



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Education,  
Skills and Employment**

**2020 Mission Based Compact  
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Charles Darwin University**

**PURPOSE**

This compact is an agreement between the Commonwealth and the University. Entering into a compact is one of the quality and accountability requirements, which a higher education provider must meet under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) as a condition of receiving a grant. Specifically, subsection 19-110(1) of HESA requires that Table A and Table B providers must, in respect of each year for which a grant is paid to the provider under HESA, enter into a mission-based compact with the Commonwealth for a period that includes that year.

All strategies should provide qualitative and/or quantitative measures of assessment.

**MISSION**

CDU is unique, serving a large remote area of the continent with a small and diverse population. We are a multi-campus, dual sector University, the only one based in the Northern Territory.

Our dual-sector status, course profile, delivery methods, and operations are necessitated by our commitment to the region in which we operate, which is characterised by a population that is/has:

- Small and below the size required to sustain a University in its own right;
- Geographically dispersed;
- A high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders;
- A high proportion of residents where English is a second language; and
- A much lower school age tertiary preparedness.

CDU is an integral contributor to the Northern Territory economy, as one of the largest employers. It is also a key contributor to the national aspirations to Develop the North, specifically through our ongoing participation in the development of an Education and Civil precinct as part of the Darwin City Deal.

CDU endorses the principles of the French Model Code on free speech and academic freedom; noting that there do not appear to be any clear substantive conflicts between CDU's existing governing documents and the Code. Many aspects of the Draft Model Code are already contained within CDU's existing governing documents. However, the CDU Council has requested that the University develop its own overarching institutional policy on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom, in consultation with staff and the Unions, which is consistent with the intent of the French Model Code and addresses reasonable restrictions that may be necessary or desirable to enable the University to discharge its obligations, or otherwise protect the University, its staff and its students, while also being in appropriate agreement with the University's existing policies. The University plans to consult with staff on such a draft policy early in 2020, which would then be presented to the University Council for approval and enactment.

CDU's Strategic Plan can be found at: <https://www.cdu.edu.au/files/2019-09/2015-2025%20strategic-plan.pdf>

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

### 2019 objectives and priorities for teaching and learning

Education 4.0 is the key platform embedded in our Learning & Teaching Plan 2019-2021 to address the challenges presented by Industry 4.0. In the recent CDU report, "Industry 4.0 and its future in the NT", we articulated some of these challenges. The report investigated the emergence of Industry 4.0 in the Northern Territory in the context of global and national developments and opportunities; assessed the current and future workforce skills requirements to support the NT uptake of Industry 4.0, and examined the impact of these requirements on training design, delivery and trainer/assessor capability.

As a leading cross-sectoral institution, CDU is well placed to help students become 'future-ready' workers who co-develop digital knowledge, skills and mindsets to both meet their personal needs and interests and prepare them for a world of constant change. Whole-of-life skills such as communication, critical thinking, digital capabilities and problem-solving, along with self-organisation and adaptability, will be integral components of continuous learning.

Cross-sectoral training will also become increasingly popular, combining the development of underpinning vocational skills and practical applications with higher education leadership capabilities to accomplish real tasks in real workplace settings.

The Plan advocates a codesign approach to collaborative innovation. We draw on Design Thinking and Digital Service Design approaches that engage staff and students in the design and delivery of meaningful, engaging education and training to students. The goal is for CDU students to value lifelong and lifewide learning and understand that learning occurs anywhere, anytime and through varied experiences. Throughout their studies, our students will build essential skills for success in academic pursuits, their work and their lives beyond CDU. Further, our codesign approach will also strengthen CDU processes, systems and practices required to achieve CDU-wide key targets.

### 2019 strategies to ensure quality in teaching and learning

CDU aims to enhance teaching quality, the student learning experience and student success. We value quality learning experiences for our students and will provide the necessary support for academic staff. Our curriculum design will optimise agile and future-oriented learning through the alignment of content, activities and assessment to provide seamless learning experiences.

Through the implementation of our new BlackBoard Ultra learning management system, we will offer new forms of polysynchronous learning, supporting learner-to-learner, learner-to-content and learner-to-teacher interactions through a blend of face to face online, asynchronous and synchronous experiences. We will continue to support External, Internal, Block/Intensive, Placement and Remote study modes, Field Studies and various forms of learning for future work.

Our new academic curriculum enhancement and development (ACED) process for courses incorporates a holistic approach to course and curriculum design that emphasises quality assurance and enhancement. This process encompasses the development and approval of new courses and units as well as the enhancement and amendment of existing courses and units. This internal quality assurance process critically evaluates the integrity, quality and effectiveness of the University's higher education courses and units, to ensure compliance with the relevant higher education standards and frameworks and the University's strategic alignment and operational planning.

To this end, when establishing eligibility for admission, the University considers an applicant's grade point average from prior tertiary study, and/or their successful outcomes in vocational study, and/or their performance in an enabling program, and/or their score in a special tertiary admissions test, and/or information provided in a personal competency statement, employment summary, CV or work references.

From time to time the University reviews the effectiveness of its admissions pathways, tracking the progression rate (student success in units of study) and retention rates for those admitted under

specific categories or criteria. The next of these reviews is scheduled following the closure of the 2020 Semester One admissions cycle at the end of 01 2020.

#### **UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS TRANSPARENCY**

The University aims to attract, select and retain a diverse range of students who are academically capable. To achieve this, the University has established minimum admission requirements that seek to ensure that all commencing students have satisfied academic and English language requirement standards that demonstrate the potential for success in their course of study, in addition to additional course specific admission requirements where applicable.

Offers of admission take account a range of factors in addition to the ATAR, including demonstrated skills, commitment, employment history and specific achievements related to particular fields of endeavour. The University seeks to provide pathways to persons who have experienced educational or social disadvantage and to address the under-representation of specific community groups in university education.

To this end, when establishing eligibility for admission, the University considers an applicant's grade point average from prior tertiary study, and/or their successful outcomes in vocational study, and/or their performance in an enabling program, and/or their score in a special tertiary admissions test, and/or information provided in a personal competency statement, employment summary, CV or work references.

#### **University Evaluation Strategies for ensuring students admitted without an ATAR are likely to succeed**

From time to time the University reviews the effectiveness of its admissions pathways, tracking the progression rate (student success in units of study) and retention rates for those admitted under specific categories or criteria. Such a review is scheduled following the closure of the 2020 Semester One admissions cycle at the end of 2020.

#### **UNIVERSITY RETENTION STRATEGIES**

In 2019 retention strategies will focus on the following areas:

- 1) Re-engagement of lapsed intermittent learners

In order to meet CDU's retention target across the year, effort will concentrate on reengaging students close to completion of their course who have not enrolled in any subjects for up to 12 months.

- 2) Course Cancellation intervention

Effort will concentrate on understanding why students were opting to discontinue with a view to offering alternatives and support if applicable. The intervention is conducted in three phases: information — web-based information provided before committing to an official discontinuation Enquiry — offering personalised advice on enrolment options and support services tailored to their circumstances Cancellation by eForm — personalised contact to determine circumstances and offering alternative outcomes such as leave of absences; referral to careers support to discuss alternative study options better aligned to career goals; referral to academic and personal counselling support.

- 3) Support for students whose academic performance is less than satisfactory and as a result are at risk of discontinuing their studies
  - 3a) Monitoring Unsatisfactory Progress (UP) students - UP students have been identified as a priority for progression monitoring students as they are at risk of exclusion for 12 months from their course if they fail to meet satisfactory performance in the subsequent semester. A pilot will be introduced in semester 1 which formed part of proactive

measures to investigate if students are implementing their Learning Management Plans (LMPs) as prescribed to them during the previous progression period.

- 3b) Introduction of a diagnostic tool to better manage Under Review students - A pilot project will introduce an online diagnostic survey to better manage Under Review students. The diagnostic questionnaire asked a series of questions with resulting student's responses recommending a 'Learning Success Plan' generated for the student to implement in their next semester to support them to succeed in their studies.

## **RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING AND INNOVATION**

CDU continues to achieve impressive ratings for its research quality including the latest ERA 2018 exercise where more than 80% of research undertaken by CDU was rated at or above world standard.

The recent EI 2018 results indicate that 100% of CDU's research has medium to high positive impact for the wider community. It also shows 100% of CDU's research has medium to high engagement with end users.

CDU is recognised domestically and internationally as having research strengths in the areas of:

- Indigenous and tropical health,
- Environment and natural resource management, and
- Social and public policy, contemporary Indigenous affairs, knowledge and governance; demography and growth planning, and regional economic and workforce development; specifically, within the context our region.

CDU is in the process of establishing a fourth institute, which will leverage the considerable opportunities for training and research that arise in Energy and Technology sectors across Northern Australia.

CDU plans to advance the goals of our strategic plan Connect Discover Grow by encouraging and supporting CDU researchers to engage in high quality scholarship and research that is engaged with the needs of CDU's stakeholders. In the research portfolio's strategy Roadmap of Research 2018-2020, CDU recognises the importance of having a capability framework in place to ensure continued excellence in areas of research strength and to nurture new areas to broaden its research base to achieve the key targets identified in the CDU strategic plan. CDU has two key initiatives to embed strategic research recruitments across key disciplines and to foster early career research active staff to improve its citations records and thus its reputation and international rankings.

CDU's Board of Graduate Studies is tasked with the fostering of high quality research training and promotion of CDU's higher degrees by research offerings. In 2019 CDU will actively pursue CDU-Industry partnership and government placement PhD scholarship schemes. CDU will also access other opportunities such as Australian Postgraduate Research (APR) Intern to create additional PhD industry internship opportunities. These initiatives are expected to open several new industry and government engagement opportunities for CDU's PhD students while introducing industry to CDU's PhD talent, skills, innovation and thinking.

CDU will boost its innovation, entrepreneurship and commercialisation activities by partnering with the Darwin Innovation Hub to access the Experts in Residence program. Experts in Residence will conduct events, workshops, mentoring and support for CDU's researchers to promote commercialisation opportunities as well as an IP opportunity audit to identify untapped commercialisation and social entrepreneurial potential at CDU.

CDU is promoting open access publications through targeted support schemes which include central funds to cover open access charges. These strategic initiatives will focus on increasing open access publications and are expected to improve CDU's citations record and international reputation thereby creating a positive impact on its international rankings.

## EQUITY

In meeting the challenge of becoming the University of Choice for Indigenous students and staff, CDIJ will build on its strong ties to Indigenous communities to lead national change in Indigenous tertiary education and achieve successful Indigenous outcomes by developing best practice in access, education and support, recruitment practices and professional development of staff. The embedding of Indigenous perspectives in learning and teaching practice is essential for parity to be achieved.

An important part of CDUs Indigenous education engagement is the partnership with the Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) under the auspices of the Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education (ACIKE).

In addition to this, the Education, Student Engagement & Success strategies focuses strongly on delivering improved student equity access and participation opportunities, along with improved outcomes for the target equity groups of our region.

### **Strategies for improving Indigenous outcomes and related targets**

The Office of Indigenous Student Services provides individualised student study support and is available to all Indigenous students in addition to the standard suite of student support and academic literacy services.

### **Strategies for achieving equity for regional and remote students, for low socio economic students and students from other equity groups**

The University's ASPIRE program is provides multi-year support to regional and remote and low SES students, and commences during their Year 10. This program supports students with the costs of study, provides additional tutoring services and is tailored to raise student's aspirations to continuing study in either VET or Higher Education.

### **Strategies to increase community access to university facilities**

Our Children's University initiative extends the University facilities to students as young as 7 to 14. The program aims to create students who are actively and productively involved in their own learning. The CU model leverages learning opportunities that sit within the community; businesses, local organisations and local education activity providers. CU's learning experiences are designed to have links to university learning and courses.

### **Strategies to increase aspirations and advice to school students on study options**

The University's Student Marketing and Events team engage with the Territory's schools, their students and their career advisers to increase students ability to make better informed and aspiration centred decisions, appropriate to leveraging their potential.

## LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

CDU has a number of strategies to address labour market outcomes.

- We aim to develop agile curriculum responsive to diverse needs of our student cohort and changing workplace conditions. This future-oriented curriculum approach integrates learning and work through real/simulated workplace tasks and will include micro-credentials to build critical industry skills and knowledge.
- Our students are offered lifelong learning opportunities to build skills and confidence to: Construct new knowledge and skills to transform their lives; Communicate professionally; Select and use a range of digital technologies to achieve results; and, Self-organise and make decisions to support personal growth and benefit themselves and society.
- We codesign learning programs with industry, learners and other stakeholders to create future-ready workers. In this process we recognise students as lifelong and lifewide learners who come with a range of practical knowledge and experiences. In doing this we will ensure we satisfy national regulatory requirements and ensure best practice in pedagogy and assessment design.
- We establish Higher Education Course Advisory Groups (CAGs) to oversee and advise on the quality of a group of cognate courses. The course grouping normally focuses on a Bachelor level degree courses, inclusive of nested award courses, and may also include aligned postgraduate courses. The Course Advisory Group is charged with engaging representatives of major stakeholders (students, graduates, staff, the disciplines, employers, industry, relevant professional bodies and the wider community) in developing, proposing, reviewing and improving the course/s. In so doing, it maintains and advances the University's academic standards and has regard for the interests of the students, the discipline/s, the associated industries and professions, and relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.
- CDU's new Credit Policy has been designed to ensure students have an opportunity to build on their prior learning, whether that learning was gained through structured courses or life or work experience. It is guided by our commitment to: recognise that learners take diverse pathways to achieve qualifications; value students' prior learning, whether formal, informal or non-formal; minimise the amount of learning students are required to repeat and facilitate student mobility between courses and between vocational and higher education, nationally and internationally. The policy applies to applicants seeking admission to the University with advanced standing due to prior formal, informal and non-formal learning and, enrolled students seeking to transition between courses or gain advanced standing in their current course due to prior formal, informal and non-formal learning. There policy recognised four types of credit: Specified credit; Unspecified credit; Block credit and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

## SECURITY MEASURES

CDU is a member University of CAUDIT and through this are partnering with AusCERT and AARNet, in an initiative known as the Australasian Higher Education Cybersecurity Service (AHECS). This initiative is aimed at proactively helping universities safeguard their intellectual property and reputation by providing fit for purpose services and proactively supporting the adoption of practices designed to mitigate risk and counter ever-increasing cybersecurity threats.

Through membership of CAUDIT CDU is also participate in a healthy Cybersecurity Community of Practice, a means of sharing good practice in a confidential, trusted environment.

More specifically in 2019 CDU will be completing the following to ensure safety of data against attacks:

- Schedule regular patching of major systems.
- Continue to improve our defence against general & spear phishing email attacks through implantation of technologies and mandatory staff training for Cyber Awareness.
- Improve email security configuration at the transport level.
- Implement solutions to provide management of local administrator account passwords of domain joined computers, ensuring passwords are stored and protected so only eligible users can read it or request its reset.
- Continue to improve our defences against threats on the internet by ensuring systems are up to date and enhancement are taken advantage of.
- Update our Virtual Private Network (VPN) infrastructure.

CDU has in place a Data Breach Response Procedure. As a participating institution in AHECS, CDU also has fast access to appropriate services to mitigate and address security breaches. When it becomes available, CDU also intends to leverage the proposed AARNet Security Operations Centre which will further facilitate pre-breach mitigation planning.

A high-level summary of CDU's Data Breach Response Procedure is below:

- Form the expert incident response team.
- Identify the cause of the breach and ensure that it is contained.
- Assess the extent and severity of the breach
- Notification: If the breach is an 'eligible data breach' under the Notifiable data breaches (NDB) scheme, report, notify individuals if required.
- Review the incident and consider what actions can be taken to prevent future breaches

In late 2018 CDU engaged a consultant to conduct an assessment and compliance exercise in relation to the ACSC Essential Eight. This work provided the baseline analysis for developing the Cyber Security continuous improvement program.

The below is a high-level summary of the assessment findings:

- Application Whitelisting
  - Server is installed across the majority of the server fleet.
  - Application whitelisting on the Desktop fleet is under review.
- Patch Applications and Patching of OS
  - CDU Patch Critical Security issues within two weeks and typically within 48 hours.
  - Applications are managed and maintained.
  - Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) is heavily in use for centralised management of application sets
- Configure Microsoft Office Macro Settings
  - Maturity Level 2 is achieved and most likely as high as a University can go in this space.
- User Application Hardening
  - Flash, Java and are under controls and have associated systems monitoring them.
- Restrict Administrative Privileges
  - Maturity Level 3 achieved, several controls used to block email and access.
- Authentication (MFA)
  - The external edge is now multifactored. Multiple MFA options are now being considered and tested.
- Daily Backups
  - Currently transitioning and redesigning the schedules and architecture.

The action list regarding CDU's planned 2019 activity relating to increasing data security from attacks speaks to both the success and focus of this program. Through this action CDU is aiming on most aspects of the ACSC Essential Eight to achieve a final maturity level of three as the most appropriate balance between business requirements and security.

In addition to this, in 2019 CDU will work with the (Innovative Research Universities) on the development of a standardised reporting framework for progress on the Essential Eight to assist in both comparative assessment and aligning our efforts.

Finally, In 2019 CDU will review its internal controls that serve to identify activities that may potentially be classified as foreign interference activities. Implementation of the amended internal controls will take place from January 2020.

**SIGNED for and on behalf of**

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by Danielle Donegan, Acting First Assistant Secretary,  
Higher Education Division of the Department of  
Education, Skills and Employment as delegate of the  
Minister for Education.

**Signed by**

Danielle Donegan

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**Date:** 17 December 2020

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**In the presence of:**

**Signed by**

Sabrina Kim

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**Position of witness**

Policy Officer

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**SIGNED for and on behalf of**

Charles Darwin University

**Signed by**

Professor Simon Maddocks

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**Position**

Vice-Chancellor and President

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**In the presence of:**

**Signed by**

Maria Mohr

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**Position or profession of witness**

Chief of Staff, VC, CDU

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