



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

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

**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**

**VISION AND MISSION**

The University of Divinity's mission is to promote excellence in education, research and engagement in theology and associated disciplines. Its primary focus over the term of this Compact is to grow partnerships with employers, including churches, religious orders, faith-based agencies, schools and hospitals, to deliver research outcomes and to form graduates equipped for the service of others.

**FRENCH REVIEW: MODEL CODE ON FREE SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The University of Divinity Act 1910 (Victoria) requires that the University does not impose a religious test on students or staff. This has enshrined the principle of free speech and academic freedom in the University's culture and conduct since its inception, and facilitated a culture of free and open enquiry vital in the field of theology and religious studies. The University's Vision statement further supports this aim by aspiring to "critical engagement" in the University's activities. In response to the French Review recommendations the University of Divinity has amended its Code of Conduct (mandatory for all Council and committee members, students and staff) to include a requirement to "promote the responsible exercise of academic freedom and academic judgement". The University has decided that adoption of the Model Code is unnecessary at this time but has the matter under review.

<https://divinity.edu.au/university-of-divinity/about-us/our-vision-and-mission/>

<https://divinity.edu.au/study/graduate-attributes/>

<https://divinity.edu.au/code-of-conduct/>

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

The University has three main objectives in learning and teaching: a) development of awards for new cohorts including Counselling and Education; b) ensuring awards which train religious and pastoral workers promote health and integrity in ministry; c) improving the academic resources available to support teaching and learning including academic skills and library resources. These objectives are embodied in the Strategic Plan. The University's major strategies for ensuring quality are prescribed by its Academic Quality Policy. Professional development of academic quality delivery for academic staff is ensured through the University's Graduate Certificate in Theological Education and through provision of micro-credentials for staff training.

### UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS TRANSPARENCY

The University does not use ATAR scores for admissions to any of its awards. Undergraduate admissions include a compulsory interview with a course advisor which is designed to assess a student's academic and English language capability and their aptitude for the award. Where a student under 21 does not possess a satisfactory result on a Year 12 qualification or equivalent, a student may only be admitted as a probationary student to a Diploma, and proceed to a Bachelor's degree only after completion of the whole Diploma. The University's Student Progress Policy provides for continuous monitoring of student progress and intervention strategies. These strategies are supported by the University's collegiate structure, which provides an intimate learning environment for students characterised by classes of between 6 and 40 participants.

### UNIVERSITY RETENTION STRATEGIES

The University's retention rate is relatively low compared to other providers. This is partly due to the majority of students being mature-age and part-time, however the University has developed a retention strategy to address this deficiency. This has four components: understanding data, early intervention by lecturers before completion of a unit of study, required follow-up with all students who fail a unit at semester end, and contacting all students who do not re-enrol to complete an exit interview. Retention is monitored annually for all awards through an annual Course Review Report, and is the subject of major Course Reviews and of an annual strategic discussion at the Academic Board.

<https://divinity.edu.au/documents/admissions-policy/>

<https://divinity.edu.au/document/strategic-plan/>

<https://divinity.edu.au/document/academic-quality-policy/>

<https://divinity.edu.au/course/graduate-certificate-theological-education/>

<https://divinity.edu.au/documents/student-progress-policy/>

## RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING AND INNOVATION

The University's Strategic Plan — Research Goal establishes strategies to measure, develop and grow research activity and research quality. Key activities in 2019 include recruitment of a second postdoctoral fellow in theology to provide for early career researcher opportunities, and new appointments in research development staff at three of the University's Colleges.

The Council has commissioned a review of the research training environment at the University and determined to establish a School of Graduate Research to further improve and develop its research training program. This includes establishing frameworks for research partnership scholarships with faith-based agencies and religious orders to deliver fully funded PhD scholarships to meet the needs of industry partners. There is presently one industry placement PhD in the area of human ageing.

The University is strongly supported by industry partners to deliver research in applied theology and ministry. These activities are measured through the University's industry funding levels and the ARC EI assessment, and through the Strategic Plan — Research Goal and publication of research outcome narratives in the University's news and events website, Vox.

The University's Research Repository provides access to staff publications and HDR research theses, subject to copyright and ethical requirements. The University's Library Hub has developed a special collections site, including digital images and objects from the University's research collections in Colleges and Libraries.

Key targets:

1. Maintain "3" on ERA for FOR 2204 and increase to "4" for ERA 2023
2. Raise minimum "research active" definition in 2021 to increase staff output and quality
3. Institute a School of Graduate Research in 2020 and improve completion rate of HDR students
4. Raise funding for at least one research partnership PhD scholarship annually

<https://divinity.edu.au/documents/strategic-plan/>

<https://repository.divinity.edu.au/>

<http://vox.divinity.edu.au/research/>

## EQUITY

The University's Strategic Plan provides for targets which address the two major historic and present inequities in Australian theology. First, the University has established a partnership to provide Indigenous theological education and research delivered by and for Indigenous people, with the first enrolments in 2018, aiming to create Indigenous leaders with doctoral qualifications in theology. Second, the University has established a goal to improve the participation of women in theology, aiming to achieve gender equity in theological research, scholarship and governance.

Key targets:

1. First graduates of the Indigenous Theology Postgraduate Program in 2019
2. Recruit Indigenous students to the University's PhD program in 2019
3. Employ an Indigenous Project Officer from 2019
4. Employ an Indigenous theologian from 2020
5. Raise \$25,000 to support Indigenous students and staff in 2019
6. Establish a mentoring program for women in theological education in 2020
7. Establish one PhD scholarship for a woman in 2019 and 2020
8. Establish gender participation targets for all University boards and committees in 2020

<https://divinity.edu.au/documents/strategic-plan/>

## LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

As a private provider, the University of Divinity's unique collegiate structure directly reflects the labour force and expertise needs of its 32 partners in the churches and religious orders. Each College has direct relationships with one or more churches and religious orders, with the mission of providing high quality theological education and ministry formation for those sponsoring bodies' future leaders. Needs are monitored through annual review of each College and a five-year major review including engagement with the College's sponsoring organisations.

These needs are augmented by the University's Strategic Plan, through three goals which add to the University's fundamental offerings or revise them in response to community standards and needs:

Counselling —to establish new awards in Counselling that meet professional accreditation requirements for Australia's two peak bodies in Counselling, to supply qualified counsellors.

Responding to the Royal Commission — to ensure the University's ministry training programs and professional development programs for ministers respond to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Enrolment Growth —to identify areas where the University is able to grow new programs to meet emerging labour market needs for faith-based services.

<https://divinity.edu.au/documents/strategic-plan/>

## **SECURITY MEASURES**

The University of Divinity's Cyber-Security Framework was reviewed and updated by the University Council in June 2019 and is now subject to annual review. In combination with the University's Privacy Policy and IT Access and Use Policy, the University manages security of sensitive personal data (such as student records) through housing all data (including third party products) on Australian-based servers, monthly review of IT products and activities, risk escalation strategies with third party providers, and annual review of all IT service providers and products. A further strategy to mitigate risk of cyber attack is division of different types of data into different systems housed with different providers. Multi-factor authentication is being introduced for all University email accounts including access to software. Regular training and reminders are provided to University staff in cybersecurity prevention and identification measures.

Due to its small size and disciplinary specialisation the University of Divinity is relatively unlikely to be a target of interest for surveillance, foreign interference, or capture of commercially sensitive data.

**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:** 17 December 2020

---

**In the presence of:**

**Signed by**

Sabrina Kim

---

**Position of witness**

Policy Officer

---

**SIGNED for and on behalf of  
University of Divinity**

**Signed by**

Professor David Sherlock

---

**Position**

Vice-Chancellor

---

**In the presence of:**

**Signed by**

Anjali Antoniotti

---

**Position or profession of witness**

University Secretary

---