance (SQEA), which connects education, research and workforce development to deliver practical outcomes for our communities. Deep and sustained partnerships underpin three core commitments: strengthening a connected tertiary system, expanding place-based access and participation, and translating research into real-world impact.

UniSQ is a comprehensive university focused on delivering workforce pipelines for our regions. Growth is essential to delivering the skilled workforce and opportunities our regions require, and to creating financial opportunities for the University to reinvest in our communities.

To achieve growth, we need to design programs and access to them in ways that meet our students' needs. We must double down on our mission to:

- create pathways for students who are typically under-represented, including First Nations students
- design programs that fit in with their lives, including the need for most of our students to work
- minimise cost to students where possible (e.g. by taking learning to them).

This is not just about delivering on the Accord's ambitions. We know the best way to meet the workforce needs of our regional communities is to educate and train students locally and we cannot achieve this without creating opportunities for under-represented groups.

Our research is defined by quality, relevance, and impact, delivered through four University Flagships that are relevant to our region: Health; Space, Defence and Advanced Technology; Agriculture, Climate and Environment; and Community and Regional Development. We focus on solving major challenges with world-class researchers, delivering measurable social, economic, and environmental benefit, plus academic engagement at the highest level. Working in partnership with industry, government, and various communities, we design research that translates knowledge into action, informs policy and practice, strengthens regional resilience, but is internationally recognised for its excellence.

UniSQ's compact commitments reflect 6 mutually reinforcing priorities:

- growing workforce-aligned pipeline in areas of national and regional need
- embedding First Nations leadership and lifting First Nations student retention
- lifting participation and attainment for equity cohorts
- strengthening the quality of teaching in both in-person and online environments
- building a joined-up tertiary system through SQEA and TAFE pathways
- translating applied research into regional, national and industry impact.

Enrolment strategy and priorities

UniSQ is focused on delivering growth aligned to regional workforce demand, expanding participation for under-represented cohorts, and strengthening place-based delivery across Southern Queensland. This approach contributes to national priorities for skills, equity, and participation. Growth will be concentrated in undergraduate enrolments aligned to workforce need, supported by improved participation and progression across equity cohorts.

Our students are predominantly mature-age, balancing study with work, family and community commitments. Enrolments are largely part-time (mean = 0.56 Equivalent Full-time Student Load (EFTSL) /student per annum), with a significant proportion studying online or in multimodal (over 50% of course enrolments are online). In 2026, we anticipate 12,727 total EFTSL, 80% undergraduate, 15% postgraduate coursework and 5% Higher Degree by Research (HDR).

Over 79% of our domestic Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) students are from under-represented cohorts (Table 1). A key strategic priority is to increase participation among these cohorts and to strengthen conversion through enabling and pathway programs, including Fee-Free Uni Ready (FFUR) offerings, and create visible pathways between the vocational sector and our programs.

Table 1: 2025 student cohort analysis (based on postcode).

Student equity group	% of total CSPs
Regional and remote backgrounds	46%
First in family	32%
Low socio-economic	30%
First Nations	6%
First language other than English	12%
Disability	11%

UniSQ delivers education across three campuses, Toowoomba, Springfield and Ipswich serving a broad demographic of students. We have deep regional connections and can leverage community-based locations to support participation across regional and remote communities. UniSQ is the only university delivering a Health program entirely in a ‘very remote’ location (Charleville), and we intend on expanding this place-based model, with Regional University Study Hubs, local communities and regional partners such as Hospital and Health Services, to help communities build and retain their own workforce. Participation in higher education across UniSQ’s catchment is uneven, as per Table 2.

Table 2: Bachelor-level qualification rate, non-school qualifications, persons aged 15 years and over (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Region	Bachelor-level qualification rate
Toowoomba	13.7%
Ipswich	11.2%
Darling Downs/Maranoa	8.7%
Brisbane	25%

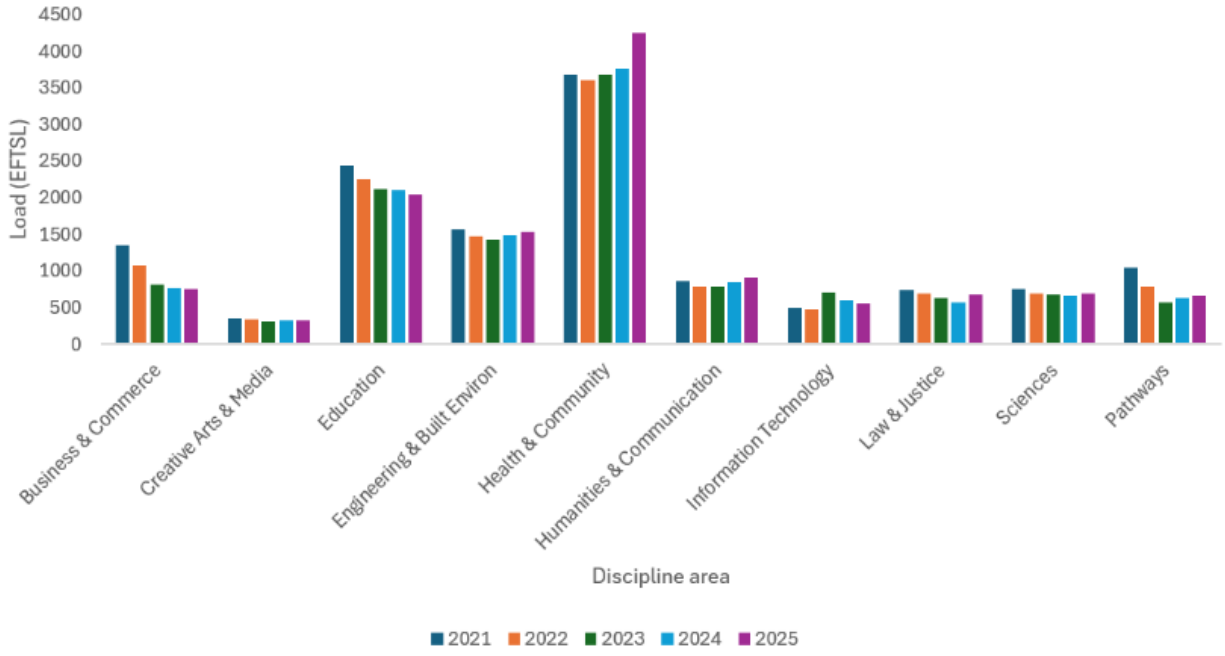
To support regional workforce needs and national participation targets, UniSQ aims to lift Bachelor attainment across its catchment and grow enrolments aligned to each location. Demand will not be realised through a single growth model, but through differentiated, place-based responses, that expand participation in low-attainment regions while capturing growth in rapidly expanding urban corridors.

UniSQ has a long-standing strength in online and external delivery, which remains critical to serving non-traditional students across geographically dispersed communities. However, future growth will require focus on multimodal and place-based delivery. In 2027, the University will review the ‘in person’ student experience, with an expected increase in on-campus and multimodal forms of delivery.

International students contribute to the learning experience and cultural diversity of our communities. Over the next 3-5 years, UniSQ will focus on diversifying the international student profile and growing load, particularly through transnational education partnerships and onshore HDR students.

UniSQ's course portfolio (Figure 1) demonstrates alignment with workforce demand across Southern Queensland and national priority areas. In partnership with local health and hospital services, we are seeing strong growth in Nursing and Allied Health graduates, strengthening workforce pipelines in high-growth, high-need regions including West Moreton, Darling Downs and the South West. This is expected to continue in 2027 as we expand our Health program suite. We also anticipate significant growth in Society and Culture disciplines (including Psychology, Welfare studies, Law and Justice) through new program development, expanded capacity, and incremental increases as we review our postgraduate offers to CSP students.

Figure 1: UniSQ EFTSL **l**oad **t**rends by disciplinary area, 2021-2025.



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

Queensland is experiencing strong population growth, increasing demand for health, community, education and infrastructure services, and persistent workforce shortages across regional areas. UniSQ is responding by expanding participation (including place-based learning opportunities), retention and completion in workforce priority disciplines, strengthening the supply of skilled professionals for our regions.

UniSQ will deliver workforce-aligned growth in Nursing, Allied Health, Psychology, Social work, Education and Engineering supported by integrated school, VET and higher education pathways, strong industry partnerships and flexible delivery. These areas reflect national, Queensland and regional priorities, where demand for health, social services, teaching and technical capability continues to outpace supply.

Action

Access and participation

Consistent with the Queensland Government's workforce priorities, we seek to strengthen the pipeline from school to tertiary study, in addressing the workforce needs of our regions. Our work with TAFE and the VET sector aligns with the Right Skills Strategy and complements Queensland's investment in regional training capacity. Our initiatives include:

- Expand delivery of Health programs across our regional locations, leveraging study hubs and community-based models, to support workforce pipelines in West Moreton, Darling Downs and the South West.
- Scale place-based delivery across priority areas, including Society and Culture (psychology, social work, and criminology), Initial Teacher Education, and Early Childhood Education, to improve access and support retention in regions with persistent participation gaps.
- Consistent with national priorities and our regions' needs, grow workforce capacity in housing construction and infrastructure through engineering, surveying and construction programs, supported by partnerships with TAFE and industry, and through engaging employers.
- Enhance Australia's sovereign capability, and contribute to our regions' growth, by building on our research strengths in space, defence and food security, and growing enrolments in our programs in these areas.

Build a stronger pipeline through integrated pathways

- Expand school-to-university and VET-to-University pathways supporting Queensland priorities to strengthen school-to-tertiary pipelines and improve participation across diverse cohorts.
- Scale enabling, diploma and pathway programs to support access and preparation for regional, low SES and First Nations students.
- Strengthen credit recognition and articulation to properly recognise the skills and experience our students bring with them to higher education, initially focusing on disciplines with workforce demand.
- Strengthen industry alignment to improve workforce outcomes in priority sectors by, for example, Partner with regional health services and other regional industry partners in program design and placement delivery to strengthen workforce pipelines.

Improve student success, retention and completion in priority areas

- Expand proactive advising, early intervention and tailored academic support, particularly in the Society and Culture field to support student success.
- Strengthen flexible delivery, digital learning and multimodal models to support participation and success for regional and non-traditional learners.
- Support equity cohorts with tailored transition and retention initiatives aligned to priority workforce fields and regional need.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
06 Health				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	3,237	3,570 Expected 10% growth resulting from the introduction of new Pharmacy program and Allied Health programs (increased intake in quota managed programs, particularly Paramedicine, and Allied Health suite)	3,690 by 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	88.72%	Targeted strategies to improve program and course design and support students to succeed	90% by 2030
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	75.73%	1.25% increase in retention consistent with University-wide strategies	80% by 2030
09 Society and Culture				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	2,640	2,981 Expected 13% growth resulting from a review of program suites in areas like Business, IT, Counselling, Social Work; and expected growth from a new Criminology program	3,036 by 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	78.32%	Targeted strategies to improve program and course design and support students to succeed	80% by 2030
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	69.37%	1.25% increase in retention consistent with University-wide strategies	80% by 2030

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

UniSQ recognises First Nations peoples as distinct rights-holders, knowledge holders and partners in shaping our future. UniSQ is committed to a whole-of-university approach where First Nations leadership, strong governance, and respectful partnerships with communities guide our decisions, policies and practices.

By 2027, UniSQ will deliver improved access, participation and success outcomes for First Nations students, supported by culturally safe environments, strengthened pathways into higher education and employment, and coordinated whole-of-university action aligned to community priorities and national commitments.

Action

Self-determination

- First Nations leadership at UniSQ is embedded at the highest level, with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations) a member of the University Executive and First Nations representation on University Council, ensuring First Nations perspectives and cultural authority shape decision-making.
- First Nations perspectives inform policy, resource allocation, education, research and workforce priorities.
- Through dedicated First Nations leadership positions and representative governance structures, such as key decision-making roles on the University Research Committee and Ethics Committee, the University seeks to ensure First Nations peoples have a meaningful role in shaping decision, priorities and outcomes that affect them.

Access and pathways

- Expand outreach, school and community engagement, and targeted enabling and transition initiatives.
- Deliver flexible pathways recognising prior learning and experience.
- Expand enabling and pathway programs at Toowoomba and Ipswich.
- Provide supported pathways into employment for First Nations students and graduates.

Participation and student experience

- Embed cultural safety as a foundational principle across all institutional levels.
- Integrate cultural safety into leadership KPI’s, supported by mandatory onboarding and annual refresher training.
- Provide culturally informed, wraparound student support to strengthen belonging, retention, and wellbeing.
- Expand targeted academic and student support programs.

Success and outcomes

- Support First Nations student progression and retention with a targeted early intervention initiative in 2027.
- Strengthened transition-to-employment outcomes through industry-linked pathways and support.

Community partnerships and place-based engagement

- Strengthen engagement with First Nations communities across Southern Queensland through sustained, place-based partnerships.
- Establish a Vice-Chancellor’s First Nations Cultural Governance Advisory Circle of Elders, Traditional Owners and Valued community representatives.
- Ensure work is guided by respectful engagement, shared accountability and measurable impact.
- Expand co-designed education, research and workforce initiatives that reflect community priorities.

- Build on established place-based education delivery models, including Nursing programs in Charleville (launched in 2022, 22% First Nations representation) and Geraldton Universities Centre (11 UniSQ First Nations Nursing students graduated through GUC), demonstrating scalable community-connected education.

Cultural capability

- Embed First Nations knowledges within curriculum, learning, teaching and research activity.
- Integrate First Nations cultural contributions as a measurable component of academic work, performance and progression.
- Strengthen the evidence base to monitor outcomes and drive continuous improvement.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
First Nations total enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	627	Increase in total First Nations enrolments by 2% (640)	750 by 2030
First Nations success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	72.64%	Pilot project of targeted support strategies to begin in 2027	78% by 2030
First Nations retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	64.02%	Initial consultation, scoping and planning of targeted retention strategies to begin in 2027	70% 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

UniSQ is committed to improving access, participation and attainment for underrepresented groups and priority cohorts. We meet members of our communities 'where they are' providing multiple pathways to higher education and scaffolding learning and success for students from diverse backgrounds.

As a regional university serving communities where educational attainment remains below national averages, we combine place-based outreach, enabling education, flexible delivery, scholarships, pathways and the national Study Hub network to reduce barriers across the student lifecycle.

Our approach enables students to study where they live, while strengthening pathways, belonging, retention and student success for our equity students.

Action

UniSQ is guided by a simple principle: all students should be able to access high-quality tertiary education, regardless of where they live, their socioeconomic circumstances, or their pathway into higher education. We serve a diverse student population, including many learners who face additional barriers to participation and success. While these factors can influence student retention, UniSQ is committed to providing the support, flexibility and engagement opportunities that enable students to thrive and complete their studies.

Coordinated equity strategy

- Implement a whole-of-university application-to-completion framework for under-represented groups that links access, participation, retention and completion.
- Coordinate delivery of equity outcomes across organisational areas with clear accountability.

Access and place-based participation

- Expand participation through partnerships with schools, communities, Regional University Study Hubs and regional organisations, supporting students to access higher education where they live.
- Expand place-based delivery models that remove geographic barriers to participation, building on initiatives such as the Charleville Nursing Program, to bring higher education into regional communities.
- Lead the development of the Inala Study Hub to reduce structural barriers for people in the Inala-Richlands community.
- Provide equity scholarships and financial assistance supporting participation, placements, relocation and study costs.

Pathways and preparedness

- Expand enabling and pathway programs, including FFUR, UniPrep and alternative entry pathways to support participation and preparation for under-represented learners.
- Strengthen progression from VET to higher education through articulation pathways, pathway programs and targeted transition support.

Participation and student experience

- Expand support for students with disability through accessibility initiatives including expansion of universal design for learning.
- Develop affordable and accessible (open access) learning materials for first year courses in priority program areas
- Strengthen support for incarcerated students, noting UniSQ has one of Australia's largest correctional education cohorts, with 728 active students studying through UniSQ in 2025.

Success, retention and completion

Student success rates have continued to improve and, through sustained investment in evidence-based support strategies, we expect this progress to translate into stronger retention outcomes in the future.

- Scale proactive advising and early-intervention approaches to support students at key transition points across our programs.
- Embed integrated support at high-risk transition points (entry, first year, pathway-to-degree transition).

Measure

Indicator	Cohort	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Total enrolments	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2025	1,633	4.5% growth in line with overall University load growth	1,796 by 2030
Total enrolments	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2025	4,518	4.5% growth in line with overall University load growth and growth from TAFE partnership	4,971 by 2030
Total enrolments	Regional	HESC – Verified 2025	5,806	4.5% growth in line with overall University load growth	6,388 by 2030
Total enrolments	Remote	HESC – Verified 2025	271	4.5% growth in line with overall University load growth	298 by 2030
Success	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	76.04%	1.25% increase in retention consistent with University-wide strategies	80% by 2030
Success	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	81.59%	1.25% increase in retention consistent with University-wide strategies	85.5% by 2030
Success	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	83.50%	1.25% increase in retention consistent with University-wide strategies	87.5% by 2030
Success	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	83.63%	1.25% increase in retention consistent with University-wide strategies	88% by 2030
Retention	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	65.81%	1.25% increase in retention consistent with University-wide strategies	69% by 2030
Retention	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	71.81%	1.25% increase in retention consistent with University-wide strategies	75.5% by 2030
Retention	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	72.16%	1.25% increase in retention consistent with University-wide strategies	76% by 2030
Retention	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	81.82%	1.25% increase in retention consistent with University-wide strategies	86% by 2030

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

UniSQ will deliver inclusive, industry-connected learning experiences that respond to the needs of its diverse and predominantly regional student population. Our flexible, future-ready curriculum is informed by the needs of communities, employers, and First Nations partners, ensuring every student, including those from first-in-family and equity backgrounds, thrives.

UniSQ will implement systematic course and program improvement initiatives in parallel to strategies to improve monitoring of teaching quality, and professional development in teaching for our academic staff. This approach recognises that teaching quality depends on the capability of educators, the quality and authenticity of assessment, and active academic governance.

Action

Building teaching capability and quality

- Develop and implement a Graduate Certificate in Higher Education for academics, with fees covered.
- Maintain Institutional Advance HE accreditation and support teaching excellence through the LIFT Fellowship Scheme. In 2026, UniSQ has 113 Advance HE Fellows across academic and professional staff, with a further 29 Fellowship applications progressing. Approximately 1 in 5 teaching and research academics holds a Fellowship or higher. We will track attainment of HEA recognition in coming years.
- Review the professional development program and introduce minimum annual teaching PD for all teaching academics.
- Review and relaunch our peer-review of teaching program (Collegial Observation of Learning and Teaching).

Reforming assessment

- Launch a reimagined approach to assessment that assures student learning while supporting students' development across their program of study so, that upon graduation, they are capable of self-assessment to guide their ongoing professional development.
- Continue to redesign assessment tasks around authentic, AI-aware, industry- and region-connected challenges, co-designed with employers and community partners.

Re-imagine learning experiences

- Improve pedagogical approaches to in-person teaching, to improve the in-person learning experience for our students.

Recognising and rewarding excellence

- Deliver refreshed UniSQ Learning and Teaching Awards and expand support for national teaching award nominations.
- Expand Students-as-Partners projects so students are full partners in shaping quality teaching and learning.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Overall educational experience	QILT SES – Verified 2025	71.0%	2% increase in 2027	77.5% by 2030
Skills development	QILT SES – Verified 2025	76.2%	2% increase in 2027, with the disruptions caused by AI and geopolitical issues, our goal is to focus on the learner	79.5% by 2030
Teaching quality and engagement	QILT SES – Verified 2025	73.5%	2% increase in 2027 in line with teaching capability initiatives	79.5% by 2030
Learning resources	QILT SES – Verified 2025	82.5%	0.5-1.5% increase in 2027	85.5% by 2030

Joined-up tertiary system

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

Vision

UniSQ will deliver an integrated and navigable tertiary education system for Southern Queensland, where vocational and higher education pathways are clear, credit-bearing, and supported, and where prior learning gained through formal study, work, and life experience is consistently recognised.

As a regionally embedded university, UniSQ works in partnership with TAFE Queensland and the Southern Queensland Education Alliance (SQEA) to strengthen pathways in priority workforce fields.

Action

UniSQ will establish a 2027 implementation program with TAFE Queensland to identify, approve, publish and support credit-bearing pathways and to harmonise curriculum in priority UniSQ bachelor programs. Throughout the year, UniSQ will improve transitions between vocational and higher education through transparent credit recognition and recognition of prior learning (RPL) processes and demonstrate through data that VET-pathway students not only access higher education but succeed and progress to employment outcomes.

In addition to our partnership with TAFE Queensland, we will partner with other VET providers and leverage our own Registered Training Organisations to build pathways into priority program areas including early childhood education, health, digital technology and community services.

Strengthen institutional readiness for national credit recognition reform

- Appoint a named institutional lead for credit recognition reform and complete a National Credit Recognition Framework (NCRF) readiness review in 2027.
- Map current credit policy, delegations and pathway agreements against emerging NCRF principles.

Expand structured, credit-bearing pathways with the vocational sector

- Formalise at least three new credit articulation agreements with TAFE Queensland in priority workforce fields by December 2027.
- Grow commencing domestic bachelor students, admitted under basis of vocational study from 345 in 2025 to 450 in 2027.
- Move to implementation of standard credit for discipline-aligned vocational qualifications.
- Work with TAFE (Brisbane) to harmonise vocational and university curricula with a view to shortening total duration of study.

Improve visibility and navigation of credit precedence, including VET-to-higher education pathways

- Publish and maintain a public credit precedent list covering all active VET-to-higher-education articulation pathways.

Improve timeliness, consistency and visibility of processes

- Implement service standards for processing of RPL applications.
- Establish a documented quality assurance process to support consistent decision-making.

Expand place-based access and support for VET-pathway students

- Strengthen access, belonging, progression and retention for VET-pathway students through locally delivered and supported study options.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Average credit awarded to commencing domestic bachelor students articulating from VET with recognised credit, by VET qualification level and pathway	UniSQ data – 2025. TCSI and UniSQ Peoplesoft System merge	32% of first year across all VET basis entrants (2.54 of 8 units) 48% for diploma entrants (3.82 units) 59% for associate degree and advanced diploma entrants (4.75 units)	Publish a credit precedent list with a guaranteed minimum credit for every active pathway, expressed as a proportion of first year, and standardise credit quantum across all SQEA pathways	Average credit for all VET basis entrants lifted to at least 45% of first year by 2030
Commencing domestic bachelor students articulating from VET with a full year of credit	UniSQ data – 2025. TCSI and UniSQ Peoplesoft System merge	345	450, supported by at least 3 new SQEA articulation agreements and additional CSPs	690 by 2030

Research

Sustaining national capability and supporting innovation through research and research training

Vision

UniSQ's research vision is to sustain national capability and drive innovation through high-impact, applied research and aligned research training. This includes clearly structured Higher Degree by Research (HDR) programs linked to UniSQ's flagships, and industry-engaged PhD pathways that build workforce capability and support both Australia's sovereign priorities, and community and industry needs.

In 2027, UniSQ will strengthen research capability through continued targeted investment in domestic HDR completion, industry engagement and applied research outcomes aligned to national and regional priorities.

Action

Research training and workforce development

- Deliver high-quality supervision to support HDR students through their candidature aligned to 2030 targets.
- Strengthen the domestic HDR pipeline and workforce outcomes through strengthened undergraduate transitions to research programs (priority project in 2026) and external recruitment aligned to our Flagships.
- Continue to grow industry embedded PhDs, internships and co-designed research with partners in priority sectors.
- Continue increasing research scholarships funded through external research funding, aligned to industry demand.
- Support First Nations students to undertake research targeted scholarships and identification and mentoring of First Nations students in bachelors degree to research pathways.

Research capability

- Support interdisciplinary collaboration and concentrate effort where UniSQ has established impact and emerging strength.
- Embed multidisciplinary, collaborative processes in delivering research impact at scale.
- Prioritise national priority research areas and UniSQ flagships through targeted recruitment, infrastructure investment, HDR load in aligned programs.
- Activate major research initiatives and schemes (including Future Drought Fund, Trailblazer programs and CRC participation) to drive scale in research income and industry collaboration.

Industry-integrated research

- Establish structured industry-embedded research pathways, including: HDR internships, co-funded PhDs, and ECR fellowships with co-location options.
- Formalise and expand a staff mobility program to support two-way movement between UniSQ and industry partners.
- Embed industry engagement expectations in UniSQ's Academic Employee Expectations Framework, and development programs.

Partnerships

- Prioritise co-designed research projects (including through partnerships with First Nations interest groups), contract and collaborative research, and pathways that support the translation of research into practice, policy and commercial outcomes.
- Establish and expand research precincts and co-location models to embed industry partners on campus and accelerate translation outcomes.
- Develop a concierge-style service for industry to be able to access University expertise and resources (both staff capability and infrastructure).

Research culture and capability

- Foster an environment that values collaboration, integrity and impact.
- Build researcher capability to secure competitive funding, lead large-scale collaborative projects and supervise HDR candidates to completion.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Domestic HDR completions (annual total)	UniSQ – preliminary 2025 HDR completions reported through TCSI	102	3-5% increase in domestic HDR completions	120 at end 2030
Domestic HDR commencements	UniSQ supplied – 2025	113	5-7% increase in domestic HDR commencements	145 at end 2030
All research income (annual total)	Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) reportable income, plus Other income from consultancies (UniSQ system) – 2025	$39.74 million (including $36.97 million HERDC reportable income)	$41.73 million (5% increase)	$50 million at end 2030
Number of National Industry PhD and CSIRO Industry PhD awards	UniSQ supplied – 2025	8 (comprising of 5 NiPhD and 3 CSIRO iPhD)	10 by end of 2027	15 by end 2030

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.