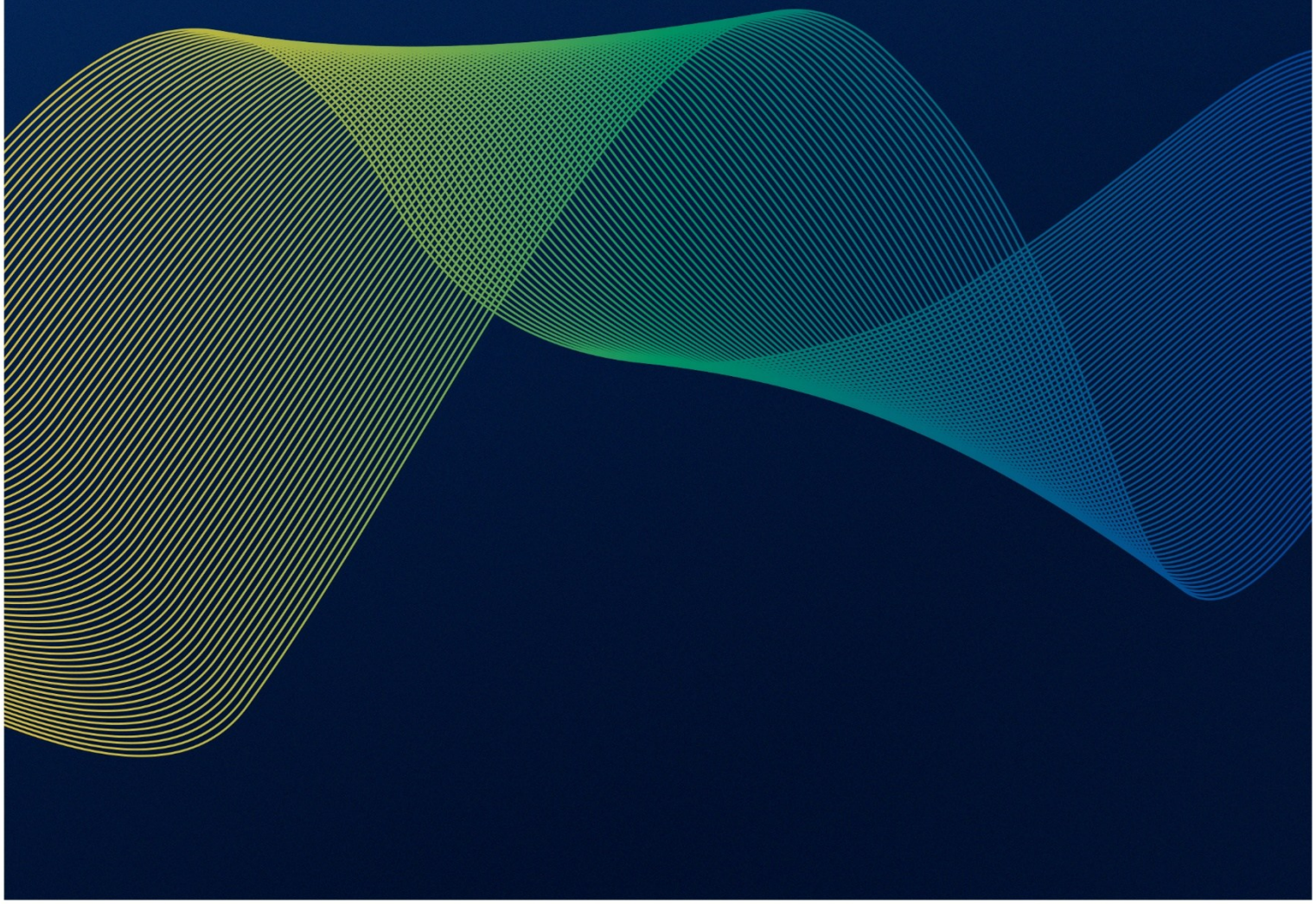
Australian Government

ATEC
Australian Tertiary
Education Commission

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY

2027 mission based compact between the ATEC and Western Sydney University



Preface

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

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

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

The ATEC may conduct annual check-in meetings with Western Sydney University as needed, to discuss Western Sydney University's progress towards meeting the terms of this compact. If Western Sydney University has any concerns about their ability to meet the agreed terms of this compact, including as a result of matters reasonably outside Western Sydney University's control, Western Sydney University agrees to inform the ATEC as soon as possible. Any amendments to the compact terms may be made with mutual agreement of the parties.

As set out in section 30-45 of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and section 46D(2) of the ATEC Act, assessment against the terms of this compact must be taken into account by the ATEC in making decisions on domestic and international student place allocations in 2028, helping to shape a high-performing, diverse higher education system.

In line with the ATEC Act, this mission based compact will be published on the ATEC's website within 28 days after the compact is entered into. It is the responsibility of the ATEC to ensure that the information in this compact is up to date.

This mission based compact is in effect from 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2027, unless varied or terminated earlier.

Contents

Preface **2**

Section 1: Context **4**

Mission statement 4

Enrolment strategy and priorities 5

Section 2: Performance domains **5**

National, State/territory and regional priorities 7

First Nations 9

Equity 11

Quality teaching 13

Joined-up tertiary system 15

Research 16

Section 3: Course and campus changes **18**

Section 1: Context

Mission statement

Western Sydney University's (WSU) mission is to deliver student success, impactful research and stronger communities.

We put students first, as reflected in our pledge to make every year the year of the student. We are committed to providing students with a world-class education that sets them up for life.

We have the highest concentration of students who are low SES, first in family, and from non-English speaking backgrounds. In 2026, we enrolled over 1,000 Indigenous students.

As Western Sydney's anchor institution, a region encompassing over 1 in 10 Australians and growing faster than the rest of Australia, WSU must meet the region's needs through education. Our established, extensive, and high-quality campus network provides access to higher education across the region.

Every day we see proof that education is the greatest enabler of social mobility, not just for individuals but for entire communities and across generations. The success of our mission benefits the whole community, including a healthy and functioning democracy and social cohesion.

We are creating opportunities to lift horizons through education and research, including educating Western Sydney's essential frontline workers such as nurses, teachers, police and social workers.

We support the call to meet the nation's economic, productivity and skills challenges through a target of 80% of working age Australians with a tertiary qualification by 2050. This will require universities like ours to stimulate new demand for post-secondary education to meet national and state priorities.

This is a formidable challenge. We must also look beyond school leavers to mature age students ready to upskill and those seeking to improve their TAFE qualifications. We must also address the 'lost boys' where just 38% of 2024 commencing university students were male.

WSU will open its doors to a larger and broader group of students through innovative and flexible pathways, including students whose academic potential is not captured by an ATAR alone or who never thought university was for them. This includes school and community outreach to low-SES, Indigenous, Pasifika, refugee, and migrant groups.

We will build on our sector-leading TAFE NSW partnership, strategic relationship with the NSW Education Department and structured diploma-to-degree pathways. As our successful College model demonstrates, many paths to higher education exist.

Our research delivers impact, enhancing communities and industries locally and globally. Western is intent on responding to the world's greatest challenges in partnership with those they most effect. We work in genuine collaboration with industry, government, and communities to achieve this.

Our mission is enduring, but how we deliver it changes with the times. With the nation's first major international airport in over 50 years opening in Western Sydney, we are taking Western Sydney to the world through our campuses in Vietnam, Indonesia and, from 2027, in India.

The region's transformation, driven by the state's economic reorientation to the west, is rewriting the nation's skills, education and research requirements. As new industries, technologies, sovereign capabilities and higher-skilled, higher-paying professions are created in Western Sydney, people must have access to ongoing education fit for those ambitions and challenges.

Enrolment strategy and priorities

Western Sydney's population will rise from 2.9 million to 3.6 million by 2041, significantly increasing the need for jobs requiring higher education.

From 2023 to 2050, Deloitte modelling projects demand in Western Sydney for technology jobs will grow by 82%, teachers by 66%, midwives and nurses by 62%, and clean economy jobs by 60%. WSU's enrolment strategy is designed to meet our region's needs and stimulate new demand.

Equity-led expansion

We serve communities representing the groups who need to go to VET or university to reach the Accord's 80% tertiary participation target. In 2025, 28% of ATAR-eligible students in Western Sydney attended high schools with an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage below 1,000. WSU enrolled 32% of this group.

We are partnering with the NSW Department of Education, initially working with Year 10 students across 170 Western Sydney high schools, to raise awareness and stimulate demand by promoting alternative pathways to higher education.

Aligning to priorities

Enrolments will be targeted to meeting skills for evolving future needs and national priorities, focusing on:

- health, education, community services
- construction, infrastructure, urban development
- digital and technology capability.

We are addressing this by partnering with schools, TAFE NSW and industry. Our school outreach program will work with over 220 public and non-government schools in Western Sydney to ensure students are aware of career opportunities.

The TAFE NSW partnership targets 21 vocations with critical skill shortages such as nursing, construction, and childcare. Our strong and expansive industry partnerships inform curricular development and drive work-integrated learning opportunities that will be embedded in courses.

Pathways

In 2026, 22% of students were admitted to WSU based on a previous VET qualification.

Admissions data from the first half of 2026 shows:

- 30.8% of school leavers via non-ATAR pathways (including HSC True Reward – conditional early offers to Year 12 students based on Year 11 results and subject to successful completion of Year 12)
- 14.9% of non-school leavers on the basis of work and life experience other than previous VET or higher education study
- 13.9% of students via bridging or enabling – Fee-Free Uni Ready (FFUR).

Regional Adjustment Factors (up to 5 points to ATAR) are provided for Allied Health programs except Physiotherapy. About 50% of our medical students are preferenced from Western Sydney and have a 4-point downwards ATAR adjustment. The same applies to non-school leavers.

Quality alongside growth

Growth will be met with continued investment in:

- improved student experiences through proactive data-driven advising and responsive standards-driven student services
- teaching quality (Teaching Quality Framework)
- digital learning (AI knowledge/skills) and analytics-enabled support
- improving employability outcomes through an employability framework, employability readiness survey, and formal industry partnerships
- connecting students to employment pathways, and
- high-quality campus facilities.

Conversion and consolidation

WSU's immediate priority is stabilising and strengthening its Domestic Student Profile by converting existing marginally funded enrolments into fully funded Commonwealth Supported Places. This reflects:

- strong underlying demand across priority fields
- demonstrated delivery capability at scale
- recent shifts in enrolment mix (including reduced international students and prior domestic load contraction)
- the need to ensure financial sustainability while maintaining equity access.

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

WSU will continue to excel in producing graduates to meet the needs of its rapidly growing region in essential frontline professions such as healthcare, education, social work, and policing.

As new industries and technologies transform the economy, WSU is equipping students with advanced skills through partnerships with the Western Sydney International Airport and the NSW Advanced Manufacturing Readiness Facility. Students will have AI skills matched with critical thinking.

The Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment will continue leading in net zero, climate action and food security, leveraging WSU's global rankings in the Times Higher Education Sustainability Impact Ratings.

Action

Construction: Up to 25% of NSW's professional construction workforce comes through our Construction Management, Architecture, Civil Engineering, and built environment programs. WSU has Australia's largest Construction Management program (about 650 students annually) and an emerging Architecture program.

We are helping address the national housing challenge through a modular consortium to deliver up to 40,000 homes.

Healthcare: NSW nursing graduates need to grow by 10-15% to meet the state's predicted shortfall of about 12,000 registered nurses by 2030. WSU trains the region's nurses, evolving teaching practices to keep pace with healthcare changes, including curricula focus on digitally integrated care and cultural responsiveness to Western Sydney's Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities.

We lead innovation in nursing education via a system that prepares students in contemporary industry practices and simulations studios. Efforts are also focused on addressing acute allied health shortages.

Education: In the next 5 years, our graduates will meet the region's need for an extra 3,000 teaching places. Our student diversity aligns with government commitments to graduate more bilingual teachers and those from diverse backgrounds.

Total Initial Teacher Education grew by 41% from 1,520 in 2022 to 2,149 in 2025. We had over 1,000 completions in 2024 across early childhood, primary and secondary programs, with many going to work in the region's schools. Our Centre for Excellence in Teaching opens in 2027.

Serving the community: WSU offers NSW's only professionally accredited Youth Work program, and demand for social workers and allied professions will grow.

The NSW Police Force is short of 3,000 sworn officers, and since 2026 WSU has lifted to a fourth intake to the Associate Degree in Applied Policing at Goulburn.

Jobs of the future: Parramatta's Engineering Innovation Hub and Bankstown's Factory of the Future engage learners in advanced manufacturing, robotics, and digital processes through spaces for experimentation, prototyping, research and collaboration.

Carbon and food security: Hawkesbury Living Labs showcase carbon farming, water recycling and biodiversity conservation while underpinning WSU's aspirations to be climate positive by 2029. The National Vegetable Protected Cropping Centre leads training in protected cropping horticulture.

Social Cohesion: Our anti-racism research shapes state and national policies around social cohesion.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
06 Health				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	7,812	8,243	8,243 by 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	91.06%	91.06%	91.06% by 2030
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	77.89%	78.3%	86% by 2030
07 Education				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	1,287	2,119	2,119 by 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	85.77%	85.9%	88.1% by 2030
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	78.98%	79.4%	86% by 2030
03 Engineering and Related Technologies				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	1,457	1,524	1,524 by 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	83.03%	83.2%	85.8% by 2030
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	74.55%	75.0%	83% by 2030
04 Architecture and Building				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	3,157	3,378	3,378 by 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	87.28%	87.4%	89.3% by 2030
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	81.49%	81.8%	88% by 2030
0905 Human Welfare Studies and Services				
Total student enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	809	806	806 by 2030
Success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	90.92%	90.92%	90.92% by 2030
Retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	72.97%	73.5%	82% by 2030

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

First Nations

First Nations leadership, access, participation and success

Vision

Western will continue to lead the nation in Indigenous excellence by embedding Indigenous leadership, knowledge systems, and self-determination across the University. Through the Indigenous Centre of Excellence, we will create a global beacon for Indigenous innovation, learning, research, and community impact, setting a new sector benchmark.

As the University serving Australia's largest urban Indigenous population, we will build on our achievements to continue increasing Indigenous access, participation and success. We enrolled over 1,000 Indigenous students in 2026. We will grow our sector-leading Indigenous workforce and place Indigenous expertise at the heart of decision-making, transforming Western.

Action

Strategies: Indigenous leadership, governance, truth telling, and self-determination are core to the 2026-2030 Indigenous Strategy co-designed by WSU's Indigenous Elders Advisory Committee, Indigenous staff and students.

Self-determination: We lead the sector on self-determination. The Indigenous Governance Mechanism, which brings together WSU's senior Indigenous leaders, meets monthly to provide Indigenous-led oversight of the Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP).

WSU's senior Indigenous leaders, staff and union representatives also meet bi-annually to inform Indigenous employment policies and workforce strategies.

Indigenous Centre of Excellence: The Centre opens on Darug land in 2028. Bringing together students, scholars, community leaders and partners, this nation-building project will advance Indigenous knowledge, research and positive change.

Its governance model will be a national exemplar of self-determination. Through an Indigenous Council, Indigenous peoples will have the authority to define priorities, make decisions and lead solutions that reflect their aspirations, cultures and strengths. It will set strategic direction, oversee governance responsibilities, and report to WSU's Board of Trustees.

Retention: In mid-2026, WSU became the first Sydney institution to enrol over 1,000 Indigenous students. Importantly, growth has been accompanied by improved student outcomes. Indigenous student retention (new normal) has increased from 66.9% to 73.3% over the past 2 years, narrowing the gap with WSU's overall 78.8% retention rate.

In serving the region, the emphasis is on increasing Indigenous access and participation.

The Badanami team along with dedicated Faculty Indigenous Success Officers provides culturally safe academic guidance and support, cultural mentoring and connection, scholarships and financial assistance, and leadership and career development. This supports an Indigenous student success rate of 78.63%.

Workforce: In August 2026, WSU had:

- 95 Indigenous staff making up 3.3% of the workforce, up from 1.6% in 2020, and above the sector average (1.8%)
- 23 graduates (since 2022) from the IGNITE Indigenous Traineeship Program, with 6 current trainees
- both Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous leadership positions (1 of 5 institutions nationally)
- Associate Dean Indigenous roles across Faculties
- Indigenous staff are 10% of the Academic Senate.

In 2026, an inaugural Chancellor's Indigenous Postdoctoral Research Fellow was appointed, and the strategic plan aims for 3.2% Indigenous Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students by 2030.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
First Nations total enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	773	2.72% of domestic students	3.2% of domestic students by 2030
First Nations success rate	HESC – Verified 2024	78.63%	78.9%	83.2% by 2030
First Nations retention rate	HESC – Verified 2024	58.74%	59.5%	73% 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

WSU serves one of Australia's most diverse communities with many under-represented in higher education. Encouraging more people into education – and supporting them – is the key to meeting the Accord's ambitions.

In 2025, WSU's student body was comprised of 37.3% first-in-family, 19.9% from low SES backgrounds, 2.4% Indigenous, and 6.59% from non-English speaking backgrounds. Many students have cumulative layers of disadvantage.

To meet the region's needs and stimulate new demand, we will continue to leverage our sector-leading expertise in meeting the needs of equity students through early intervention, inclusive teaching, and needs-based investment to improve retention, progression, and completion.

Action

Building potential: Western leads one of the nation's most extensive school-based equity outreach programs, engaging more than 10,500 high school students from 130 schools annually across low SES, Indigenous through Pathways to Dreaming, Pasifika, refugee, and asylum seeker communities.

Our goal is to engage every Western Sydney school, deepening engagement to drive aspiration and demand.

Expanding access: WSU's The College's new modular teaching model scaffolds learning through:

- Modular study: One subject at a time
- Small workshop-style classes: More interaction and personalised support
- Real-world assessment: Applied learning
- Personalised coaching: Targeted support
- Structured pathways**:** Diploma and FFUR programs that support progression to Bachelor degrees, particularly for students who may not see university as attainable.

Since moving 100% to modular learning in 2025, The College has seen:

- 86% retention in 2025 (up from 56% in 2024)
- Commencing intakes up 42% (Autumn 25) & 23% (Autumn 26)
- Pass rates of 82% compared to 71% under the old model
- Completion rates up to 86% compared to 56%, and student satisfaction at 94%.

In 2026, 88% of transitioning Diploma students commenced in the second year of a Bachelor degree. 1,149 students who transitioned to first- or second-year Bachelor studies are performing at least equal to direct-entry students.

Building on this success, WSU will expand access for lower ATAR students (40-55 range) in partnership with NSW Department of Education for Diploma-to-Bachelor pathways. This will also support stranded equity students.

Student success: WSU's Success Coach model identifies risk behaviours, enabling earlier and more targeted outreach. Success Coaches survey all commencing students on academic confidence, connection and self-identified support needs. The results drive targeted proactive outreach. In 2026, over 53,500 proactive contacts have been made. Support will increase in 2027.

We provide hardship support to all equity students at the point of need. In 2026 to August, there were 420 grants to 378 students. WSU currently does not have dedicated scholarships for regional students.

Disability inclusion: From 2027, WSU will operate the first full year of its reformed disability support model, which accelerates the time from need identification to adjustment, and embeds Universal Design for Learning across Faculties.

Measure

Indicator	Cohort	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Total enrolments	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2025	1,561	1,791	1,791 by 2030
Total enrolments	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2025	6,234	6,920	6,920 by 2030
Total enrolments	Regional	HESC – Verified 2025	1,215	1,543	1,543 by 2030
Total enrolments	Remote	HESC – Verified 2025	17	15	15 by 2030
Success	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	81.06%	81.2%	84.2% by 2030
Success	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	81.24%	81.4%	84.3% by 2030
Success	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	87.80%	88.0%	90% by 2030
Success	Remote	HESC – Verified 2024	76.73%	77.1%	84.4% by 2030
Retention	Students with disability	HESC – Verified 2024	71.15%	71.7%	81% by 2030
Retention	Students from low SES backgrounds	HESC – Verified 2024	72.30%	72.8%	82% by 2030
Retention	Regional	HESC – Verified 2024	69.02%	69.6%	80% by 2030
Retention	Remote *Note: small number of students in baseline data*	HESC – Verified 2024	30.77%	32.1%	56% 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

Our teaching vision is for students to experience learning overseen by teachers who embody excellence within a university that understands their uniqueness and prioritises their success.

The Teaching Quality Framework (TQF) is key to our Western 2030 strategic plan, and our mission to strengthen student success and outcomes. The TQF recognises that evidence of student learning and success lie at the core of teaching efforts. Our teaching will be supported by a student centred digital and technological ecosystem, ensuring they flourish in a world of AI.

The purpose of our teaching is to make student learning possible and successful.

Action

Defining good teaching: The TQF recognises Western Sydney's unique context while defining good teaching, how it is rewarded and recognised. It sets out WSU's expectations for high-quality teaching and is aligned with recruitment, probation, performance and promotion criteria to ensure that student learning, retention and success are key indicators of academic performance. Academics need to demonstrate teaching excellence to progress in their careers.

This requires them to:

- be prepared
- have skills to design inclusive learning environments
- be equipped with the ability and sensibility to engage and support students
- know how to evidence their teaching and improve it
- be continually learning as teachers, and
- have the capacity to drive educational transformation.

Teachers are empowered to share their achievements and impact, and to expand their professional development to align with career pathways. This gives WSU a language, approach and reporting mechanism to ensure high-quality teaching across the institution through integration in recruitment, probation, performance and promotion policies and processes.

Recognition: More than 248 staff have achieved fellowship with Advance HE, across all 3 levels, placing us as one of the sector leaders in this accreditation of quality teaching. In 2025, 4 academics were recognised in the Australian Awards for University Teaching.

In 2026, we have delivered:

- initial training to nearly 300 sessional staff
- foundation training to over 200 staff (with over half from our decasualisation program).

We offer professional development on AI, particularly relating to learning design and assessment.

Work-integrated learning experiences across the curriculum enable students to apply their knowledge in professional settings and develop the skills and confidence needed for successful careers. We successfully achieve this in our many accredited programs and are expanding more broadly.

Student feedback: We are improving how we collect student learning feedback to inform teaching practices.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Teaching quality and engagement (undergraduate)	QILT SES – Verified 2025	78.2%	78.4%	83% by 2030
Teaching quality and engagement (postgraduate coursework)	QILT SES – Verified 2025	82.5%	82.5%	85% by 2030
Employability skills	QILT ESS – WSU 2023-25 Pooled	89.3%	89.3%	89.3% by 2030
Adaptive skills	QILT ESS – WSU 2023-25 Pooled	90.3%	90.3%	90.3% by 2030

Joined-up tertiary system

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

Vision

Western will continue leading the way on a joined up tertiary system, strengthening its existing pathways and developing new initiatives.

In 2026, 22% of commencing undergraduate domestic students were admitted based on VET qualifications. These students perform well. In 2025, VET-to-WSU students had a success rate of 85.88%, up from 80.68% in 2020.

In 2027, we begin formal partnerships with TAFE NSW and the NSW Department of Education. We are piloting two initiatives for national adoption. All our pathways, including through WSU The College, provide wraparound support to give students the academic skills, confidence and readiness to succeed.

Action

VET-to-WSU: In 2024, there were 1,810 VET-to-WSU commencing Bachelor students, with one-third admitted into health studies. WSU will build on this critical pathway, strengthening a joined-up system in 2027 through streamlining processes, investing in enabling systems, and raising the visibility of credit recognition and admission pathways, including VET qualifications as a basis of entry.

Cheaper, faster degrees: Students who have completed a TAFE NSW diploma can enrol in WSU and receive full credit for their VET studies, saving 12 months of study and up to $18,000 in fees. The partnership leverages WSU's existing campus network, including co-located campuses, with access to share facilities, including Bankstown, Liverpool, Campbelltown, and Kingswood.

The NSW leading model, designed to scale up, features single enrolment, making it easier for students. Success coaches will support students with the transition to university. The first phase targets Western Sydney's critical skills shortages, including nursing and health science, aged care, and early childhood education.

Opportunities beyond ATAR: In 2027, WSU is partnering with the NSW Education Department to reform post-secondary options for students with low ATARs. This is a significant initiative aimed at ensuring people and their Western Sydney communities do not miss out on the social mobility and benefits of education.

This pilot addresses systemic biases in ATAR-based selection, which strongly correlates with socioeconomic status, school resourcing, and family educational background rather than academic capability. In 2025, 10,401 NSW students, or 18.9%, fell within the 40-55 ATAR range with about 4,160 students from Western Sydney.

Targeting underrepresented groups, including the 'lost boys', the model offers a supported and structured pathway that combines a diploma with guaranteed articulation to a WSU Bachelor degree. The College and other non-ATAR admission pathways students achieve strong progression, retention, and completion outcomes, significantly widening participation:

- 88% of students eligible to transition into Bachelor studies (2026)
- 47% achieved a GPA of 6–7 (Distinction/High Distinction) compared with 27% before The College moved to 100% modular learning in 2025.

Transitioning students performed on par with direct entry students in first semester of Bachelor studies.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
Number of WSU students admitted based on a VET qualification	WSU internal figures – 2025	1,832	1,882	1,882 by 2027

Research

Sustaining national capability and supporting innovation through research and research training

Vision

What matters in Western Sydney – new industry creation, climate adaptation, community health, wellbeing and culture, and educational equity – matters to Australia and the world.

Research training is critical to the next wave of innovation. Our increasingly industry engaged HDR candidates will spend more time between industry, community and the University and less time working in isolation. Faster completion times will reduce the trade-off between joining the workforce and pursuing HDR study, accelerating the exchange of knowledge across the private and public sectors.

Action

Research concentrations aligned to national priorities include:

- Youth and digital resilience (Young and Resilient Research Centre; Institute for Culture and Society)
- Food security (National Vegetable Protected Cropping Centre)
- Advanced and additive manufacturing (Factory of the Future; Centre for Advanced Manufacturing Technology)
- Modular construction and materials innovation (Urban Transformations Research Centre; Centre for Smart Modern Construction)
- Climate change impact and adaptation (Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment)
- Neuromorphic sensing applications (International Centre for Neuromorphic Systems; MARCS Institute for Brain and Behaviour)
- Population health and chronic disease (Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism Translational Research Unit; Translational Health Research Institute).

Western's research and research-training ambitions are linked. Our HDR candidates connect us to industry and help us scale complex priority research programs – ambitions that reflect those of the Strategic Examination of Research and Development.

Simply expanding HDR enrolments will not lift the domestic HDR pipeline or realise the national dividend of research training. On Western's enrolment targets, 1,772 candidates would graduate over the next 10 years if all candidates completed in 4 years. That drops to 1,358 if half of those candidates completed in 6 years. Our vision is to enhance the quality of the HDR experience and to build a research environment for HDRs that lead to timely completions and strong graduate satisfaction and outcomes.

To achieve this, the University:

- has increased HDR stipends, by 5% in 2026 and by 10% for 2027. We are increasing the availability of part-time scholarships and set our Yarramundi Research Scholarship (for candidates identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researchers) at the highest rate.
- has revitalised the Master of Research to ensure students complete in 18 months in discipline-relevant cohorts and are eligible for RTP scholarships. RTP support is expected to increase domestic enrolments and the pipeline of domestic HDR candidates.
- is reforming the PhD for professional candidates. Our current professional PhDs provide a foundation for new programs that are modular, translational and industry relevant. We will shift the emphasis from a single solitary thesis to co-designed industry outputs that accelerate innovation.

Measure

Indicator	Data source	Provider baseline	Milestone for 2027	Expected outcome and timeframe
HDR domestic enrolments	HESC – Verified 2025	811	820	846 by 2030
HDR domestic completions	HESC – Verified 2024	130	151	155 by 2030
Number of HDR scholarships supported by industry co-funding	Research – April 2026	155	158	170 by 2030

Section 3: Course and campus changes

Course closures

Before closing any undergraduate or postgraduate course of study in which Commonwealth supported students have been enrolled for more than two years without its immediate replacement by a course of study that leads to the same occupation or provides a similar specialised skill (including any suspension of intake of students for more than one consecutive academic year), the provider must notify the ATEC of its plans in writing.

Notification of actual or potential closures must occur as soon as reasonably possible before final decisions to close courses are made, or before any information on the potential course closure is made public (whichever comes first). Notification must occur via email to studentprofiles@atec.gov.au as information on proposed course closures becomes available.

Providers must provide a list of all courses proposed for closure and a short justification (e.g. low student demand).

Where a proposed course closure falls within one or more of the areas of Commonwealth concern, providers must identify the relevant courses and provide additional information. Areas of Commonwealth concern include whether the course:

- prepares students for an occupation experiencing a skills shortage
- is in a field where closure may create a skills shortage, including where the provider is the sole or dominant national provider
- is a specialised course linked to a regional economy
- is in a field identified as an ATEC priority in the interim SSP:
  - health, aged care and disability support
  - education, including early childhood education and care
  - sovereign capability and food security, including advanced manufacturing and critical minerals
  - digital and technology
  - housing and construction
  - climate change and Net Zero transformation
- is funded under a specific Commonwealth initiative such as Nuclear-Powered Submarine places.

Where a closure relates to one or more Commonwealth concerns as listed above, the provider must provide information on:

- the expected high-level impacts on staff and students arising from the closures, including numbers of students and staff affected, and how these impacts are being mitigated including alternative options available for students
- the consultation undertaken with staff, students, community and other stakeholders
- how the provider is meeting relevant requirements under the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, including the proposed teach out provisions to ensure existing students can complete their chosen course of study
- potential options to retain the course, including through cooperation with another provider or the movement of Commonwealth supported places to another provider (where applicable).

If the ATEC has any concerns about the potential course closure based on the information provided, the provider must engage with any discussions that the ATEC may seek to have, to reach a mutually agreeable arrangement with the provider regarding the course closure.

Where a provider determines that a closure does not relate to any identified Commonwealth concerns, they are only required to notify ATEC of the name of the course being closed via email to studentprofiles@atec.gov.au and classify it as a routine/low concern closure.

Campus changes

Providers must notify the ATEC if the provider proposes to enrol Commonwealth supported students in a course of study at a new campus or educational facility, or if the provider proposes to close a campus where Commonwealth supported students are enrolled.