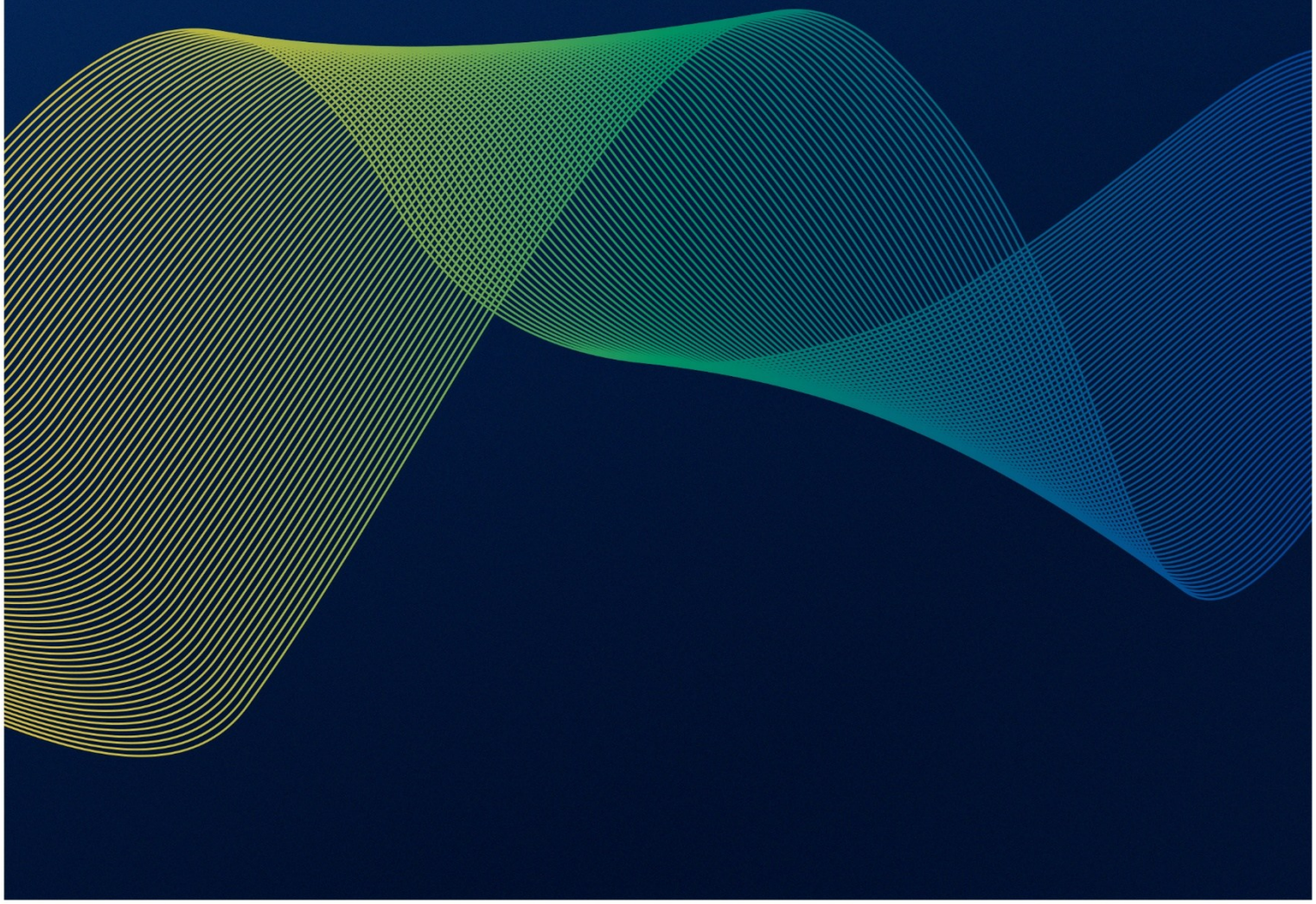
Australian Government

ATEC
Australian Tertiary Education Commission

University of the Sunshine Coast Australia

2027 mission based compact between the ATEC and the University of the Sunshine Coast



Preface

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

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

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

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

The University of the Sunshine Coast (UniSC) is a public university serving diverse communities across South East Queensland, with a recent campus development expanding presence in Adelaide. Operating across regional, peri-urban and metropolitan settings, UniSC advances participation in higher education through accessible education, workforce development, applied research and industry-connected partnerships that respond to community and workforce needs. These efforts contribute to long-term social, economic and environmental sustainability.

As a growing university with a strong community focus, UniSC plays an important role within Australia's higher education system through its commitment to widening participation and student success. UniSC serves students from a range of diverse backgrounds, including people who are the first in their family to attend university, those from under-represented socioeconomic backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and students who are balancing study with work or caring responsibilities. UniSC is committed to reducing barriers to participation while maintaining a strong focus on student support, success and graduate outcomes.

Guided by its Strategic Plan 2025–2028, UniSC delivers on its mission through 4 strategic pillars: Transformative Student Experience; People First; Local and Global Impact; and Sustainable and Resilient. These pillars support accessible education, positive student outcomes and meaningful engagement with communities, while contributing to workforce capability, applied research and innovation.

Aligned with national, state and local priorities, UniSC focuses its learning, teaching and research activity in areas that support workforce needs, community wellbeing and economic development. These include health, education, digital skills, engineering, environmental sustainability and key industry sectors relevant to regional economies.

In disciplines facing workforce pressures, UniSC recognises the importance of not only supporting student participation but also strengthening pathways into employment. This includes working with partners to support practical learning opportunities including placements to enhance connections between education and industry.

UniSC operates in an environment characterised by population growth, cost-of-living pressures and changing patterns of participation in higher education. In response, UniSC emphasises flexible, student centred and accessible learning models that meet the needs of diverse learners and support lifelong learning.

Through education, research and engagement, UniSC contributes to national, state and local priorities. By working in partnership with government, industry, schools and communities, UniSC contributes to participation, skills development and sustainable growth across the communities it serves.

Enrolment strategy and priorities

UniSC's enrolment strategy aligns with national and Queensland workforce priorities while responding to the rapid population growth and diverse equity profile of the communities it serves. The University is planning for sustained growth to 30,000 students through a disciplined, place based approach that balances participation, quality, workforce relevance and student success.

Growth is targeted toward disciplines aligned with demonstrated workforce demand and community need, particularly in health, education, digital and technology fields, alongside engineering and environmental sustainability. Program development and expansion are informed by ongoing engagement with industry, professional accreditation requirements and placement capacity, ensuring enrolment growth translates into workforce supply. UniSC emphasises work integrated learning, industry linked curriculum and applied research to deliver work ready graduates and support regional economic development.

As enrolments grow, UniSC maintains a strong focus on student and staff safety, wellbeing and inclusion. Governance frameworks, reporting mechanisms and capability development are being strengthened to support a safe, respectful and inclusive university environment. These conditions are critical enablers of participation, retention and success, particularly for students from equity backgrounds.

Equity remains central to UniSC's enrolment strategy. The University continues to reduce barriers to access, participation and completion through whole of institution approaches to inclusion, accessibility and student wellbeing. Partnerships, pathway programs and flexible entry options support transitions into higher education and progression through study, with a strong emphasis on place based provision and collaboration.

UniSC's teaching and learning approach underpins enrolment growth and student success, with a focus on quality, flexibility and continuous improvement. Curriculum renewal, inclusive design and diverse delivery models support students across varied learning and life circumstances while maintaining academic standards and engagement.

Targeted student support, early intervention strategies and data informed approaches to student success contribute to improved retention and completion outcomes. Investment in outreach, transition support and wellbeing ensures that growth expands opportunity, meets workforce needs and sustains educational quality.

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

UniSC's vision is to deliver accessible, flexible and high quality tertiary education that advances equity, workforce capability and regional prosperity, aligned to the National Tertiary Education Objective and Queensland Government priorities to 2030. Through its transformational Learning and Teaching Program, UniSC will modernise learning to improve participation, progression, retention and completion while removing barriers for learners from diverse backgrounds. Guided by strong industry and government partnerships, UniSC aligns program delivery with workforce needs across health, construction, food and agriculture, digital capability and other priority sectors. UniSC will expand programs, delivery locations and partnerships to address skills shortages and support Queensland's growing regions.

Action

As part of this mission based compact, UniSC will prioritise Nursing as a critical discipline aligned to ATEC national skills priorities and the Queensland Government's focus on workforce participation, regional responsiveness and health system sustainability and Queensland's 2030 workforce objectives.

Queensland faces growing demand for nurses driven by population growth, ageing demographics, geographic dispersion and increasing complexity of healthcare delivery. UniSC plays a central role in addressing this demand across the Sunshine Coast, Moreton Bay and surrounding regions, supporting local workforce supply while expanding access to higher education for under-represented cohorts.

UniSC has commenced a significant transformation of its learning and teaching environment, directly supporting Queensland priorities by increasing flexibility, improving student progression and embedding quality and efficiency into delivery. The Learning and Teaching program is expected to strengthen student engagement, retention and completion by enabling learners to better balance study, work and caring responsibilities, supporting both participation in higher education and long-term workforce outcomes. Beyond nursing, the initiative will support UniSC's growing health portfolio, including medicine, helping meet workforce demand in regional Queensland.

In Nursing, which represents a large percentage of UniSC's Commonwealth Supported Place Equivalent Full-time Student Load (EFTSL), the Learning and Teaching transformation will transition programs to trimester based delivery, streamline intake points, and strengthen flexible pathways for school leavers, mature age learners and regional students. Curriculum design will align with contemporary clinical practice, digital capability and evolving models of care, while preserving the human-centred skills essential to high-quality healthcare. Curriculum renewal will also strengthen culturally safe and inclusive practice and be supported by targeted investment in priority nursing specialisations and academic capability.

UniSC will continue to strengthen partnerships with Queensland health providers to support clinical placement capacity, workforce readiness and graduate transition into employment. Enhanced student support, particularly around study planning, early intervention and progression, will improve retention and completion, contributing to a more stable nursing workforce.

This commitment reflects UniSC's broader approach to workforce development, where program planning is informed by regional and state workforce needs, industry engagement and tertiary collaboration. As one of Australia's fastest-growing regions, UniSC works closely with government, industry and community partners to support workforce capability in priority sectors and respond to emerging economic and social needs. Through these actions, UniSC will contribute to sustainable enrolment growth, improved student success and stronger workforce outcomes for Queensland.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
0603 Nursing				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	2,825	+2-3.5% growth	By the end of 2030, achieve approximately 10-15% growth (3,100 to 3,250 enrolments) from the 2025 baseline, reflecting improved continuing student progression, modest and sustainable intake expansion while maintaining strong student success and workforce outcomes. ***Noting: Nursing is a capped program and any increases would be dependent on the accreditation body allocation of additional places.***
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	83.15%	+0.5-1.0 percentage points (p.p.). improvement	By 2030, student success rates are expected to increase to at least 85%, representing an improvement of approximately 1.85 to 3.85 p.p. from the baseline. This will be supported through enhanced academic support, inclusive curriculum design, early engagement and intervention strategies and strengthened preparation for professional practice.
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	76.49%	+1-2 p.p. improvement	By the end of 2030, retention is expected to increase by approximately 3.51 (80.0%) p.p. through improved student engagement, flexible study options and proactive progression monitoring.

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

UniSC is committed to First Nations self-determination. leadership, access, participation and success as core to our identity and engagement with Country. We will maintain First Nations enrolments above 4% of the domestic cohort while improving retention, progression and completion, supported by culturally safe, strengths-based pathways and high-quality learning. UniSC expands employment and leadership opportunities for First Nations staff, embedding Indigenous knowledges, perspectives and decision-making across teaching, research and governance. Through First Nations-led partnerships and stewardship of initiatives, including the Indigenous Student Success Program, a whole-of-university approach will close equity gaps, strengthen cultural capability, and contribute to thriving communities and regional prosperity.

Action

UniSC will deliver measurable and sustained progress in First Nations leadership, self-determination, access, participation and success through coordinated action across employment, education, engagement and governance. These actions align with the University's strategic commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, and are embedded within institutional planning, performance monitoring and accountability frameworks.

UniSC has achieved its target of 2% First Nations employees in 2026 and is working towards increasing this to 2.5% by 2027, with at least half of all First Nations employees in academic roles. Targeted recruitment, Indigenous-identified roles, culturally informed selection and leadership development will support this goal. Culturally safe workplaces, mentoring, professional development and Indigenous staff networks will support retention and belonging, recognising the cultural load carried by First Nations staff. Workforce representation and staff experience will be monitored through university wide equity, diversity and inclusion reporting.

UniSC will maintain First Nation student enrolments above 4.0% of the domestic student cohort, recognising enrolment growth must be matched by retention, success and completion. Building on 10.4% enrolment growth in 2025, direct entry pathways, enabling programs and transition support will be strengthened. The Buranga Centre will support culturally safe services, early intervention, student success and community connection. Curriculum will embed First Nations knowledges and perspectives, with shared responsibility for student success and input from regional First Nations communities. Participation, retention, completion, success and graduate outcomes will inform targeted support.

UniSC will build respectful, reciprocal and long-term relationships with First Nations communities. At least two formal partnerships will support co-designed education, research and workforce initiatives aligned with community priorities, strengthening aspiration-building, place-based pathways and applied research with shared benefit.

UniSC will advance self-determination through Indigenous governance, student voice and shared decision-making, ensuring First Nations priorities inform planning, investment and student success.

Progress will be embedded in university planning and reported through strategic plan scorecards and annual performance reporting. Through these actions, UniSC will contribute to closing equity gaps while strengthening First Nations leadership, institutional capability and regional impact.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
First Nations total enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	589	Maintain 4% representation of domestic student enrolments	By 2030, First Nations student enrolments will increase to approximately 1,000 students, representing at least 4% of domestic enrolments. This reflects sustained growth in access, participation and student success, aligned with UniSC's equity, reconciliation and Indigenous advancement commitments.
First Nations success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	77.25%	+0.5-1.0 p.p. improvement	By 2030, First Nations undergraduate success outcomes are expected to improve by approximately 2.75- 4.75 (80-82%) p.p. through targeted academic support, culturally safe learning environments and inclusive curriculum design.
First Nations retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	69.23%	+1-2 p.p. improvement	By 2030, First Nations undergraduate retention is expected to increase by approximately 5.77 p.p. to 75.0%, supported by enhanced transition, study planning and student support initiatives.

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

UniSC is committed to advancing equity by increasing access, participation and attainment for under-represented groups and priority cohorts across our student communities. Equity is foundational to educational excellence, workforce capability and social mobility. Through evidence led intervention and continuous evaluation of impact and culturally safe, accessible learning and working environments, UniSC will close participation and attainment gaps while strengthening belonging and success. Our vision is a university where diversity is reflected at every level, barriers to opportunity are systematically removed, and all students are supported to thrive, contribute and lead.

Action

UniSC will deliver its equity commitment through targeted, measurable actions across student participation, retention and success, supported by strong data governance and continuous improvement. A rigorous logic-model approach will evaluate equity initiatives and ensure resources are directed to interventions that demonstrate measurable impact.

UniSC serves a diverse regional population, with 60.1% of students belonging to one or more equity cohorts under UniSC's broader equity definition. Growth at UniSC therefore contributes to equity outcomes, while reinforcing the importance of supporting students to succeed once they enter higher education.

UniSC will expand access for under-represented students, targeting a 2.0% increase in enrolments from priority cohorts in 2027. As well as growing the 4 priority cohorts, UniSC will seek to increase enrolments of students who identify as First in Family, from 6,340 enrolments in 2025 making up 36.5% of the domestic student cohort, up to approximately 8,550 First in Family students by 2030. Growth will be supported through targeted and sustained outreach, enabling and academic pathways, transition support initiatives, place-based delivery and partnerships with schools, vocational education and training providers and community organisations. Fee-Free Uni Ready (FFUR) will play a key role, with UniSC exceeding its 402 EFTSL allocation in both 2025 and 2026, demonstrating sustained demand for enabling places. Admissions and transition processes will remain clear, transparent and flexible.

Improving student retention, success and completion remain central to UniSC's equity agenda. By 2027, UniSC will increase four-year completion rates for under-represented students to 26.0%, reduce attrition rates to 18.5%, and increase success rates to 88.0%. These outcomes will be supported through curriculum and teaching reform, proactive academic advising, wellbeing services and targeted learning support. UniSC's Learning and Teaching program and the Learner-Centred pillar of the Curriculum Design Framework will support these improvements.

UniSC will strengthen early identification and intervention through the next phase of the Early Warning System, combining student data with previous intervention outcomes. An Institutional Research-led student lifecycle deep dive will integrate Customer Relationship Manager (CRM), progression and outcomes data to identify pipeline leakage and inform evidence-based action. Learning analytics and intervention data will monitor effectiveness and direct support where it is most needed.

Disability support will be strengthened through Disability Support Fund initiatives, including assistive technologies, staff capability and inclusive learning design.

Together, these actions will embed equity across institutional practice, expand opportunity sustainably, and improve measurable retention, success and completion outcomes for equity students.

Measure

Indicator	Cohort	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Total enrolments	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2025	2,970	5-7% growth	By 2030, participation is expected to be maintained with growth of around 16-18% (3,600-4,050 enrolments), supported by continued access to flexible learning and support arrangements.
Total enrolments	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2025	3,666	2-4% growth	By 2030, participation is expected to be sustained with growth of around 8-17% (3,968-4,289 enrolments), supported by equity initiatives and pathway programs.
Total enrolments	Regional	HESC – Verified 2025	3,298	3-5% growth	By 2030, regional participation is expected to be maintained with modest growth of around 18-20% (4,050-4,500 enrolments), reflecting UniSC's regional focus.
Total enrolments	Remote	HESC – Verified 2025	47	2-3% of enrolments	By 2030, remote student enrolments are expected to increase to between 70 and 90 students through enhanced digital access, flexible delivery options, targeted outreach and support initiatives designed to address barriers to participation.
Success	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	80.62%	+0.5-1.0 percentage points (p.p.) increase	By 2030, success outcomes are expected to improve by approximately 2.38 p.p. (83%) through enhanced accessibility, early support and flexible delivery.
Success	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	83.65%	+0.5-1.0 p.p. increase	By 2030, success outcomes are expected to improve by approximately 1.35 to 2.0 p.p. to around 85.0% through targeted academic support and improved study planning.
Success	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	87.71%	+0.25-0.5 p.p. increase	By 2030, sustain strong undergraduate success outcomes for regional students with modest improvement to 88.21%.
Success	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	87.74%	+0.25-0.5 p.p. increase	By 2030, maintain high success outcomes above 87%, acknowledging variability due to smaller cohort sizes.

Indicator	Cohort	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Retention	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	74.60%	+0.5-1.0 p.p. increase	By 2030, retention rates for students with disability are expected to increase to at least 77%, supported by flexible study options, personalised support services, proactive progression monitoring and enhanced student engagement initiatives.
Retention	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	76.98%	+0.25-0.5 p.p. increase	By 2030, retention rates for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are expected to increase to at least 80%, supported by improved transition support, financial wellbeing initiatives, progression monitoring and targeted student success programs.
Retention	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	77.54%	+0.5-1.0 p.p. increase	By 2030, retention rates for regional students are expected to increase to at least 80%, reflecting enhanced student engagement, flexible delivery options and strengthened transition and progression support.
Retention	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	69.23%	+1-2 p.p. increase	By 2030, retention is expected to improve by approximately 1 to 2 p.p. through targeted transition and engagement strategies.

All indicators are for the domestic undergraduate student cohort. Success rate includes both commencing and continuing students.

Quality teaching

Raising the quality and recognition of higher education teaching

Vision

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching that is student centred, evidence based and responsive to changing learner needs. Our vision is to deliver high quality, flexible and engaging learning experiences that support student success, progression and employability, while recognising and valuing teaching as a core academic endeavour. Through innovative curriculum design, inclusive delivery models and continuous improvement informed by student feedback and outcomes, UniSC will strengthen teaching quality and satisfaction, building on improved student success rates, record-low attrition and sector leading student experience outcomes, ensuring our graduates are confident, capable and prepared for future work and lifelong learning.

Action

UniSC will strengthen teaching quality and recognition through an integrated, student-centred approach focused on excellence, flexibility and continuous improvement. Maintaining UniSC's position as the top public university in Queensland in the national QILT Student Experience Survey remains a strategic priority, with targets of 84.6% teaching quality and 83.0% overall student satisfaction. Student feedback, QILT results and program-level data will guide improvements to teaching, curriculum and academic engagement. This builds on recent gains, including an 88% success rate and undergraduate attrition at its lowest level in more than a decade.

UniSC will improve the flexibility and quality of the learning environment through better timetabling that responds to diverse student needs, particularly students balancing work, caring responsibilities and part-time study. Timetabling reforms will improve predictability, accessibility and alignment with transport and campus infrastructure, supporting attendance, engagement and progression.

As UniSC grows across the Sunshine Coast, Moreton Bay, Brisbane, Fraser Coast and online, its learning and teaching model will continue to evolve to provide high-quality, interactive and place-based experiences. A Benefits Realisation Framework will measure the impact of program renewal across teaching quality, satisfaction, progression, retention, completion and graduate outcomes, supporting accountability and evidence-based improvement.

Teaching excellence will be strengthened through professional development, peer review, academic leadership and formal recognition. Building on strong participation in the Advance HE Fellowship scheme, with more than 70% of staff recognised, UniSC will explore future targets and measures of teaching excellence beyond 2027.

Academic staff will be supported to innovate in pedagogy, inclusive curriculum design and the responsible use of digital and AI-enabled tools that enhance learning and maintain academic integrity. Consistent with the Curriculum Design Framework, professional learning and quality assurance will support continuous improvement. Learning analytics and engagement data will identify strengths, emerging issues and opportunities for targeted action.

Through this approach, UniSC will ensure teaching quality keeps pace with enrolment growth, maintain strong student experience outcomes and deliver capable, work-ready graduates.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Overall educational experience	QILT SES – Verified 2025	81.6%	+1-2 percentage point improvement	By 2030, overall educational experience outcomes are expected to increase to 84%, reflecting continued enhancement of the student experience through inclusive support services, improved learning environments, student engagement initiatives and a strong focus on student success.
Teaching quality and engagement	QILT SES – Verified 2025	83.2%	+1-1.5 percentage point improvement	By 2030, teaching quality and learning engagement outcomes are expected to increase to 85%, supported by ongoing investment in contemporary teaching practice, curriculum innovation, digital learning capabilities and high-quality learning environments across all campuses and modes of study.

Joined-up tertiary system

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

Vision

UniSC is committed to a joined-up tertiary education system that strengthens opportunity, workforce readiness and lifelong learning through seamless pathways between vocational education and higher education. Our vision is a coordinated system where learners move flexibly between qualifications, supported by co-designed programs, shared delivery models and strong industry alignment. This approach strengthens collaboration between vocational education and training (VET) and higher education through integrated pathways, aligned curricula and seamless credit recognition that maximises prior learning and removes barriers to progression. Through deep partnerships, UniSC will expand participation, increase VET-to-university transitions, accelerate skills development and deliver industry relevant credentials that meet evolving workforce demand.

Action

UniSC will strengthen collaboration and coordination across the tertiary system through structured partnership activation, integrated program design and institutional capability development. Central to this approach is the delivery of the TAFE Queensland Memorandum of Understanding, deepened through UniSC's co-locations in Gympie and Caboolture and extended to our Moreton Bay campus at Petrie with the co-location of a new TAFE campus.

Priority program partnerships aligned to workforce demand will include areas such as aviation and advanced manufacturing, in collaboration with partners such as Aviation Australia, alongside pathway development linked to workforce requirements associated with the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Additional pathway opportunities will be explored in engineering, technology, construction and renewable energy, including associate degree and articulated pathway models.

These partnerships will be enabled through clearly defined co-design and co-delivery models that reduce duplication, strengthen alignment with industry need and support learner progression across vocational education and training (VET) and higher education.

UniSC will refine a suite of programs built on clearly defined pathways, supported by transparent and consistent credit arrangements and recognised processes to enable seamless student transition and progression. Curriculum reform will prioritise streamlined credit recognition and transfer arrangements, ensuring students receive maximum recognition for prior learning and experience and encounter no unnecessary barriers to progression. Alignment of academic policies, credit frameworks and quality assurance will support national tertiary reform priorities, improving system coherence and student mobility. Pathway development will include diploma-to-degree pathways, articulated entry arrangements and innovative 2+2 models that strengthen progression between VET and higher education.

Pathway delivery will focus on place-based provision in high-growth regions, improving equitable access through local, flexible and applied study options. Joint planning with VET partners will ensure pathway sustainability, workforce relevance and strong industry engagement, supporting efficient progression from skills acquisition to higher-level qualifications and employment outcomes. UniSC will work towards increasing bachelor enrolments through VET pathways by up to 500 students by 2030, while exploring embedded vocational learning and reverse articulation to strengthen industry readiness and graduate outcomes.

These actions position UniSC as an active contributor to a more connected tertiary system, strengthening pathways, expanding participation and supporting workforce capability while maintaining academic quality and institutional integrity.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Domestic students enrolled and admitted into a bachelor course on the basis of VET	UniSC student enrolment data – finalised 2025 (Peoplesoft)	362	+5-8% growth	By 2030, enrolments of domestic students entering bachelor programs through VET pathways are expected to increase to approximately 500 student enrolments. This growth will be supported through strengthened partnerships with VET providers, expanded articulation arrangements, improved credit transfer opportunities and targeted initiatives that increase progression from vocational education into higher education.

Research

Sustaining national capability and supporting innovation through research and research training

Vision

UniSC advances research and research training that delivers impact for our regions while contributing to national and global priorities. Our vision is to build and sustain research capability that improves wellbeing, strengthens environmental resilience and drives innovation to contribute to healthy people and a healthy planet. By growing research excellence, developing the next generation of researchers and deepening partnerships with industry, government and communities, UniSC will translate knowledge into impactful outcomes to strengthen sovereign capability and position the University as a nationally and internationally recognised research institution.

Action

UniSC will strengthen research, research training and innovation through a coordinated, evidence-led approach that builds scale, capability and impact while maintaining strong governance under the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Growth will focus on established and emerging strengths of regional and national relevance, including mental health neuroscience, environmental sustainability, biologically inspired solutions, transcultural and Indigenous advancement, human factors, and Pacific Island futures.

Implementation of the Better Tomorrow Research Plan 2025-2028 and the Indigenous Research Plan will guide strategic investment and ensure research delivers meaningful outcomes for communities and Country. Interdisciplinary teams formed through the Future Forward Initiative, in collaboration with external partners, will strengthen competitiveness for external funding and support solutions to complex, multi-sector challenges.

UniSC will grow research quality and scale by achieving 35% of publications in the top 10% of journals (Scimago), exceed our baseline in annual HERDC income, and improving global standing, including Top 500 in THE World University Rankings and Top 50 in THE Impact Rankings. Our Research Infrastructure Framework will guide a 5-10-year investment plan, with priority business cases commencing in the 2026–2027 budget.

Researcher and Higher Degree by Research (HDR) development will remain central, with a targeted 5%annual increase in HDR completions supported by high-quality supervision, streamlined candidature management and enhanced training. A refreshed and targeted HDR recruitment process involving marketing our research strengths, embedding scholarships in research grants, and increased industry opportunities commenced in 2026.

The UniSC Research Capability Strategy will deliver a researcher skills development program to support each career stage aligned to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. UniSC will deepen partnerships and diversify research income by strengthening engagement with industry, government and community. A clear engagement model and delivery of the research partnerships roadmap will position UniSC as a partner of choice. Innovation initiatives, including Collider, will support translation, entrepreneurship and commercialisation and strengthen pathways for intellectual property and spin-outs.

To enhance accountability and impact, UniSC will implement a research impact platform and an institutional performance framework integrating outputs, outcomes and impact data. Through these actions, UniSC will sustain excellence, and deliver measurable societal benefit.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
HDR domestic enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	414	+1–2% growth to enrolments	By 2030, HDR domestic enrolments are expected to increase to between 422 and 443 candidates, reflecting growth in research capacity, strengthened research training opportunities, expanded supervision capability and increased participation in higher degree research programs.
HDR domestic completions	HESC – Verified 2024	47	+55 completions	By 2030, HDR domestic completions are expected to increase to 84 completions annually, supported by improved candidate progression, higher quality candidates on admission, more effective supervision, targeted research training and initiatives that support timely completion and reduce attrition.

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.