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Australian Government

**Department of Education,
Skills and Employment**

2021-2023 MISSION BASED COMPACT BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA AND TORRENS UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA

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

KEY OUTCOMES:

1. Torrens aims to improve annualized retention to 75% and increase progression by 2% per year up to 80%, as outlined in “Improving teaching and learning outcomes for Australian Students”
2. Torrens aims to improve student experience as evidenced by improving QILT to exceed national average and improve NPS scores by 5% annually, as outlined in “Improving teaching and learning outcomes for Australian Students”
3. Torrens aims to continue to grow our research capability, as outlined in “Research Opportunities and Partnerships in the National Interest”

Torrens University’s four promises to its students (everyone goes to work, everyone has a choice, everyone has an edge, and everyone can change their world) continue to drive the University’s strategic focus on significantly increasing graduate employability and helping students thrive in their chosen field. Torrens’ vision is to have 50,000 employed graduates by 2025. This focus sits firmly within its strategic statement which asserts *We champion the power of people to connect the world for good.*

The following five Strategic Priorities drive the focus over the term of the compact:

- Engage our people
- Ensure student success
- Secure the future
- Simplify the business
- Do Good Business

Torrens’ 2021 Values and Strategic Priorities are accessible [here](#).

As a private university, Torrens is unwavering in its mission to be a force for good in business and education. As a Certified B Corporation, it is committed to high standards of social and environmental performance, public transparency and legal accountability.

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FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The Vice Chancellor has spearheaded the development and agreement of the Torrens University [Academic Freedom – Statement of Principles](#). It was informed by the Report of the Independent Review of Freedom of Speech in Australian Higher Education Providers. The document was presented to the Governing Board, which provided its full support, and debated at Academic Board. There is continued socialisation within the academic workforce.

The Walker Review found that Torrens had fully aligned their statutory framework with the Model Code.

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

KEY TEACHING AND LEARNING PERFORMANCE TARGETS:

1. Clear [policy](#) and process for admissions criteria is enacted, communicated to all stakeholders on the website and the impact monitored in relation to retention and progression of students:
 - Student access and progression against the admissions criteria monitored by Academic Board's Admissions Committee
 - Annualised retention goal of 75% achieved and progression increased by 2% per year up to 80%, monitored per trimester and annually
2. Industry engagement and experiential learning is integrated into the curriculum and the learning & teaching (L&T) planning process to ensure effective transformative learning and employability through experiential learning.
 - Course advisory committees, including industry, deployed for curriculum and continuous quality monitoring processes.
 - 85% of graduates employed within 12 months after graduation.
3. Hybrid and blended delivery modes deployed to optimise flexibility and choice for students to accommodate personal preferences and manage contingency aspects impacting L&T.

Full spectrum of support services available in a blended mode to individual and groups of students, including learning support and psychosocial support to accommodate mental health and personal needs.

- Student satisfaction and engagement monitored through SESL (average 4+ across all courses), QILT (exceed the national average) and Net Promoter Score (NPS) (5% annual improvement).

LEARNING AND TEACHING OBJECTIVES

Torrens' [Academic Framework](#) contextualises and outlines key Learning and Teaching Objectives:

- Curriculum, Programs, Andragogy, Pedagogy and Heutagogy
- Learning, Teaching, Professional Development and Scholarship
- Student Success, Learning and Outcomes
- Assessment and Academic Integrity
- Industry/Professional Practice, Career Connectivity and Community Engagement
- Research, Scholarship and Innovation

These manifest through an annual Learning and Teaching Plan.

UNIVERSITY ADMISSION TRANSPARENCY

The University provides access for students with a school leaving certificate (ATAR no longer required) as well as work-based and life experience-based entry. Our admissions committee tracks cohorts by entry criteria, and progression.

UNIVERSITY RETENTION STRATEGIES

Retention improvement plans across Academic and Support Service areas are informed by customer insights, including evaluation surveys.

A [‘Students At Risk’](#) process, highlighting low engagement or academic risk, ensures additional academic or other support is pro-actively directed to students.

Students indicating intention to withdraw are counselled on their options and support available.

LABOUR MARKET STRATEGIES FOR TORRENS UNIVERSITY

- Global and local skills gaps are identified through market reports, landscape surveys, whitepapers, trends analysis etc. Effectiveness is tracked through key metrics checked via a survey program.
- Content is informed by *Course Advisory Committees* and a product summit process which include prominent industry representatives, feeding industry intelligence into course design and assessment.
- The curriculum is balanced between conceptual and applied learning.
- [Work integrated learning \(WIL\)](#) is embedded throughout courses.
- Campuses offer state-of-the-art, fully simulated, applied training facilities enabling skills to be practiced in an authentic learning environment.
- Subject-matter experts employed from industry, leverage their professional networks.
- Students may apply for [recognition of prior learning](#) through the assessment of formal or informal prior learning.

STUDENT RETURN TO CAMPUS STRATEGY

As a national and global university, there are few elements of our programs that cannot be delivered online to keep our students on track for timely completion, (practical subjects being the main exception). As borders open and lockdowns are lifted, we open place-based contact classes and re-introduce timetabling of practical classes accordingly.

STUDENT AND STAFF MENTAL HEALTH

We understand the impact of the pandemic and lockdowns on mental health. Extended availability of our employee assistance program (EAP) for staff as well as counselling and [individual and group support services](#) are available to students.

Our flexible working patterns also allow many workers to cope with childcare and other responsibilities during lockdown to relieve stress.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

KEY PRIORITIES:

1. Increase research output in quality publications:
 - annual output in Q1 and Q2 journals by 10% annually
 - citation rate of publications by 10% annually
 - research book and book chapter publications by 5% annually

2. Increase Higher Degree Research student numbers and completions:
 - Masters and PhD by research numbers by 15% annually
 - Completion rates by 10% to 15% annually

3. Grow collaboration network with industry, donors, research entities and commercial partners.
 - University and research entity collaboration – three new relations annually
 - Donors measured by research grants/funding/collaboration – three new relations annually

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Informed by the Torrens University Australia Strategic Research Plan (2021-2025) the four core strategic priorities are:

1. *Research matters and quality outputs:* Create world class interdisciplinary teams to deliver quality outputs; measured through the Excellence in Research Australia program.
2. *Researchers Matter and Research Talent:* Invest in the development of and attracting top talent to ensure superior research performance to support an excellent student experience; measured by HDR student attrition and progression and research training engagement.
3. *Reputation matters:* Develop strategic collaboration relationships with industry, community, professional bodies, Government and other stakeholders in Australia and overseas; measured by ongoing partnerships, co-authored publications and commercialisation.
4. *Real World Impact Matters:* Deliver impactful interdisciplinary research for new knowledge and translation aligned to research themes of local and global significance; measured through co design activities, joint publications, commercialisation initiatives and sustainable long-term partnerships.

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMERCIALISATIONS

We focus on high quality reciprocal Universities, Research Institutes, professional associations, government agencies and Industry partnerships in undertaking projects nationally and internationally. Partnerships are underpinned by alignment of values and our Be Good mission. We implement a wide range of dissemination and communication strategies to share research outcomes, and to encourage applied or translational research.

We are developing a Research Commercialisation Training Hub that will build competencies in investment approaches.

SECURITY MEASURES

The Audit & Risk Committee of the Governing Board oversees risk mitigation in response to the Government's guidelines covering cyber security, governance and risk frameworks and due diligence on research communication on the risk of foreign interference. As an Administering

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Institution, Torrens enters into a formal agreement with Institutions covering research activities. The Research Office interrogates for foreign interference; and Torrens Legal provides due diligence in line with Torrens' policies, Code of Conduct and Australian legislation.

Torrens follows the Australian Cyber Security Centre cybersecurity principles and, as a Sarbanes Oxley enforced entity, adheres to strict IT controls ensuring best practices which are audited regularly.

IMPROVING STUDENT EQUALITY AND OUTCOMES

KEY PRIORITIES:

1. Increase participation of all under-represented groups in both staff and students as outlined in our [Be Good pledge](#)
2. Improve retention, progression and increase pathways of under-represented student groups. This also includes improve QILT & NPS by +5 p.p, which we consider a key mark of student success
3. Achieve B Corp recertification demonstrating the University's operations consider social impacts

Torrens University is embedding a robust and broad strategy to increase the enrolment and graduation of students from diverse backgrounds. Key elements are:

Strategies for improving Indigenous outcomes and related targets:

- Academic Governance Board inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
- Increased recruitment, retention and promotion of Indigenous staff
 - Establishment of strategy to recruit, promote and market Torrens as an employer of choice for Indigenous.
 - Implementation of Reconciliation Action Plan (approved 2020) and Indigenous Advisory Committee
- Increased enrolment, retention and completion of Indigenous students
 - Increased cultural, pastoral, academic & learning, student journey support and resources
 - Enhance existing [scholarship program](#), and monitoring and tracking of academic progress.
 - Ongoing implementation of Indigenous student Education plan.
 - Inclusion of Indigenous content in courses

Strategies for achieving equity for low socio-economic students and students from other equity groups:

- [Disability policy](#) updated to reflect current legislation addressing disability and inclusivity.
- Bespoke online support for learners with a [Learning Access Plan](#).
- Awareness training and professional development support for staff
- Refine onboarding process for students with disabilities
- Ongoing Steering Committees and working groups for Disability and LGBTQIA+ for ongoing implementation of the three year Disability Action Plan and [LGBTQIA+ strategy](#)

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- Inclusion of Disability Services & LGBTQIA+ page on [Student Hub](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion Policy](#) reviewed and amended to embrace gender neutral terminology and inclusivity
- Establishment of the [Ally Network](#)
- Ongoing review/development of LGBTQIA+ topics inclusive curriculum, addressing matters of equity for staff and students identifying in this group

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SIGNED for and on behalf of
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

In the presence of:

by

Dom English

Ryan Kinder

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

A/g Director

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)

of the Department of Education, Skills and
Employment as delegate of the Minister for
Education and Youth

Signature

Signature

28/12/2021

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of
Torrens University Australia Ltd

In the presence of:

by

Alwyn Louw

Natalie Hayes

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

Vice Chancellor

Regulatory Compliance Manager

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)



Signature

Signature