



**2020 Mission Based Compact
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and James Cook 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

James Cook University's (JCU) Strategic Intent is to create a brighter future for life in the tropics world-wide through graduates and discoveries that make a difference and our actions are underpinned by our values and beliefs:

Values

- Excellence
- Authenticity
- Integrity
- Sustainability
- Mutual Respect
- Discovery
- Creativity and Innovation

Beliefs

- We recognise that knowledge has the power to change lives
- We ignite and support a passion for learning in our community
- We are enriched by and celebrate our communities' diversity
- We understand that a sustainable environment is central to our lives and our work
- We strive to participate and respond to our community's needs delivering education and research in more flexible ways
- We uphold our commitments.

The University Plan builds upon our Strategic Intent and expresses how we intend to demonstrate the value provided by JCU in learning and teaching, research and engagement for the region, nation and global tropics over the 2018-2022 period. A thematic approach has been adopted, highlighting the primacy of our academic ambitions and identifying the services and capabilities required to fulfil these.

Response to the French Review

JCU seeks to appropriately respond to the Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan's review into university freedom of speech and the Model Code proposed by the Hon Mr Robert French AC, within the context of its State and Commonwealth legislative context and the current policies and Enterprise Agreement which speak to these principles.

The Vice Chancellor's Advisory Committee and University Council considered the draft Model Code, and complexities in Queensland given the Human Rights Act (Qld) 2019 coming into effect in January 2020;

and, as universities in Queensland no longer have the power to make subordinate legislation such as statutes or regulations since the passing of the *Universities Legislative Amendment Act (Qld) 2017*.

JCU has undertaken an assessment of the JCU Enterprise Agreement (2016), Council Code of Conduct, Staff Code of Conduct, and the Code of Conduct Explanatory Statement, and the Student Code of Conduct as they pertain to freedom of speech/academic freedom, and relate to the draft Model Code. In strengthening the JCU policy framework, consideration was given to the applicability of the existing policies, their scope, and the risk should a highly controversial matter arise in relation to academic freedom or freedom of speech.

JCU considers that the current JCU Enterprise Agreement (2016), Council, Staff and Student Codes of Conduct and broader policy and procedures satisfactorily address the objects and intent of the Model Code. Council has determined that when the policies and Enterprise Agreement are due for review, the University will, to the greatest extent possible, update relevant definitions to ensure consistency with the intent of the Model Code.

A policy gap was identified in relation to Principle Six which states: “University has the right and responsibility to determine terms and conditions upon which it shall permit external and invited visitors to speak on university land.” Whilst the [Authorised use of University facilities and or grounds for non-core purposes](#) is consistent with the Model Code, the University is currently undertaking consultation on the adoption of a Visiting Speaker Policy that covers both invited visiting speakers and external visiting speakers who may attend the JCU campuses or land/facilities. Much of what is proposed, currently occurs in practice. The Policy, once finalised, will undergo the normal approval processes through Management and Governance Committees to Council for approval.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

PRIORITIES AND QUALITY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The University Plan (2018-2022) and Academic Plan (2018-2022) guide future directions for learning and teaching at JCU. JCU delivers high quality learning environments and programs that are inclusive, relevant and engaging, position students at the heart of the university experience and lead to excellent outcomes for our graduates. In particular, we focus on the hands-on, practical experiences in learning and the virtual learning environments for enhanced student experience.

In 2019, JCU implemented an Engaged Curriculum Process (ECP), led by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Students. The ECP is a student experience focused, data driven, collaborative, and integrated process that enables the following:

- The identification and celebration of best practice in teaching and learning in our courses and subjects;
- Leveraging best practice to enhance the experience of students across the University;
- The identification of actions we need to take at course/subject level that will further enhance the suite of programs and the experience of our students; and
- The identification of where we can further enhance the teaching quality through supporting and developing our academics.

Our innovative approaches to teaching and active engagement with industry was recognized via two JCU academics being awarded the prestigious national Australian Awards for University Teaching – Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning in 2019.

UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS TRANSPARENCY

JCU uses academic achievement rating scales (such as ATAR, OP, Selection Ranks or overseas equivalent) to assess students for entry to Bachelor courses. International students also need to prove English Language proficiency. Entry to some competitive health courses requires an additional written application and an interview while entry to enabling courses requires only the satisfaction of minimum English proficiency requirements. From 2020, due to the discontinuation of the OP in Queensland, domestic

applicants must have an ATAR, a completed international qualification (such as the International Baccalaureate), or an AQF Certificate III or higher to gain access to a Bachelor degree. The Queensland Tertiary Admission Centre (QTAC) can also calculate a Selection Rank for non-school leavers based on an applicant's employment experience which can be assessed on its own or in conjunction with a [Special Tertiary Admission Test \(STAT\)](#) result.

The University has introduced a process where applicants who do not meet the published academic or English Language proficiency entrance requirements are made a packaged offer, requiring the completion of a pathway program such as the Diploma of Higher Education, Foundation year or English Language training before admitting to degree program. Students entering JCU through this Diploma of Higher Education pathway are advised in regard to the subjects they are required to undertake to acquire the foundational skills necessary for their chosen degree and to maximise credit when entering the degree. This ensures that students can develop the foundation skills necessary to succeed in their degree of choice, in a supported environment prior to moving into an undergraduate degree. Students requiring additional English Language to enable academic study are supported through the JCU College which provides dedicated support to International students.

JCU uses learning analytics and our student data reporting system (COGNOS) to monitor and evaluate the success rates of students who enrol and complete the diploma and then enrol in a degree program.

UNIVERSITY RETENTION STRATEGIES

As a regionally based University, JCU's student body comprises of significant numbers of students who are considered to be at risk of attrition. Our domestic student body is characterised as follows:

- 25% of students are from a low socio economic background;
- 88% of students are from a regional area and 4% are from an area considered remote (highest in Qld);
- 6% of students are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (highest in Queensland);
- Nearly 60% of commencing students who originate from Cairns and Townsville are the first in family to attend university;
- 53% of commencing students are aged 20 or above (i.e. not school leavers); and
- 36% of students are studying part time.

JCU is acutely aware of the need to ensure that students who embark upon tertiary study are supported to succeed and complete their course. Our own research shows that the main factors associated with student attrition are academic performance (both prior and during university course), attendance category (full time /part time), mode of study (internal or external), course engagement and age.

JCU has implemented a framework of academic and personal support services which respond to the known factors outlined above to assist students continue with their study. The support mechanisms are implemented across the student journey from pre-arrival through to graduation and include:

Pre-arrival and commencement

- Pre-arrival information about what to expect at University so that students can be prepared and transition successfully. [getready4uni](#) is an online resource that provides essential information about commencing university study for both on campus and external students;
- The provision of a suite of [pathways programs](#) that enable students to build their capacity for university study including both long and short term programs depending on student preparedness;
- a 2-week [Summer school pre-entry program](#) to provide intensive preparation for prospective Indigenous students who had completed Year 12 QCE or HSC requirements and were seeking to gain entry into a nursing, midwifery and medical programs at JCU. The Pre-Program also served as an alternative selection process for students who had not achieved the require entrance score for the course;
- Scholarships and Bursary for first year students requiring financial assistance to study; and

- A well-established [student mentor program](#) that matches experienced, successful students (Mentors) with commencing undergraduate students from the same course of study during [Orientation Week](#) to assist in creating social and academic support networks for new students. Student mentors provide campus tours including of key student contact points, provide introductions to relevant service providers such as counselling and learning support and act as a buddy for the first study period.

During

- The [Indigenous Education and Research Centre](#) has specialised education and socio-emotional support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These services are designed for special entry Indigenous students to increase their capacities to be successful in degree programs; and
- A range of [academic support services](#) including learning advisors to provide individual assistance, peer assisted learning groups and college support officers, all which enable early intervention if a student is struggling in adjusting to university life.
- AccessAbility services – team of professionals that coordinate, implement and deliver a range of support across the University;
- Student Wellbeing – Professional counsellors and psychologists deliver free and confidential psychological and welfare services in one-on-one and group workshop formats; and
- Learning and social spaces which are accessible 24 hours per day to provide students with access to ICT equipment and places to interact with their peers outside of class time.

Link to careers and employment

- Work integrated learning opportunities are integrated into most courses to ensure students can see the vocational aspects of their course and are prepared for employment upon completion; and
- Careers and employment service provide linkages to careers and have a focus on motivating students to continue with their studies.

Reporting and Evaluation

JCU monitors and reports on retention and attrition annually and evaluates the success of retention initiatives. This evaluation includes an analysis of data (retention rates, success rates and completion rates) and qualitative analysis via discussions which College Support Officers and staff involved in the Diploma of Higher Education and Indigenous Education and Research Centre have with students considering withdrawing from their studies. This data informs the allocation of human and financial resources to the initiatives listed above to ensure that services which are the most effective are resourced appropriately. Student retention, success and completion data is also a component of the Engaged Curriculum Process to inform subject and course development and provide input into learning and teaching strategies and practice.

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING AND INNOVATION

JCU continues to build on academic and research excellence to raise awareness and develop solutions to issues facing tropical and underserved populations. We sustain research excellence and intensify its impact by making it relevant to tropical communities, industries and policy makers.

Our world class research is enabled through extensive research infrastructure and a well-established graduate research education program to develop the next generation of researchers. JCU has refreshed its strategic and capital planning processes for development and support of high-quality research infrastructure, across analytical infrastructure, marine controlled environments, field stations and fleet, to ensure that JCU students and researchers have access to world-quality enabling infrastructure, while also attracting collaboration into the region from quality scientists globally.

The Graduate Research School provides a holistic approach to Research Education. The program includes opportunities for additional [skills development](#), [professional development](#) and internships for [HDR](#) and [PhD](#) candidates (via [APR.Intern](#)). JCU employs a dedicated Business Development Officer to identify potential industry placements for candidates.

The University has established **JCU Connect**, an organisational unit, and innovation platform, that serves as the “front door” through which industry (government, business and community) can engage with the breadth and depth of JCU’s research and commercial expertise, intellectual property, facilities, research stations, analytical services, and innovation centres; and a “one-stop-shop” for JCU researchers seeking assistance with their research, partnerships, and commercialisation. JCU Connect facilitates collaboration and engagement between JCU and industry clients and other end users. Our success is measured, not only in the amount of research income generated but also the diversification across Category 1-4 income sources and the impact of our discoveries on our local communities and the tropical world.

JCU is investing in its capability and infrastructure to support innovation through the construction of innovation centres in Townsville and Cairns and the creation of dedicated roles in support of the development and implementation of a university-wide innovation strategy. JCU also continues to play an active role in the wider innovation ecosystem through enhanced collaboration between JCU, the start-up and scale-up community and established industry partners, including prototype design and build, and independent testing. JCU is a member of three innovation hubs, some of which are funded by the Queensland Government under the [Advancing Regional Innovation Program](#).

JCU makes its research publications and data accessible through an online portal - [Research Online](#).

EQUITY

JCU is recognised throughout Australia for its sustained activities in the widening participation agenda. JCU’s [Access, Participation and Success Plan 2018-2020](#) details the key evidence-based programs in operation to reduce educational inequality from pre-entry and access through to achieving positive graduation outcomes. Activities to ensure equitable participation and success in university study is focused across the following four domains:

1. Pre-Entry and Access – raising awareness and aspiration to attend university;
2. Alternative Pathways – providing integrated and accessible pathways into university for students who do not meet standard entry requirements;
3. Successful Participation – focused on successful transition into university and progressing through the program; and
4. Positive outcome – preparing students to transition to employment.

Indigenous students make up approximately 6% of JCU’s domestic student body. According to data reported to the Department of Education, this is more than triple the sector average for Indigenous student participation (currently 1.8%) and nearly double the Indigenous participation rate at other regional universities (3.7%). [Ensuring Indigenous students succeed and complete their study is of paramount](#)

importance and the JCU Indigenous Education and Research Centre has developed an evidence-based model under the leadership of the Pro Vice Chancellor, Indigenous Education and Strategy, Professor Martin Nakata, to achieve this. This model is designed to ensure students entering undergraduate programs are academically prepared to undertake study. An overview of the model is provided below:

Raising Aspiration	Community outreach activities, partnerships with other organisations for example ATSIMS, CSIRO, Talgai, Winter School to raise aspiration and provide role models for university study,
Academic Preparation	Activities with primary and secondary schools to assist students to select appropriate subjects at school which prepare them for university study.
Integrated Pathways	Students have a range of pathway options depending on their level of academic preparedness. Options include JCU enabling and diploma programs, TAFE certificates and diplomas, Summer Pre-Entry school.
Careers and Course Advice	Staff in the Indigenous Education and Research Centre assist students to complete the application and enrolment forms to ensure a smooth transition into university.
Timely financial assistance	Students are allocated a Commonwealth Scholarship upon enrolment if they meet the criteria. This automatic allocation enables students to gain financial assistance to relocate or settle into university. Students are also assisted to apply for ABSTUDY or other financial assistance they may be eligible for.
Welcoming and culturally safe environment	Dedicated Indigenous Centre with welcoming staff, dedicated computer laboratories and places for staff to interact with students, triage to other university services such as counselling and careers advice.
Timely academic and tutorial support	Students are allocated to an Academic Support Officer who develops individual learning plan and ensures that students have access to tutorial assistance and learning support. Students' progress is monitored through a case management system so that timely interventions can be made if the student is identified at being at risk of failing or withdrawing.
Celebrating Success	An annual awards night is held each year to celebrate the achievements of students. This is attended by staff from across the University (including members of the University Executive) and members of the community.

JCU is proud to provide educational opportunities for people living in northern and far northern Queensland who may not otherwise be able to access university study. With four of every five students at JCU's Townsville and Cairns campuses coming from a regional, rural or remote (RRR) area, JCU welcomed the release of the National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy and the shining of a spotlight on the lower participation and attainment rates of those living in Regional, Rural and Remote locations. JCU is keen to work with government to implement recommendations from the National Strategy and further realise the potential of the Northern Australia region.

JCU actively works in RRR areas to raise aspirations and make university study an accessible option for school students. JCU offers a Year 8, 10 and year 12 University Experience programs to all schools from Mackay north with the Year 12 program having a residential component for students from outside of Townsville or Cairns. While JCU subsidises the programs as much as possible, financial constraints prevent some students from participating. Ensuring schools can send their students to these or other on-campus events is a key part of breaking down the barriers and perceptions of the accessibility of university. Exposing school students to university study in Years 8 and 10 is of vital importance to encourage students to select appropriate level subjects in years 11 and 12 and prevent a perception of being locked out of university study because they don't have the necessary pre-requisites.

JCU is also part of the Queensland Widening Participation Consortium targeted at raising aspiration levels of low SES students. As part of this consortia JCU conducts school visits to selected schools throughout north and far north Queensland, as well as schools in the Mount Isa and Gulf regions to raise awareness and aspiration to attend university. Trend data has demonstrated success in student applications to tertiary study where sustained engagement with universities is undertaken, for low SES and Indigenous students. Under the consortia agreement, JCU serves the greatest number of RRR schools in Queensland.

Raising the aspiration of those who have completed their schooling and are living in RRR areas is more challenging as these people often have other responsibilities such as family and employment that prevent them leaving their community to study. JCU is exploring a blended delivery model, using a combination of online material and face-to-face interactions at community infrastructure (e.g. JCU clinical schools, secondary schools, TAFE colleges) in RRR communities.

JCU also involves current students as ambassadors in programs to attract and retain students across all equity groups. JCU students are employed to assist with marketing and outreach activities to talk to prospective students about their own journey to university and experiences while at university. Where possible, ambassadors are matched to the marketing activity and prospective student group, considering aspects such as social and cultural background so that prospective students can identify with the experience. The student mentoring program also engages successful students to assist new students in adapting to university study and the campus experience. JCU Halls of Residence also engage senior students living on campus to assist new students in settling into their new environment and cope with relocating away from home.

LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

JCU plays a vital role in the economic development of communities throughout northern Queensland and beyond, by providing opportunities to participate in higher education as well as encouraging students to live and work in the region as part of the professional workforce. The University's intent is to develop graduates and discoveries that make a difference in the lives of those living in the tropics and has focused its course portfolio on responding to the workforce needs of the region and providing students with the skills and experiences to contribute and succeed in rural, remote and under-served communities. JCU is delivering on its mission and 75 per cent of our graduates' gain employment in the region north of Mackay following graduation. Furthermore, JCU has been rated in the top 3 Australian Universities for employer satisfaction in the Quality Indicators in Learning and Teaching (QILT) Employer Satisfaction Survey for the last two years.

JCU's course portfolio and the content of each degree program are informed by the needs of our region and the specific requirements of professions. When developing new programs, JCU undertakes market assessment to assess the latent market for the course, preferred delivery options and whether the course should be undergraduate and postgraduate. JCU is currently developing a framework for modular based delivery, to respond to market demand for micro-credentials or specific skills, where students do not wish to complete an entire degree program. JCU colleges are also informed by local industry advisory groups and accreditation bodies which provide input into course content and professional experience requirements based on the needs of industry.

Perhaps JCU's most well-known example of tailoring programs to meet labour market demands are those offered in the Medicine and Health disciplines. The Division of Tropical Health and Medicine has focused its course portfolio on improving health in rural, remote, Indigenous and tropical communities within Australia and worldwide. The focus is embedded across all courses with students completing subjects and experiences to provide them with the necessary professional knowledge and skills and attributes required to make a difference in rural, remote and Indigenous communities. This focus is also incorporated into recruitment strategies and selection processes for the Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery which incorporate a written application and interview in addition to academic merit, to assess desire to work in these settings and providing students with early and repeated exposure to rural experiences during

training. This method has proven effective, with two thirds of JCU Medicine graduates going on to practice outside of major cities.

Student placements, projects, clinical practice and fieldwork are central to JCU's learning and teaching approach and students are encouraged to undertake placements in regional, rural and remote locations in keeping with our mission to develop the workforce for the northern Queensland region. Our students have the opportunity to take part in a wide-range of hands-on experiences which are informed by industry best practice and designed to prepare students for the future of work. In professionally accredited programs, placements are arranged throughout the course as required. JCU has increased emphasis on incorporating real life work experience (putting theory into practice) into degrees such as the Bachelor of Arts, Science and Business through projects developed in conjunction with local business, community-based projects (both overseas and in Australia) and internships or workplace placement. JCU is also embedding innovation and entrepreneurial skills into degree programs through the inclusion of hackathons and design sprints held annually across a range of areas in conjunction with local industry and innovation groups.

SECURITY MEASURES

Cyber security is a key area of focus for JCU and the University is actively working to reduce and mitigate risks in this area and continually improve our security posture and maturity. JCU has established a strategic program of work that is integrated with University Governance and Risk Management functions, that considers a broad range of risks and outcomes including identification, protection, detection, response, and recovery measures.

JCU, through our membership of the Council of Australasian University Directors of Information Technology (CAUDIT), 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 of by providing fit for purpose services and proactively supporting the adoption of practices designed to mitigate risk and counter ever-increasing cybersecurity threats. The AHECS cybersecurity framework maps both existing and proposed services across 4 key focus areas – engagement, advocacy and advisory, support and operations, and training and is mapped to the NIST framework.

JCU actively participates in a healthy Cybersecurity Community of Practice supported by CAUDIT. This provides a means of sharing good practice in a confidential, trusted environment. This is complemented by technical data sharing initiatives such as our membership of the Research and Education Networks Information Sharing and Analysis Center (REN-ISAC), and our capabilities to identify and mitigate vulnerabilities across our entire systems environment both on premises and externally hosted or cloud.

To ensure that the University is prepared to deal with a breach of security, JCU has developed and implemented a cyber security incident response framework and plan that integrates with the range of other university incident and business continuity plans. This plan outlines the actions required to effectively contain, remediate, and recover from a critical incident. This plan is augmented with specific guidelines to address the nature of various types of incidents and operates in conjunction with other technology and business incident management procedures. Additionally, AHECS will provide several services including fast access to appropriate services, negotiated pre-breach, along with good practice guides, templates and talent pool available to assist in the mitigation strategies and a community of practice across the sector with expertise in cybersecurity.

In the development and ongoing continual improvement of the University's security posture, we actively utilise guidance such as the ACSC Essential 8 and related mitigation strategies. Key areas of focus for JCU from this guidance have been strategies to mitigate:

- Targeted cyber intrusions
- Business email compromise (ransomware, malware, and phishing)

These strategies include:

- Patching regimes for operating systems and applications
- Content filtering
- System hardening
- User awareness and education
- Restricting privileged access and local administrator access
- Intrusion detection
- Systems and data protection and recovery capabilities

In order to enhance the identification and deterrence of foreign interference activities, JCU looks forward to engaging with the Department of Education, through Universities Australia, to support the development of best practice guidelines to counter foreign interference in the Australian university sector. JCU supports fostering a positive security culture through a principles-based approach to risk management that can help to ensure the university sector continues to produce world-class research while protecting academic freedom and minimising risks.

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

Date:
06/01/2021

In the presence of:

Signed by
Kate Thompson

Position of witness
Executive Officer

SIGNED for and on behalf of

James Cook University

Signed by
Professor Sandra Harding

Position
Vice-Chancellor

In the presence of:

Signed by
Russ Parker

Position or profession of witness
Executive Officer
