



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

**2020 Mission Based Compact
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Victoria 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

Victoria University (VU) is a dual sector international University of Opportunity and Success based in the West of Melbourne, one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. With a culturally diverse population of students and staff from a wide range of backgrounds, VU has a powerful moral purpose to provide vocational and higher education that transforms the lives of students and the communities it serves.

The University's heterogeneity reflects the diversity of its core constituency in the West of Melbourne, an area which is undergoing major change in its traditional industries and workforces. VU's stakeholders deserve an outstanding university that is engaged with and focused on the contemporary needs of students and communities to ensure they survive and thrive in the face of such major economic and social changes.

In learning and teaching, VU is focused on providing high quality, engaging career-based tertiary education at all levels of vocational and higher education with flexible entry and exit points, appropriate pathways, engaging and rigorous curriculum and contemporary delivery; while maintaining rigorous standards and ensuring that all students are supported to meet those standards.

In 2018, VU introduced [The VU Way](#), a revolutionary approach to learning and teaching, which will be fully implemented across the University by 2022. Under *The VU Way*, large impersonal lectures and passive learning in semester-long units of study are being replaced by small group, engaged learning in Block Mode. Studying one subject at a time, the focus is resolutely on the individual learner and their learning success. Often successfully utilised in vocational and postgraduate education, this approach has been largely absent in undergraduate higher education in Australia.

The Block Mode has already been adopted for all first year undergraduate students at VU, and has had a very positive impact on learner engagement and student transition, satisfaction, retention and success. In 2019 it is being implemented in all second year undergraduate subjects. By 2022, it will be implemented across all VU's vocational and higher education courses.

By adopting this approach, VU can provide a high quality, comprehensive and flexible tertiary education offer to any student from any background. The move to Block Mode across courses at VU will increase the flexibility with which VU students can mix and match their subjects in a way that suits them best. Under this system, students are able to gain vocational or higher education credentials concurrently or sequentially to equip them with the knowledge and skills they will need as future ready graduates. Concurrently, VU is investing in digital technology, new online education offers, and creating its academic programs of the future.

The Victoria University Polytechnic offers contemporary vocational education and applied industry relevant programs. It works collaboratively across the University to ensure strong pathways from vocational to higher education and vice versa, as well as offering a wide range of vocational programs which students take in their own right as a route to skilled occupations.

As a dual-sector university, VU is especially well placed to run industry focused programs that reflect our vocational and higher education capabilities relevant to particular industries, conducted as cross-university programs, drawing our higher education and vocational offers in a joined-up way.

In research and engagement, VU is committed to undertaking high quality and innovative applied and translational research which results in healthier, smarter and sustainable communities in the West of Melbourne and beyond, and connecting deeply with industry and the community, in turn enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

VU Research was established to lead, manage and administer the University's research and research training programs. VU has defined areas of research focus that build on well-established capability and disciplinary

expertise, and align with its teaching and learning. Designed to be interdisciplinary, our areas of research focus will create opportunities for collaboration and growth and enable innovative solutions to immediate and pressing issues of the day. VU is also building a significant profile in developing robust evidence-based policy and in advocating for best practice policy development and implementation at both State and National levels.

Through its innovative teaching and learning, impactful research and engagement VU will be an open and excellent university without boundaries, creating exceptional outcomes for any student from any background and uplifting the communities in which we operate.

TEQSA Re-Registration

In 2020, the University will undertake a renewal of registration assessment to secure re-registration for a further seven years.

French Review

The University supports the objectives of the Model Code and will incorporate the broad principles within the University's current policy architecture. This approach will provide clarity and consistency for all University stakeholders in terms of identifying their rights and obligations in this important area.

The University's proposed approach in adopting the Code principles is as follows:

1. A new *Freedom of Expression* Policy will be adopted which codifies the current implied right of staff, students and invited speakers to freedom of expression and will commit the University and relevant stakeholders to principles consistent with those outlined in the Model Code. These principles will also apply to academic freedom under the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy.
2. University management considers it appropriate that the Model Code be adopted in addition to the Policy such that any interpretation issues which may arise by virtue of the Policy being a high level document will be clarified by the more specific provisions of the Model Code.
3. Relevant University policies will be amended to ensure that they are also subject to the new *Freedom of Expression* Policy. These policies include the University's:
 4. Student Charter Policy; and
 5. Venue Hire Policy.

This approach help assures our shared objective to promote and encourage greater freedom of expression on university campuses.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The main focus for VU's teaching and learning is the implementation of the innovative *The VU Way* and Block Mode in a dual sector university setting as outlined below. Other priorities include: implementing circular pathways and leveraging dual sector educational opportunities for students and industry, development of academic programs of the future, and providing transformative student and learning experiences.

VU will continue to deliver technology enhanced learning in vocational and higher education, and develop future-ready graduates through strong links into practice and industry integrated learning as a whole of institution strategy.

- Key features of The VU Way, include: **Engaged learning**: Small classes, focus on one unit at a time, supportive educators, active collaboration and assessment. Large impersonal lectures and passive learning in semester-long units of study were replaced with small group classes (no more than 30 students) and students studying one subject at a time over a four week period: known as Block Mode. All assessment is undertaken within the four week period, leading to a significant reduction in the use of traditional exams. In 2019, the Block Mode will be implemented across all second year undergraduate units. By 2022, it will be implemented across all VU's courses.
- **Flexible**: Rolling enrolments, time and place flexibility, accelerated & dual-sector study options, blended learning.
- **Future-ready grads**: Building our students' 21st century knowledge and skills to graduate work, tech and life ready.
- **High quality student experience**: Transformative and enriching learning that will ensure students succeed on their terms, during & after study.
- **Blended learning**: A mix of face-to-face and online learning and teaching

The VU Way, Block Mode and the Blended Learning Model are designed with future-ready and job-ready graduates in mind – focused on helping students build the knowledge and technical skills required and assuring the acquisition of the 21st century capabilities required to thrive in the uncertain world of future work. *The VU Way* focuses on:

- **WORK READY**: Graduates will be supported to develop the portable skills, values and behaviours that will enable them to navigate the non-linear trajectories of the future in both work and life.

- **TECH READY:** Technologies will be incorporated into all courses to prepare graduates for life and work in the context of rapid technological and digital change.
- **LIFE READY:** VU graduates will create greater networks of influence and change to become global citizens – adaptable, resilient people with deep concern for social justice today.

Underpinning *The VU Way* is the University's commitment to a high quality, contemporary, enriching and personalised student experience that goes beyond the formal learning experience and will ensure students succeed on their terms. VU values students as partners throughout the learning journey. VU provides opportunities for students to build connections with each other and their professional communities, and co-curricular programs that enrich their learning experience and connections with industry.

With a greater focus on the individual and their learning success, many students, including those from low socioeconomic backgrounds and non-English speaking backgrounds, have seen improved pass rates and better grades. As a result, VU is seeing increased student satisfaction and higher retention rates. Staff feedback is evaluated alongside student feedback. These quantitative and qualitative measures are being collected and reviewed at end of every block, to continuously improve teaching and learning and the student experience.

Teaching and Learning Measures

To measure improvement in teaching and learning, VU aims to improve by 2% above 2019 results in each of Overall Student Satisfaction, Quality of Teaching, and Learner Engagement for undergraduate students as reported in the annual Student Experience Survey.

UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS TRANSPARENCY

VU has a range of admissions strategies in keeping with its mission as a University of Opportunity and Success, including non-ATAR based admissions:

Students must meet the minimum academic entry requirements in order to be eligible for admission into a course, such as minimum study scores in specified study units.

Students without a completed qualification, must have completed at least 6 months of continuous study in an undergraduate degree or higher qualification, at any Australian University within the last 5 years, and have also completed your VCE or equivalent, alongside meeting course-specific eligibility criteria.

Some courses may accept completed accredited award at Diploma or above at an Australian Registered Training Organisation, or a Certificate IV in a related discipline, alongside meeting course-specific eligibility criteria.

Students without any formal academic history, may be considered on the basis of other course-specific work or life experience admissions requirements.

Course-specific requirements can be found in both [VU's course search](#) and the [VTAC CourseSearch](#).

The University monitors students' progress and regular reports are considered by Colleges and relevant Academic Board committees. A range of strategies are in place to support all students – including those admitted without an ATAR - to succeed in their studies, including the transformative block teaching model, early identification of students at risk as part of retention programs and co-curricular and complimentary academic programs provided as part of block model. Progress and retention by student group is monitored, and admissions requirements and academic support strategies are regularly reviewed to ensure quality standard and student success.

In 2020 VU will commence work on an Admissions and Student Outcomes Reporting Project in order to adopt a consolidated and cohesive institutional wide approach for collecting and reporting student data. This will strengthen our practice and enable us to track student cohorts against each other using a range of data elements including basis for admission, English language level and tests, recruitment channels and student support interventions. This will bolster the collection and application of information relating to VU student cohorts, their characteristics and to compare their study and course outcomes to external comparisons and internal data.

This information will inform not only sound academic policy and operational decisions about the likelihood of student success when setting or reviewing selection criteria and methods, but also provide more comprehensive reporting to governance bodies for monitoring and improvements. The academic performance of students will be reviewed against the admissions settings within which the students were admitted.

UNIVERSITY RETENTION STRATEGIES

Victoria University campuses are located in the western region of Melbourne, and its student population includes a strong representation from lower SES groups and from recent migrant families. VU recognizes that this student population has some particular challenges that can lead to higher rates of attrition, so the University has an extensive coherent program to improve success and retention rates of all students. The program is strengthened by:

- the development of the Student Retention Strategy, 2021-2023;
- consolidation of Student Retention and Success Policy and Guidelines with clear senior executive accountability;
- clarification of the connection between and accountability for the Student Retention and Success Policy and the Academic Progress suite of policies;
- development of an annual Student Retention Implementation Plan using strong project management discipline for all initiatives, setting agreed targets, milestones and accountabilities for action and reporting.

Retention Strategy and Student Support

The guiding principles for our student retention strategy include:

1. A whole of university approach to student retention and success: a “culture of retention”.
2. Data informed approaches to student retention intervention:
 - a. Using predictive analytics to identify students at-risk and, in turn, identifying those for whom interventions will be most effective, (and tracking the value of retention interventions);
 - b. Using analytics to monitor and track the value of retention interventions;
 - c. Moving to a better understanding of the factors influencing student retention.
3. Clear understanding of official definitions of retention and identified local indicators for regular measurement.
4. Communicating the findings to increase sector knowledge – underpinning VU reputation as an achiever in this space.

First Year College, The VU Way and impact on retention

A First Year College was also established in 2018 to provide integrated teaching, personal support and guidance to our first year students, with the central feature being Block Model of teaching. A key feature of the Block learning model is delivery of subjects sequentially, one at a time, rather than concurrently, in small and interactive group learning.

The First Year College ensures a common integrated teaching and learning experience for all first year students, with dedicated staff, smaller and more interactive classes, delivered in block mode, along with targeted complementary activities including:

- both embedded and complementary academic development program;
- personal goal and career guidance, including ‘Success Planning’;
- extension development opportunities, such as the *VU Academy*;
- student advisors who work with students on an individual success plan for their studies, and learning hubs for study advice and career guidance from student mentors and learning advisors.

Outcomes of the Block Model are very positive for student success and retention, with an improvement in pass rates and grades for first year students. The model also improved student engagement, with greater class attendance (around 90 per cent). The Block has been rolled out to second year students in 2019 and for all HE undergraduate year levels by 2020. In 2019, a Block pass rate of 93% was attained, well above pre-block levels.

The overarching, high-level target for Student Retention Strategy (note this will be updated in 2020) is that the university’s official undergraduate retention rate will increase by 2% over the life of the Retention Strategy.

Under this high-level target, VU continues to develop student-level and institutional-level measures of student persistence, student success, and in turn, student retention. These are:

1. The impact on student retention of the block model is tracked and analysed on an ongoing basis.
2. The impact of various retention interventions are measured against various student cohorts including Western Region, Indigenous, NESB, low SES, and mature aged.
3. A more nuanced understanding of the impact of attending to positive attrition on the overall retention rate of the university.

Measuring retention with The VU Way

There a range of issues that bear upon retention at VU, including its identification and measurement in the context of the Block Model. For example, Block Model potentially facilitates greater retention as there are more opportunities for students to be present during the year after they commence due to its flexibility in enrolment. Retention is also influenced by many factors such as changes in enrolment patterns, funding

structures, employment trends and the needs of industry, along with the natural characteristic differences in cohorts from year to year.

VU continues to develop its analytical and data tools to assess retention. While acknowledging the Commonwealth's formula for retention, VU complements this through its own internal markers as guidance for retention performance. One approach that VU uses is to measure the difference between peak load (generally March) and end of year load. In 2019 this difference was lower than 2018 (4.8% in 2019 compared to 6.3% in 2018), suggesting that attrition has declined or retention improved, noting of course that many factors shape load. In 2020 using this measure the target is for a further reduction in attrition to 3.9%.

VU welcomes the opportunity to engage further with the Commonwealth on these analytical issues.

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING AND INNOVATION

In 2017, *VU Research* was established to lead, manage and deliver all Victoria University's research and research training (HDR). *VU Research* is a dedicated whole of University department that supports all aspects of the University's research activity, and includes:

1. [Institute for Health and Sport](#)
2. [Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities](#)
3. [Centre of Policy Studies \(CoPS\)](#)
4. [Centre for International Research on Education Systems](#)
5. [Research Services](#)
6. [Office for Researcher Training, Quality & Integrity](#)

In addition, VU has one of Australia's leading edge think tanks in the Mitchell Institute which provides cutting edge evidence based research and policy advocacy in health and education.

VU has defined areas of research focus that build on well-established capability and disciplinary expertise, and align with the University's interdisciplinary areas of strength in Sport, Health and Active Living, and Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities. The *VU Research* Plan focuses on the following strategic goals to ensure research excellence and capability:

1. **Capability and reputation:** Grow our research and research training in areas of research focus to world standard and above in the areas of research focus.
2. **Research training:** Support graduate research students to become independent critical thinkers and enhance their graduate employability.
3. **Research Engagement:** Engage with local, national and international partners to undertake research that has substantial and mutually beneficial impact.
4. **Research-teaching nexus:** Embed the principles of research and translate the outcomes of *VU research* into coursework programs to enhance student learning.
5. **People and culture:** Embrace, encourage and sustain academic creativity, critical enquiry and integrity by our academics and research students.
6. **Supportive and sustainable environment:** Ensure financial sustainability through the continuous improvement of research systems, policies, processes and infrastructure.

In 2020, the development and Council approval of a new Research Strategy will be undertaken. This strategy will build on strong existing capabilities in broad based applied and translational research to address critical challenges and need facing industry and community. A centre piece of this Strategy will be a whole of University approach to Planetary Health and a placed based focus in its economic, social and environmental domains.

Research Services provides essential support to enable the University to realise its research goals through:

- supporting the development and management of research partnerships;
- facilitating and supporting access to research funding;
- assisting the development, implementation and monitoring of the University's research strategy and operations;
- capturing, reporting and analysing research performance;
- leading the development and operationalisation of the University's research policies and procedures.
- planning and managing access to research infrastructure;
- contributing to compliant, safe and ethical research programs.

The *Office for Researcher Training, Quality and Integrity*:

- provides administrative support in relation to research training;
- provides administrative support in relation to research ethics and researcher integrity;
- delivers the coursework curriculum for higher degrees by research (as part of the VURDP);
- curates and delivers the professional development programs for higher degrees by research students and their supervisors and researchers more generally.

VU Research is focusing on optimising the number and quality of completions, whilst at the same time seek to optimise commencing enrolments. A new suite of research masters degrees began delivery in

2019, to create greater opportunities for pathways to doctoral degrees. In addition, a new elective has been introduced into doctoral degrees to improve opportunities for the development of transferable skills to enhance graduate outcomes.

VU offers a comprehensive [Researcher Development Program](#) (the VURDP) for the VU researcher that offers opportunities across nine categories spanning the entire research career from graduate researcher through to accomplished senior researcher.

The VURDP is offered in collaboration with the:

- [Office for Researcher Training, Quality and Integrity](#)
- [Research Services](#)
- [VU Library](#)
- [Learning Hubs](#)

Development of supervisors is also key to high quality research training. *VU Research* ensures:

- Higher Degrees by Research students are only allocated to those staff in priority research codes who are deemed to be sufficiently qualified and have the necessary experience to supervise the topic.
- Professional development is offered to supervisors through a suite of workshops.
- Registration of supervisors is closely monitored.

Victoria University supports a range of industry experiences for graduate researchers, including industry placements via scholarships and/or industry placements. The [Doctoral Industry Placement Program \(DIPP\)](#) allows students to engage with industry, apply transferable skills gained as part of their research studies, and develop professional competencies. It is an opportunity to develop professional networks and strengthen future career opportunities. Several options are available to doctoral students to enhance their skills in industry and community contexts. Placements may be part of the *APRIntern* program and/or part of an elective in their degree. Industry co-funded scholarships are also available. Planned as part of the doctoral degree, placements may be up to five months in duration with industry, government or non-government organisations. The aim is for 10 students to take up the VU elective annually and additionally to facilitate participation in *APRInternships* that are appropriate for students' career aspirations and professional development.

As described above, *Research Services* actively supports the commercialisation of research (including patenting and licensing). With the appointment of the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research the strategies and objectives are being reviewed and confirmed.

The [VU Research Repository](#) is an open access repository that showcases the research and scholarly outputs of VU staff and higher degree research students.

As one measure of success, and subject to resourcing, VU has set an ambitious target of achieving academic citations to Academic Research FTE of 32.7 in 2020, up from 26.1 performance in 2019, (for Academic Only and Academic Teaching and Research staff).

EQUITY

As a university of opportunity and success, VU is open to students of all backgrounds and continues to have a high proportion of equity groups enrolled. Based on data regarding the performance based funding, Victoria University equity participation are reported as:

- Low SES above sector average is in performance funding band 1 (25.02%, performing significantly better than sector threshold (10.3%).
- Regional and Indigenous is in performance funding band 2, and for regional participation very slightly below (10.18%) funding band 1 threshold (10.8%). *Please note that this data relates to 2019 as a 2020 update has not been received.*

VU is committed to improving indigenous student participation and engagement with students from West of Melbourne. Two significant strategies are outlined below:

Indigenous education strategy, the Bathelmun Yalingwa Strategy

This strategy which incorporates the indigenous student recruitment plan.

The [Bathelmun Yalingwa Strategy](#) is a commitment to the opportunity and success of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff, and to our role as a regional leader in raising awareness of Indigenous issues and addressing any challenges. The Strategy encompasses all aspects of University activity and consists of three key aspirations:

1. **GROW:** Growing the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in tertiary education and assuring their success by being an open and excellent university.
2. **SHARE:** Sharing Aboriginal culture, knowledge and history and ensuring that it is acknowledged and celebrated throughout our university and our community.
3. **CONNECT:** Connecting Aboriginal culture to our people and spaces in a meaningful way to build a strong, culturally aware University environment.

Victoria University commits to Universities Australia (UA) objective to 'maintain institutional growth rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' enrolment that are at least 50 per cent above the growth rate of non-Indigenous student enrolment, and ideally 100 per cent above'.

The specific objectives of our Grow aspiration on access are:

- Meet student enrolment targets through an Aboriginal Student Recruitment Plan and targeted campaigns for indigenous students, and rolling out communications plan to promote Aboriginal opportunities at VU to industry, community and media.
- Provide foundation studies with culturally specific courses for delivery in Aboriginal community settings that pathway into further education and employment.
- Provide targeted support during transition, first year and throughout the course through specific services such as the Aboriginal Student Life Liaison Officer and the Aboriginal Student Club, scholarships and cultural engagement courses.

As part of the Grow aspiration, VU is aiming for more students in 2020, offering a wide variety of high quality and contemporary courses in Higher Education, including in childhood education, business, social work, youth work, psychology, arts and law, and in Vocational Education and Training certificates and diplomas in construction, tertiary education preparation, nursing and cyber security among others. These courses will enrich the student experience and provide education which will enhance individual skill development and employment prospects and support broader community development.

VU Guaranteed

The [VU Guaranteed](#) program offers Year 11 and 12 students from partnership schools mainly in the West of Melbourne a guaranteed place at Victoria University (VU) or Victoria University Polytechnic (VU Polytechnic), prior to their final Year 12 exams. Applications for the program is open to year 11 and 12 students. VU Guaranteed exists to ensure students who are willing and motivated to study can access a course that will facilitate their chosen career path. Students in the program have access to tailored advice and events with current students, graduates, academics and industry leaders. The objective of this program to ensure students from the West of Melbourne are able to access tertiary education at VU and support their career and professional aspirations.

LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

Employability

VU is committed to improving the employability and career outcomes of VU students through the development of enterprise skills, knowledge, confidence, hands on work experience, and provision of comprehensive careers

and employability service and programs for VU students at all levels of study. The initiatives outlined below are aimed at ensuring:

- students develop a well-defined set of enterprise skills for a wide range of job opportunities;
- industry partnerships and engagement to facilitate jobs, graduate careers, work integrated learning and professional mentoring opportunities;
- students are supported at all stages of their career from part-time and casual roles while they study, to finding their first graduate position.

The programs and initiatives include:

- [Work Integrated Learning](#) (WIL) is a feature of most VU coursework programs, so that students gain practical workplace experience before graduating. There are significant placement, WIL and internship opportunities in VU courses, including supervised professional work experience in VU-managed clinics.
- *VU Employ* offers a friendly and positive space in a visible location where students' feel comfortable and well supported, with flexible and accessible drop-in services designed around HE block timetables. At VU Employ students can access takeaway career resources, industry connected events, assistance with job searching, internships and resumes.
- Career and employability individual advice and workshops are offered to students at all levels, via *Learning Hubs* and *VU Employ*.
- *Talent Connect* is a mentoring program that connects final and penultimate year students with alumni and industry mentors.
- *Beyond VU* is a new program created by *VU Employ* that offers students who are eligible to graduate this year a range of career support options including the newly designed *Grad Sessions*. *Grad Sessions* are half day intensive career workshops, and will be delivered this year in November and December.
- Career, professional and Industry events for students such as *The Teaching Expo*, *Engineer Your Dream Career*, *Employer Information Sessions* on campus and *Career-Fest*, refreshed career fair bringing employers to campus.
- *Employability Health Checks* for students to be able to gauge and track their skill development across their course.
- *Students as Staff* and other on-campus student employment programs, such as corporate areas providing work experience opportunities with external vendors.
- Student leadership and volunteering opportunities, including *V4U Day*, the award winning mass volunteer program.

Assessment measures include:

- In medium to longer term – improvement in graduate outcomes (GOS survey);
- usage/participation numbers and student feedback;
- employer/Industry and staff feedback;
- number of students placed employment during their study.

In 2020, a new Employability Strategy, 2021-2023 will be developed to continue to impact graduate outcomes.

Academic Program of the Future

2020 will be the second year of the of the strategic project, Academic Program of the Future, which will determine: How to prepare an increasingly diverse group of learners to navigate the complex world of work, with a focus on the most-needed skills for employability.

What qualifications, programs, units and other forms of offerings VU will pursue for the future, drawing on market intelligence and trends supported by latest student centric data and predictive capabilities

The best way to actively advance the unique opportunities and advantages of being a dual-sector, multi-campus, international institution.

Pathway options from Vocational Education and Training (VET) to Higher Education (HE) and HE to VET
Flexible offerings tailored to changing individual and industry needs, including short courses and micro-credentials, and how best to accelerate course offerings from concept to market **Market consideration in the course approval policies and processes**

It is important to note that universities do not control the labour market and there is a limit to how much they can do to influence graduate employment outcomes. This is a particular challenge within VU's geographical location, serving some areas of disadvantage where unemployment is higher for a range of reasons. Employment outcomes for VU graduates should be considered relative to previous performance and performance of universities in similar socioeconomic locations. VU is committed to facilitating positive employment outcomes for our graduates, within the limitations expressed above.

Course approvals

VU's current *Courses Lifecycle* policy includes a Concept Approval and Business Case procedure to ensure that all new proposed courses are subject to a detailed analysis of demand and relevance. Under this procedure, course proposers follow a two-stage process to provide evidence of the need and market relevance of a course, including:

- analysis of demand and evidence of likely employment outcomes;
- expert opinion from industry or research bodies;
- evidence of industry growth or change
- competitor analysis;
- summary of internal and external pathways related to the course, including between VE and HE, offshore and partner courses;
- professional accreditation recognition where relevant.

Expert industry advice

Four industry boards, three of which represent industry in the West of Melbourne, provide high-level advice to the Vice-Chancellor and senior leadership in relation to the needs of industry, business and community stakeholders. All discipline-based Colleges at VU have industry advisory boards whose role, in part, is to advise on current industry needs, skill gaps and market trends, and collaborate on curriculum.

Pathways

Being a dual sector institution has enabled VU to create pathways between the VET and Higher Education sectors that further increase opportunities for a more diverse range of students within catchments in the west of Melbourne and beyond. There is also emerging evidence of a trend for workers, who are already higher education-qualified, turning to VET to upskill and reskill for career development. Universities therefore need to increasingly see themselves as part of providing a range of offerings and see pathways as not simply linear. VU is exploring models to meet the changing needs of students and the workforce through our Academic Program of the Future project (see below) and in deliberately encouraging enrolments across VE and HE to suit students' vocational and personal goals.

Cross-sector schools

VU is establishing cross-sector schools, in consultation with industry, to provide training and education at all levels to fulfil current and emerging skills needs in specific industries. The *School for the Visitor Economy* has already been established and a *School of Transport Systems and City Infrastructure* is currently being developed to align with trends in the economy and government interest in both transport and infrastructure.

Assessment measures include: student enrolments and success; feedback from employers/industry and students, and improved graduate employability outcomes (GOS survey).

Building communities and job growth in west of Melbourne

A key part of Victoria University's mission is to uplift the communities it serves in the West, by providing quality higher education, vocational education and training, that contributes to job creation and economic development in Melbourne's West that meets 21st century industry needs. Provision of tertiary education and job creation in the West Melbourne are significant priorities to match and meet the needs of the significant population growth projected in the coming years. VU's initiatives are outlined below. In addition these activities facilitates community, industry and schools access to VU's campuses and facilities.

- *Skills and Jobs Centres* at Sunshine and Footscray Nicholson campuses, funded by the State Government to provide a free service for community members looking to enter the workforce, start training, re-skill, improve their career opportunities or for employers to meet their workforce needs
- *Footscray University Town* is a bold and innovative partnership between Victoria University and Maribyrnong City Council to revitalise and position Footscray as a hub of knowledge, learning, creativity and opportunity, with benefits for the whole community and a strong social and economic future. By working together we're aligning University, Council, business and community interests and activities, opening up new opportunities for employment, enterprise and investment throughout Melbourne's west. *Footscray University Town* is playing a key role in cementing the west's reputation as a safe, healthy, prosperous and sustainable region in which to live, work, study and recreate.
- VU at *MetroWest* is Victoria University's community space in the heart of Footscray that hosts a wide range of events, exhibitions and services.

From campuses to precincts, VU is developing five precincts with State and local governments, industry, sporting and community groups: to develop for each precinct in different parts of the West Melbourne, a hub of knowledge, learning, creativity, industry and employment opportunity, with benefits for the whole community.

A Precinct-led development of the VU Campuses

The University's Campus Master Plan builds on the significant work already undertaken in reshaping our physical presence in the West and beyond, detailing an important shift in focus to a precinct-led development of the University campuses to serve the entire West. Recent developments include the new City West tower in Queen Street which sees the University consolidate its presence in the CBD; the state-of-the-art Sunshine Skills Hub which is designed to provide flexible training solutions to develop 'future skills' for the workplace; and the VU Sunshine Clinical School for our third-year nursing and midwifery students to make our contribution to the preparation of the West's future health workforce. Other exciting developments have

included the State Government's decision to co-locate the new Footscray Hospital adjacent to our Footscray Park campus, which will provide for the establishment of a new world class health and education precinct, worthy of the West. Alongside these developments, the State Government has declared Footscray and Sunshine as Priority Precincts, with Werribee already identified as a National Employment and Innovation Cluster.

Our institution-wide commitment to the health and wellbeing of future generations aligns strongly with the precinct development of our campuses, with the design and development of these to be shaped by a core set of principles to be exemplars of campus sustainability – something for which the communities of the West can be proud. Furthermore, much of the new infrastructure will be home to our education and research capability in Placebased Planetary Health, where our staff and students will work together, with industry and community partners, to address ambitious local and global challenges and contribute to a better future. Our precinct developments will support local communities to address the health and wellbeing of all people, for our communities and for our planet.

Partnering with the Victorian Government and the communities of the West

Importantly, we will continue to work with the Victorian Government on the development of precinct plans for Footscray, Sunshine/St Albans and Werribee. This work has also been informed by the West of Melbourne Economic Development Alliance (WoMEDA), which has built on its original work of an economic development strategy for the west of Melbourne, with the release of its economic development and jobs strategy for *Sunshine – Sunshine: Daring to be Great*. In particular, we want to play a leadership role in addressing the opportunities and challenges facing the West including high unemployment, youth engagement and social inclusion relative to other parts of Victoria; significant population growth; and growing employment and educational attainment across the region. Our plans paint an exciting vision for the future including:

- **Footscray:** With the co-location of the Footscray Hospital at our Footscray Park campus, we will see the establishment of a new health and education precinct and along with our Footscray Nicholson campus, Metro-West presence in the heart of Footscray and VU Whitten Oval, Footscray University Town will be a pre-eminent hub for teaching and learning combined with health, sport and active living.
- **Sunshine/St Albans:** The Sunshine campus, the home of VU Polytechnic, will establish a skills and innovation centre of excellence for advanced manufacturing, construction, IT and service industries, supporting the Sunshine Precinct in the heart of the West of Melbourne. This will also be complemented by a strong presence at Sunshine Hospital, in health and allied health and a hub for vocational health and IT training at St Albans, with embedded industry engagement, partnership and research.
- **Werribee:** This precinct will play an important role in building the skills and jobs for the future, in particular in Health and Community; Sustainability and Innovation; and Construction. There will also be major alignment with our Place-based Planetary Health commitment, with a major focus on Sustainable Futures

The new City West Precinct, provides a gateway to the west of Melbourne and is at the interface of the CBD's commercial, cultural and justice precincts. The new VU Tower will reflect VU's position as an international institution of high standing, providing a high quality offer in the CBD and greater industry, business and community engagement. Finally, the Outer West of Melbourne is also a major focus of our growth and transformation.

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SECURITY MEASURES

The *VU Cybersecurity Strategy* (CSVU) which was developed in consultation with KPMG outlines a three-staged strategic approach for transforming cybersecurity capabilities at VU. Stage one is an accelerated development and uplift of foundational cybersecurity capabilities. Stage two is an enhancement and an expansion to develop analytics-driven, intelligent and adaptable security practices that support the growing business demands. Stage three is to enable automation and develop capabilities to predict and manage emerging cyber threats.

The CSVU program is designed to establish strong foundations supporting VU's cybersecurity strategy and implement controls to reduce the likelihood and impact of these threats:

- improved IT Security Policy and supporting standards to define baseline security requirements for VU information assets;
- cyber Incident Response Plans to respond to cyber incidents in a timely and coordinated manner;
- strengthened security controls across privileged users to monitor and protect access to critical VU information assets;
- the establishment of relationships with local government and cybersecurity agencies such as ACSC (Australian Cyber Security Centre).

The University has also enabled additional logging and monitoring capabilities by expanding on investments within the networks and infrastructure technologies.

Ongoing investment and support of the CSVU program will further improve maturity and implement new capabilities to strengthen VU's cybersecurity defences, which includes:

- implementation of data classification and protection capabilities;
- improvements in end-point (laptop, mobile devices and desktop) security;
- delivery of further cybersecurity awareness training including face-to-face training, phishing simulations and engagement of students and staff;
- strengthening of detection, monitoring and investigative capabilities;
- improvement of technical security controls to address system vulnerabilities in a timely manner.

The University has and is continuing to implement a range of measures to monitor and mitigate potential foreign influence threats, including cybersecurity measures as described above, and relevant policy and compliance programs. Further activities will be implemented following release of UA's framework.

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
Victoria University**

Signed by

Professor Peter Dawkins

Position

Vice-Chancellor and President

In the presence of:

Signed by

Tara Schuurmans

Position or profession of witness

Chief of Staff
