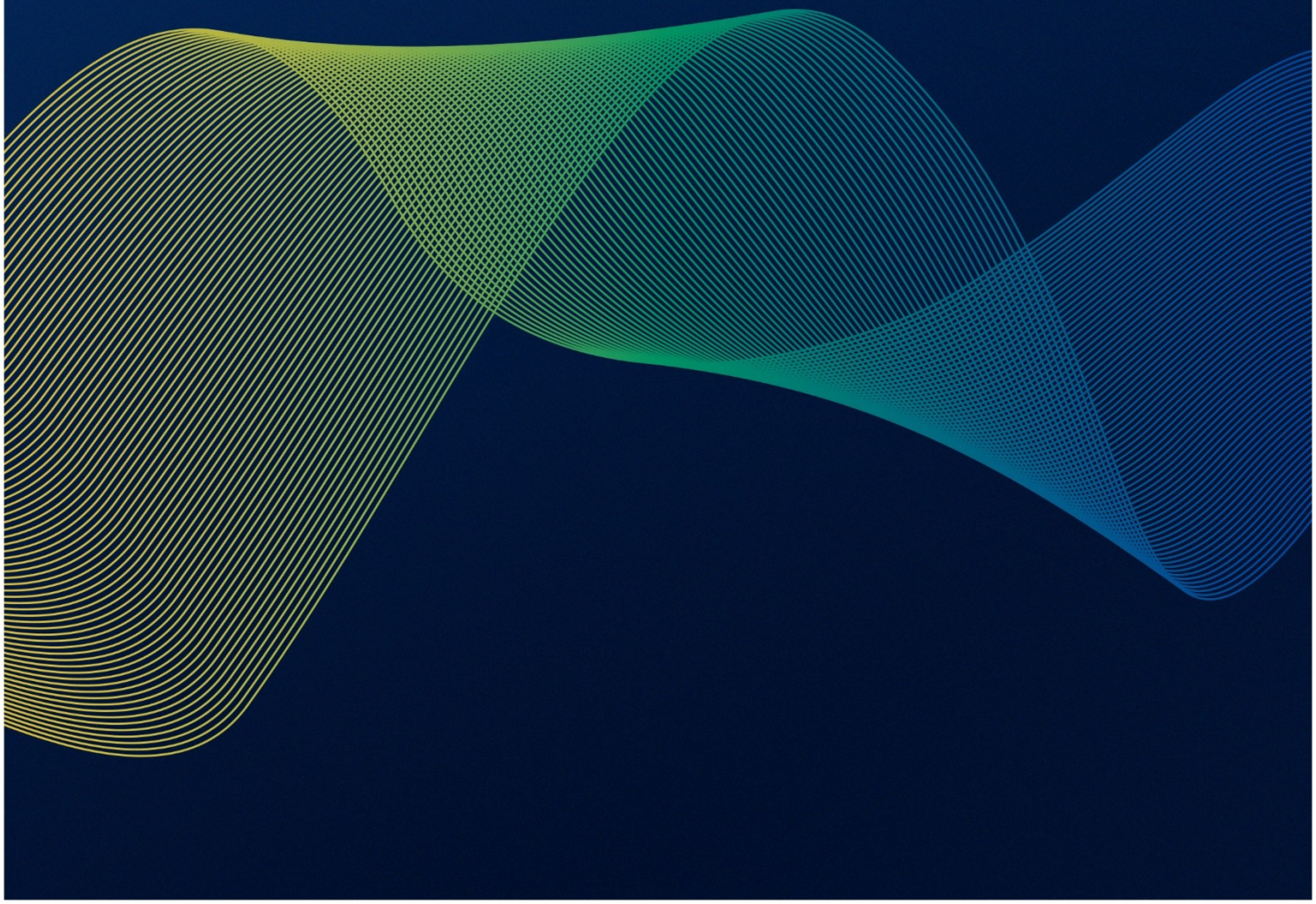
Australian Government

ATEC
Australian Tertiary Education Commission

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG AUSTRALIA

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



Preface

This mission based compact is established between the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) and the University of Wollongong 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 Wollongong 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 Wollongong. 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 Wollongong'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 Wollongong's academic freedom.

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

The ATEC must assess the University of Wollongong'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 Wollongong 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 Wollongong 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 Wollongong'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 Wollongong 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 Wollongong as needed, to discuss the University of Wollongong's progress towards meeting the terms of this compact. If the University of Wollongong 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 Wollongong's control, the University of Wollongong 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

In late-2025, the University of Wollongong (UOW) released its Vision 2035 and Strategic Plan 2030, which clearly articulates our purpose to create and apply knowledge that empowers people, strengthens communities and supports a resilient and sustainable world.

The University is driven by a strong mission, built upon our regional origins and enhanced by a long-standing global presence that has supported our ability to think global, act local and deliver impact through partnership. As we look towards our 60th anniversary, our Vision 2035 sets a bold direction: empowering student success, delivering world-leading teaching and research, and driving local and global impact, UOW will be recognised among the world's top 100 universities.

Our strategic approach is defined by four pillars that reflect the enduring strengths and values woven into UOW's DNA and guiding the decade ahead:

- **Student experience and success:** Australia's leading university in student equity, experience and employability.
- **Local impact:** A powerhouse for innovation, economic prosperity and social impact, harnessing our regional strength from the Illawarra to Greater Sydney.
- **Global excellence and connection:** An interconnected, world-leading university with a long-standing international presence.
- **Better together:** A values-driven culture grounded in trust, inclusion and respect.

UOW's distinctive mission is to lift higher-education attainment in communities where it is lowest – across the Illawarra, regional NSW and, more recently, South West Sydney. By placing campuses where attainment lags and demand is high, from the South Coast and Southern Highlands to Liverpool, UOW connects industry-aligned education in engineering, health, education and technology with VET-to-university pathways that build the skilled workforce these communities need.

Our Strategic Plan 2030 aligns firmly with ATEC's interim Statement of Strategic Priorities, and includes specific goals relating to equity, First Nations engagement, quality teaching, a joined-up tertiary system and research. These goals, spanning education, research, engagement and partnership, direct our focus and are delivered through our Strategy Execution Framework that operationalises our Strategic Plan.

This Compact reflects UOW's proven record and commitment to widening access, supporting student success and delivering education and research that responds to local workforce needs and national priorities, and builds on long-standing pathways through partnerships with TAFE and UOW College.

This mission is high-performing: UOW was the top public university in Australia for overall student satisfaction (2024 QILT), and sustains strong success and retention despite a high equity-cohort share, achieving success rates of 90.8%, 87.9% and 84.3% for regional, low-SES and students with disability cohorts, with strength in priority Fields of Education including Nursing, Education, Engineering and Information Technology, and First Nations enrolment (3.9%) above local parity (3.6%).

Demand for university study in UOW's equity-rich catchments remains strong. The additional funded places for growth allocated by ATEC, together with the commencing glidepath agreed will support UOW to transition sustainably to the new funding arrangements while maintaining access for students from equity backgrounds. This allocation will enable UOW to respond to demonstrated demand, preserve equitable access, lift attainment and deliver the skilled graduates needed to support national, state and regional priorities and the Accord's ambitions for increased participation and attainment.

Enrolment strategy and priorities

In 2027, UOW will pursue sustainable, evidence-based growth where student demand, workforce need, regional presence and pathways intersect, sustaining equity participation, strengthening pathways, and expanding in South West Sydney. UOW's 2025 domestic undergraduate commencing cohort comprises 53% school leavers and 47% non-school leavers. UOW College adds supported diploma, vocational and University Entrance Program pathways, into UOW degrees, with a 75.0% first-year pass rate for 2025 entrants. The success rate of domestic bachelor students admitted on the basis of VET is 90.6%.

Demand from equity cohorts in UOW's catchments is very strong, and early admission data for 2027 shows a marked increase in applications. The additional Commonwealth supported places allocated by ATEC will enable UOW to scale proven programs aligned with ATEC's Statement of Strategic Priorities, including targeted enabling, pathway and outreach initiatives. UOW will focus on converting this demand into enrolments within its agreed allocation, supporting as many prospective students as possible to take up a funded place at university.

Education in place

UOW will expand places at its campuses close to where students live, and provide access for regional students to attend Wollongong campus with retention support such as the Country to Coast Scholarship, growing higher education opportunities at locations where higher education participation lags national averages. In Liverpool, only 20.1% of adults hold a bachelor degree, compared with 33.4% across Greater Sydney. Attainment is lower still in UOW's regional and coastal catchments, at 9.6% in Shellharbour and 10.6% in Shoalhaven, with Year 12 completion rates of 41.2% and 40.6% respectively, compared with 43% across regional NSW.

A key priority for 2027 is growth in South Western Sydney, aligning UOW's Liverpool course mix and pathways to workforce need. UOW currently has just over 1,700 students studying at Liverpool, and with a campus redevelopment underway, is projecting more than 3,000 students by 2030 and approximately 6,000 by 2039.

UOW's Nursing program (2,255 enrolments, 98% domestic success) is a base to expand joined-up TAFE and UOW College pathways. UOW College also delivers enabling and diploma pathways at Liverpool across nursing, business, information technology, and medical and health sciences, together with the University Entrance Program, supporting local students to progress into UOW degrees.

Current and planned study areas at UOW Liverpool, outlined below, are aligned with local workforce needs and will strengthen South Western Sydney's health workforce. Building on existing nursing, medicine and health sciences, exercise science and rehabilitation offerings, UOW plans to add psychology from 2028 and physiotherapy from 2029, subject to course approval, to coincide with the opening of the second stage of our new Liverpool Campus.

Table 1: current and planned study areas at UOW Liverpool

2026	2027	2028	2029
Law	Law	Law	Law
Criminology	Criminology	Criminology	Criminology
Business	Business	Business	Business
Accounting	Accounting	Accounting	Accounting
Information Technology	Information Technology	Information Technology	Information Technology
Computer Science	Computer Science	Computer Science	Computer Science
Nursing	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing
Social Work	Social Work	Social Work	Social Work
Primary Education	Primary Education	Primary Education	Primary Education
Exercise Science	Exercise Science	Exercise Science	Exercise Science
Medical and Health Sciences	Medical and Health Sciences	Medical and Health Sciences	Medical and Health Sciences
-	Pre-Medicine	Pre-Medicine	Pre-Medicine
-	-	Psychology*	Psychology*
-	-	-	Physiotherapy*

Table 1 notes:

1. Building 2 (opening 2028) increases campus facilities by approximately 200%.

2. Study areas operating in Building 1 as of 2027 will increase student intake and/or add additional courses drawing on the additional laboratories in Building 2. Nursing laboratories will remain in Building 1.

** Subject to course approval.*

Equity participation and success

A defining feature of UOW's approach is its sustained record in equity outcomes – enrolling, supporting and graduating students from regional and low-SES communities. As outlined in the equity section below, UOW has seen a strong increase in demand from equity cohorts via early admission for 2027, and in order to ensure that UOW is in a position to offer these applicants a place at university, UOW will need additional places to meet this additional equity demand. Retention and success for First Nations, low-SES and regional students exceed the national Table A average, and UOW ranks first nationally for undergraduate student experience.

Table 2: Equity cohorts total enrolments, success and retention

Equity cohort	Total enrolments	Success rate	Retention rate
First Nations	573	87.7%	78.6%
Students with disability	1,506	87.2%	77.5%
Students from low SES backgrounds	2,303	87.9%	72.9%
Regional students	4,131	90.8%	76.1%
Remote students	35	78.6%	73.3%

Joined-up tertiary system, TAFE NSW and UOW College pathways

UOW will seek to grow pathways through VET and UOW College. Since 2023, over 1,300 domestic undergraduates entered UOW on prior VET qualifications. UOW has a long-standing record with TAFE NSW and, as a dual-sector provider, UOW College. UOW co-locates with TAFE NSW on regional campuses and partners in skills centres of excellence in building and renewable energy; TAFE-credit commencements have grown 250% in four years. UOW offers CSP-funded diplomas delivered by UOW College with an 80%+ articulation rate into UOW bachelor courses. UOW College is critical to boosting participation and attainment for equity cohorts and underrepresented backgrounds.

Focus on local skills needs

As demand for blended education grows, UOW seeks ATEC support to accelerate tertiary harmonisation and expand credit transfer, dual delivery and pathways. Our course mix prioritises areas that strengthen Australia's productivity and sovereign capability, where we seek to expand enrolments. Through work-integrated learning and industry-aligned courses graduates will drive innovation in health, education, AI, technology, engineering, advanced manufacturing, clean energy and national security.

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

UOW was established 50 years ago to educate engineers and skilled workers for the region's steelworks and that origin continues to shape our vision today. The University will actively contribute to Australia's workforce development and future skills needs by growing industry-aligned education and pathways in critical fields where the University has recognised strengths and regional relevance, including engineering, advanced manufacturing, health, education, energy and digital technology. We recognise the ongoing rapid development of artificial intelligence and the pressing need to prepare students for an AI-shaped workforce by strengthening academic-industry partnerships and translating AI-related shifts into future-ready curriculum design.

Action

Workforce development and addressing skills needs

UOW will address skills shortages by growing enrolments in priority Fields of Education, aligning course offerings, outreach, work-integrated learning and industry partnerships with workforce need. UOW offers 41 degrees aligned with occupations identified on the 2025 NSW Skills List, including programs in health, education, engineering, construction, infrastructure and technology.

In line with our Strategic Plan, UOW will expand industry-relevant teaching and research addressing national, state and regional priorities. Actions include:

- Strengthen and expand work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities, ensuring all coursework students complete a WIL experience aligned with industry and community engagement.
- Deliver discipline-specific outreach that exposes students to study areas through hands-on workshops, lab tours and academic-led sessions, linking school learning to careers.
- Grow enrolments in courses aligned with occupations experiencing skills shortages such as in nursing, engineering, education and early childhood education.
- Leverage UOW's engineering foundations, locally embedded research, industry and defence partnerships, and collaboration with TAFE NSW to build workforce capability for housing, infrastructure, construction, the clean-energy transition and Australia's sovereign priorities.
- Deliver the Australian Government-funded Energy Futures Skills Centre in partnership with TAFE NSW to expand education, training and workforce pathways in renewable energy, clean manufacturing and related technologies, including retraining opportunities for workers transitioning from traditional industries.

Pathways and tertiary harmonisation

UOW will further build future workforce skills and capacity through tertiary harmonisation. Aligned with NSW Government priorities, UOW will work with sector partners to advance credit recognition and pathways. Actions include:

- Promote existing and explore new partnerships, responding to the national call for tertiary harmonisation between VET and higher education, including with TAFE, UOW College and other institutions.
- Increase the number of students articulating from TAFE NSW and UOW College to the University in priority skills areas such as nursing, early childhood education, social work, engineering and technology.
- Work with local community organisations, including Country University Centres, to deliver higher education information aligned to community needs and promote accessible pathways.

Artificial intelligence

UOW is undertaking a whole-of-institution program to renew learning, teaching and student success for an AI-enabled future. A key pillar is preparing students for an AI-shaped workforce by strengthening academic-industry partnerships and translating AI shifts into future-ready curriculum. Actions include:

- Implement the UOW renAIssance program to establish a coordinated approach to AI-enabled education and develop the UOW AI-Enabled Education Blueprint.
- Deliver 13 industry-informed AI Practice Co-Labs across disciplines including accounting, marketing, law, engineering, publishing and healthcare, to identify how AI is reshaping professional practice and workforce expectations and translate the findings into future-ready curriculum and graduate capabilities.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
0603 Nursing				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	1,759	1,963 (204 additional Commonwealth supported students)	2,179 student places by 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	97.90%	98% - maintain strong success rate within course	98% by 2030
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	89.00%	91% by especially strengthening continuation from first to second year	95% by 2030 by especially strengthening continuation from first to second year
07 Education				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	1,989	2,195 (206 additional Commonwealth supported students)	2,436 student places by 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	94.30%	95%	96% by 2030
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	80.30%	83% by especially strengthening continuation from first to second year.	87% by 2030 by especially strengthening continuation from first to second year
03 Engineering				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	1,408	1,508 (100 additional Commonwealth supported students)	1,674 student places by 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	91.70%	93%	94% by 2030
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	84.00%	85% by especially strengthening continuation from first to second year	87% by 2030 by especially strengthening continuation from first to second year

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
02 Information Technology				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	844	909 (65 additional Commonwealth supported students)	1,009 student places by 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	85.10%	87%	90% by 2030
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	77.20%	80% by especially strengthening continuation from first to second year	85% by 2030 by especially strengthening continuation from first to second year

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

Guided by the principles of trust, respect and reciprocity outlined in our Healing and Recognition Track (HART) plan, UOW is committed to empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success. We will embed Indigenous worldviews and practices within our teaching and research culture, strengthening relationships and care for Country to deliver meaningful, community-determined impact. Self-determination is supported and celebrated at an individual and portfolio level, including the self-determination and First Nations management of external funding including ISSP and needs based allocations. Initiatives will be informed by these First Nations governance structures, community advice and cultural authority. In line with our Strategic Plan 2030, we will deepen engagement with First Nations communities to strengthen partnerships and deliver meaningful impact and will increase the number of students enrolled and graduating from UOW.

Action

UOW will advance First Nations access, participation and success through targeted outreach, inclusive pathways and tailored student support, anchored by our Woolyungah Indigenous Centre (WIC) and alongside system-level reform grounded in truth-telling, recognition and self-determination. Our student outcomes provide a baseline for this work, with 573 First Nations student enrolments, representing 3.9% of enrolments and exceeding the 3.6% First Nations proportion of our local population, alongside an 87.7% success rate and 78.6% retention rate. Further, the First Nations student cohort demonstrates high level academic outcomes beyond standard measures which measure success as a pass. By example, 49% of subjects attempted in Spring semester 2025 achieved a mark of Distinction or High Distinction.

The success of UOW as an education pipeline for First Nations students can be demonstrated through the retention of undergraduate students who move into postgraduate coursework studies such as Education, Social Work, Psychology, Indigenous Health and Medicine. Significant growth has been seen in the First Nations cohort enrolled in the Doctor of Medicine program, including 10 students – attending the Shoalhaven Campus with a further 11 attending the Wollongong Campus. This represents around 6% of the program's 335 domestic students and provides a strong foundation for growing the future pipeline of First Nations health professionals.

Increasing access and participation

- Strengthen access for regional First Nations students through targeted in-region engagement opportunities including partnerships with regional campuses, industry and local community.
- Increase access and participation through scholarships, including the Aunty Linda Cruse scholarship, for regional and remote students.
- Provide alternative entry pathways to support participation from non-school leavers and recent graduates from vocational or non-ATAR programs of study.
- Partner with First Nations communities and schools to deliver culturally safe, on-Country and on-campus experiences that build aspiration and belonging from secondary school.

Student success

- Strengthen First Nations data sovereignty, with community-governed use of cohort data to identify at-risk students and tailor culturally safe support.
- Support ongoing improvement of student success measures through the provision of tailored academic programs and tracking across student studies, as well as wrap-around support by WIC.
- Embed Indigenous knowledges and perspectives in curriculum and teaching, reviewed with First Nations academic leadership to improve cultural safety and success.

Healing and Recognition Track

UOW's Healing and Recognition Track is an institutional commitment to move toward practical, system-level reform that supports participation, success and self-determination.

- Deepen engagement with Indigenous communities to integrate their perspectives into strategic initiatives through the development of a coordinated Indigenous Communities Engagement Plan.
- Build on a strong Indigenous staff base (2.5% of UOW staff in 2025) through continued focused recruitment and career development across all levels.
- Continue strong First Nations leadership and self-determination through a Vice-President, First Nations on the Executive Board, ensuring all decisions carry a First Nations perspective and policies and investments are informed by community advice and cultural authority. First Nations governance structures include the Indigenous Governance Group (IGG), Aboriginal Advancement and Advisory Committee (AAAC), Aboriginal Advisory Group (AAG), Community Engagement Reference Group, and identified positions within the Student Advisory Council (SAC).

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
First Nations total enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	573	Grow First Nations enrolments at >3.9% of student population, sustaining UOW's access rate well above local population parity (3.6%).	Increase enrolment by 20% by 2030
First Nations success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	87.70%	89% through improved student support	90% by 2030
First Nations retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	78.60%	80%	85% 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

UOW aspires to be Australia's leading university for student equity, advancing ATEC's goal of lifting educational attainment through wider participation and student success. UOW serves disadvantaged regions, where participation higher education participation lags national averages. By placing campuses close to where students live and work, UOW opens access for those who might otherwise miss out. Through outreach, inclusive pathways, financial support and coordinated first-year transition support, UOW will extend its record in widening access, participation and success, backed by strong support for mental health, financial wellbeing, academic success and belonging, including personalised learning, peer mentoring and programs for under-represented groups.

Action

As an Accord-aligned university with 46% of undergraduate students from ATEC equity cohorts, including students with disability, UOW will advance equity across the full student lifecycle by strengthening outreach and pathways, improving transition and belonging, and using evidence-informed support to lift retention, progression and success. Equity demand in UOW's catchment exceeds its funded places, underpinning its request for additional Commonwealth Supported Places.

UOW continues to prioritise its outbound activities to support prospective students from equity cohorts. So far for 2027, UOW has seen a 4.9% increase in demand from equity cohorts via early admission (+174 applications compared to last year), with particularly strong increases in applicants from regional and remote areas (+6.6%; +149) where UOW offers scholarships to support access to university. UOW has also seen increases in Low SES applications to UOW's Liverpool campus (+23.4%; +55), where UOW has expanded access to scholarships in 2027. In order to ensure that UOW is in a position to offer these applicants a place at university, UOW will need additional places to meet this additional equity demand.

UOW considers applicants who do not initially meet admission thresholds for supported UOW College diploma or enabling pathways. Early Admission applicants are also reassessed once ATARs are available, helping more prospective students, including those from equity cohorts, access higher education through direct entry or an appropriate pathway.

Access

UOW will strengthen equitable access through targeted outreach, clearer pathways, regional engagement and improved information for underrepresented cohorts.

- Review and renew outreach and widening-participation programs so they are evidence-based, compliant and responsive to local need, increasing participation and supporting consistent equity-cohort representation.
- Strengthen equitable access for regional students by expanding in-region engagement, increasing hands-on dedicated regional outreach activity across key catchments and targeted financial support mechanisms and scholarships, to reduce barriers and support enrolments.
- Increase equity non-school leaver access, with a focus on the wider Liverpool region, by reviewing and optimising current activities, and implementing targeted strategies to deepen community engagement and reach underserved cohorts.
- UOW is seeking additional FFUR places, to enable the development of new targeted Enabling Programs to support access for specific equity students into priority disciplines.

Participation

- UOW will improve transition and belonging through a coordinated, whole-of-university first-year experience.
- Implement strengthened curriculum design, teaching practices and coordinated transition support to improve first-year retention, progression and student experience.

Success

- UOW will use data, student voice (Students as Partners) and coordinated support to improve retention, progression and outcomes for equity cohorts.
- Undertake course level re-enrolment analysis to understand any trends or shortfalls and where targeted support and intervention may be required to support students to succeed and re-enrol for the following semester.
- Establish a framework for student success that enables earlier identification of support needs and coordinated data-informed interventions to improve retention and progression for equity cohorts.

Measure

Indicator	Cohort	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Total enrolments	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2025	1,506	2% increase (1,535)	5% increase by 2030 (1,580)
Total enrolments	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2025	2,802	4% increase (2,914)	10% increase by 2030 (3,082)
Total enrolments	Regional	HESC – Verified 2025	3,893	4% increase (4,049)	10% increase by 2030 (4,282)
Total enrolments	Remote	HESC – Verified 2025	35	4% increase (36)	10% increase by 2030 (39)
Success	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	87.20%	Maintained at or above 87%	90% by 2030
Success	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	90.45%	Maintained at or above 90%	94% by 2030
Success	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	92.36%	Maintained at or above 92%	95% by 2030
Success	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	92.40%	Maintained at or above 92%	95% by 2030
Retention	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	77.45%	80%	83% by 2030
Retention	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	78.98%	80%	85% by 2030
Retention	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	83.38%	85%	87% by 2030
Retention	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	60.00%	65%	75% 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

UOW will deliver a future-focused curriculum built on teaching excellence, enhanced by technology, and designed to support lifelong learning. We aim to develop critical thinkers who graduate with curiosity, confidence and proficiency in artificial intelligence, ready to adapt and lead in the evolving landscape of work. UOW will strengthen recognition of student-centred, high-quality teaching, expand institutionally recognised work-integrated learning and embed career readiness, transferable skills and industry-aligned learning across the student experience. This approach will equip graduates to contribute to innovation, productivity and social impact in critical fields.

Action

UOW will strengthen teaching quality and recognition through a coordinated, evidence-informed approach that integrates curriculum transformation, academic capability development, AI-enabled education and student success, aligned with the University's Strategic Plan 2030.

Future-focused curriculum and AI-enabled education

UOW will deliver a future-focused curriculum built on teaching excellence and enhanced by technology, recognising AI as a core enabler of pedagogical innovation, assessment renewal and student success.

- Implement institution-wide initiatives, including the UOW renAIssance program and development of an AI-Enabled Education Blueprint. This approach embeds AI as a core enabler of pedagogical innovation, assessment renewal and student success, and will include strengthening curriculum coherence, support authentic and integrity-embedded assessment.

Professionalising teaching practice

UOW will strengthen teaching quality through a coordinated teaching excellence ecosystem led by the new Educational Excellence Division under the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), and supported by the continued development of the UOW Academy. Key actions include:

- Launch the UOW Teaching Capability Framework by the end of 2027, supported by developmental pathways, implementation resources and an Evaluation and Impact Framework.
- Align UOW Academy programs and broader professional learning with the Teaching Capability Framework, connecting educator development, embedded support, peer review, educational leadership, recognition and career progression.
- Review and refresh the Continuing Professional Development Portfolio, with clearer links to academic probation, promotion and career-long professional learning.
- Implement the refreshed Institutional Teaching Awards program, aligned more closely to the Australian Awards for University Teaching.
- Complete and evaluate an Advance HE Fellowship, enabling educators to evidence their practice against internationally recognised professional standards.

Work-integrated and world-ready learning

UOW will embed career readiness and transferable skills across the student experience through a World-Ready Graduate model and expanded work-integrated learning.

- Provide authentic, industry-aligned learning experiences that build communication, teamwork, problem solving and global competencies
- Strengthen ethical judgement, cultural awareness and societal engagement.
- Foster curiosity, confidence and adaptability so graduates can contribute to a changing world of work and make meaningful impact.

Student-centred and evidence-informed teaching

UOW will strengthen teaching quality through an integrated, student-centred and evidence-informed approach to student success.

- Use data-informed support, a university-wide First Year Experience model and coordinated transition support to improve outcomes.
- Develop future-ready learning environments that integrate digital and physical spaces to enable inclusive learning.
- Draw on student outcomes, feedback, curriculum and teaching reviews to support continuous improvement in retention and progression.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Overall educational experience	QILT SES – Verified 2025	76.2%	UOW will target modest improvement, aiming for 78% overall satisfaction in the 2027 SES.	Maintain UOW's strong SES performance, including its No.1 public university ranking for undergraduate student experience and top 10 ranking for postgraduate experience.
Skills development	QILT SES – Verified 2025	83.2%	Maintain skills development above 80%.	Maintain above 80% through to 2030.
Teaching quality and engagement	QILT SES – Verified 2025	81.4%	Maintain teaching quality above 80%.	Maintain above 80% through to 2030.
Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Experience	UOW internal reporting – graduating cohort 2025	40% of all graduating students	Increase to 65% of all graduating students by end of 2027.	By 2030, all students to have an institutionally approved WIL experience.

Joined-up tertiary system

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

Vision

UOW will strengthen tertiary harmonisation by building clearer, more supported pathways between vocational education, TAFE NSW, UOW College and UOW degrees. We will improve credit recognition, articulation and transition support, with a focus on priority workforce areas including nursing, health and education. This joined-up model expands opportunity for learners without a direct route to university, supports priority cohorts and strengthens regional workforce development. UOW has long-standing relationships with TAFE NSW and its pathways provider UOW College to break down barriers and drive a strong pipeline of skilled workers.

Action

UOW has a long-standing track record of working with VET providers, and TAFE NSW and UOW College are central to UOW's joined-up tertiary system. With five other NSW universities and TAFE NSW, UOW is building consistent, two-way credit pathways in priority areas such as nursing.

UOW College provides diploma, vocational and University Entrance Program pathways for students without a direct route to university; more than 40% of its students come from priority cohorts, and 2025 College entrants achieved a 75% first-year pass rate. UOW will build on this to improve transitions, strengthen VET-higher education collaboration and support regional workforce development.

Since 2023, more than 1,300 domestic undergraduate students have been admitted to UOW on the basis of prior VET qualifications, predominantly through TAFE NSW and UOW College. These students account for more than 10% of all domestic bachelor degree commencements at UOW. UOW also recognises and awards Credit for Prior Learning through its admissions processes in accordance with university policy. Credit outcomes are captured and communicated within students' offers of admission.

To further reinforce UOW's commitment to a joined-up tertiary system, the University is partnering with the NSW Universities Admissions Centre to implement UAC Advance, a credit management platform designed to streamline the recognition of prior learning and academic credit assessment processes.

UAC Advance will simplify the application experience for prospective students from pathway providers while supporting a more consistent approach to credit assessment across the University. Scheduled to launch in Q4 2026, UAC Advance will also support plans to establish a suite of block credit arrangements for domestic & international partners, including TAFE NSW, from 2027 onwards. The platform will enhance the recording of credit decisions and strengthen institutional reporting capabilities.

Strengthen student success in pathway programs

UOW will strengthen student success in pathway programs by expanding effective delivery models and improving transition support from UOW College and other providers into UOW degrees.

- Further roll out block delivery in all pathway courses, building on strong outcomes achieved with equity cohorts in the University Entrance Program.
- Strengthen transition program for students articulating from TAFE NSW, the VET sector and UOW College.

Grow health and nursing pathways

UOW will grow health and nursing pathways to support local workforce needs and create cleaner progression routes from vocational study into higher education.

- Grow enrolments in the UOW College Diploma of Nursing at Liverpool and Wollongong.
- Build on strong student outcomes, with 170 UOWC Nursing Diploma graduates achieving a 95% second-year bachelor pass rate in 2024, and 181 students achieving a 97% pass rate in 2025.
- Enable students who do not meet direct entry to the Diploma of Nursing to progress through the Certificate IV in Aged Care, with credit into the Diploma.
- Expand VET offerings in Health with credit-bearing pathways into UOW degrees.

Improve pathway visibility and VET partnerships

UOW will strengthen pathway visibility and deepen collaboration with VET partners, particularly TAFE NSW, to support clearer credit recognition and articulation.

- Build on UOW's strong relationship with TAFE NSW, with 130-150 students commencing with credit from TAFE each year from 2023 to 2025 through joint planning, co-delivered events.
- Review credit availability, admissions and articulation arrangements.

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	HESC Preliminary – 2025	494	5% increase (519)	30% increase by 2030 (642)
Domestic students admitted to a bachelor course on the basis of VET and awarded credit points for their previous studies	HESC Preliminary – 2025	343	5% increase (360)	30% increase by 2030 (445)
Success rate of domestic bachelor students admitted on the basis of VET	HESC Preliminary – 2025	90.6%	Maintain the strong 90%+ success rate in 2027	Increase to 93% by 2030

Research

Sustaining national capability and supporting innovation through research and research training

Vision

UOW will continue to partner with government, industry and regional communities to deliver high-impact, interdisciplinary research that advances knowledge, responds to local needs and contributes to meaningful societal change. We will refocus our resources, talent and capabilities to ensure our research is distinctive, impactful, financially sustainable and aligned to national priorities. Our research will build on strengths in environmental sustainability, social justice and community resilience, health and wellbeing, future technologies, industries and the workforce. This will be supported by AI and digital transformation, strengthened research training, and investment in domestic Higher Degree by Research (HDR) capability to support national innovation and future research workforce needs.

Action

UOW will focus research investment, grow the domestic HDR pipeline and accelerate commercialisation to build sovereign capability and strengthen regional and national economic and social outcomes. UOW will align research strengths with education growth and workforce needs, creating an end-to-end pipeline from skills development and discovery to innovation and industry impact. UOW also advocates reform of the R&D Tax Incentive to support 10,000 industry-linked PhDs annually, embedding research capability in businesses, particularly regional SMEs.

National capability and regional economic and social development

Through focused, distinctive research, UOW will serve its regions and strengthen national capability.

- Establish interdisciplinary research initiatives aligning UOW's strengths with regional needs and national priorities including a Steel Precinct supporting local steel manufacture and a Healthy Living Precinct improving quality of life for the region's low-SES aging population.
- Establish four focused global research impact areas aligning UOW's strengths with local needs and global challenges: Future Industries, Health Equity, Sustainable Environments, and Regional Futures.
- Continue to work closely with industry for industry-led initiatives, especially in the areas of energy futures, materials, health, environmental and sustainability research.
- Leverage the University's newly established Innovation Catalyst commercialisation ecosystem, supported by a $10 million UOW Innovation Seed Fund and the nationally recognised iAccelerate incubator, to strengthen the Illawarra economy by accelerating industry-research collaboration, commercialisation and the translation of ideas into new technologies, businesses and jobs.
- Establish an Indigenous Research Centre to support Indigenous entrepreneurship, Indigenous IP and the creation of Indigenous SMEs.

Researcher training and development

- UOW is focused on increasing industry-linked HDR completions in areas including advanced materials, smart manufacturing, energy transition and health and ageing.
- Embed entrepreneurship and the application of AI in formal HDR coursework, supporting research aligned with UOW's impact areas.
- Strengthen support across the research lifecycle through skills development, industry internships, translation, entrepreneurship and commercialisation.
- Grow the domestic HDR pipeline through Research Training Program (RTP) stipends, research Honours programs, co-funded industry collaboration, internships and global research partnerships, including the National Industry PhD program.
- Provide all HDR candidates with an annual research allowance and skills development, with UOW stipends set 8% above the government RTP base rate and externally funded stipends uplifted to the UOW minimum. Indigenous HDR candidates receive stipends at the top government RTP rate.

Research governance, translation and innovation

UOW will build a collaborative, innovation-led ecosystem that accelerates research translation into industry and community impact.

- Continue building the UOW Innovation Catalyst innovation ecosystem, including a commercial entity, an innovation seed fund, and an independent advisory bord.
- A new Executive Director, Innovation will link the innovation ecosystem across the University and its global campuses.
- Ensure research entities are clearly focused and aligned to national priorities: energy transition, advanced materials for defence, and future technologies for healthy ageing.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
HDR enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	651	690	775 by 2030
HDR domestic completions per annum	HESC – Verified 2024	110	Maintain current numbers while strengthening supervisor training and HDR support across the research lifecycle.	Ensure that 85% of HDRs complete within 3.5yrs
Value of research commercialisation outcomes, industry partnerships, and innovation ecosystem activity	Higher education research data collection SCOPR report and UOW financial Statements	2025: (non-audited results) Cat 2-4 = $31.4 million Consultancy and Commercialisation = $3.65 million Total = $35 million	Cat 2-4 = $44 million Consultancy and Commercialisation = $8.6 million Total = $52.6 million	By 2030: Cat 2-4 = $63 million Consultancy and Commercialisation = $16 million Total = $79 million
Percentage of HDR candidates and research staff attending newly developed researcher development training	UOW training attendance records	During 2025, there were 927 attendances to HDR training workshops (existing training suite).	30% of Academic Staff completed at least 1 course from new offerings. 50% of HDR candidates have completed at least one course from the new offerings.	By 2030: 50% of Academic Staff completed at least 1 course from new offerings. 75% of HDR candidates have completed at least one course from the new offerings.

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.