

# OFFICIAL



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education,  
Skills and Employment**

## **2021-2023 MISSION BASED COMPACT BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME 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.

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### MISSION

The *Objects* of the University of Notre Dame Australia (Notre Dame) are the provision of university education within a context of Catholic faith and values, and the provision of an excellent standard of teaching, scholarship and research; training for the professions; and pastoral care for its students.

In pursuit of these *Objects* the University aims to:

- Graduate *good citizens* that are empowered to realise their full potential and serve the community, by providing students a holistic, integrative and transformative education with a liberal arts foundation, and theoretical knowledge and professional skills;
- Undertake high quality research that improves the quality of lives of people within the wider community; and
- Provide scholarly leadership on matters of local, national and global importance

A key priority over the period from 2021 to 2023 will be the enhancement of the University's academic model. As part of this, the University will further build on its distinctive relational and community based learning environment, embrace the opportunities of digital learning to increase access and participation, strengthen its focus on work integrated learning by deepening collaboration with industry, and embrace its local, national and international networks to provide students opportunities to learn in culturally and professionally diverse contexts and develop lifelong personal and professional networks. These initiatives will be particularly important to increasing opportunities for students of low SES backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander students, and regional students to study in their regions.

The outstanding quality of Notre Dame's education and reputation of Notre Dame's graduates as ethical leaders, critical thinkers and problem solvers, will continue to be recognised by employers and the wider community.

To support the post-COVID economic recovery and development of a future ready workforce, over the period 2021-2023 the University will grow its enrolments by expanding its program offerings to increase opportunities for upskilling and reskilling. The University will collaborate and partner with industry, government, and employers to develop innovative curriculum, learning and credentialing models.

The University will also intensify its research agenda, pursuing research that is aligned with the University's mission, is demonstrably high impact and responds to the needs and challenges of its local, national and international communities. Key research initiatives will be develop and enhance local, national and international partnerships with industry and other research partners.

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The University of Notre Dame Australia was established and continues to be governed by both the *University of Notre Dame Australia Act 1989 (WA)* and its *Canonical Statute (2 July 1991)*. In recognition of the University's legislated [Objects](#), our institutional autonomy, and the expectations of our wider University community and the academy, our considered approach to the implementation of the Model Code required that we take measures to ensure that matters of mission and identity are lawfully and reasonably protected. Like others within the wider academy in Australia, this has meant adopting the Model Code within an existing context of a positive and healthy respect for academic and intellectual freedom. We are therefore confident that our policies, new and existing, reflect the true spirit, principles and defined objects of the Model Code, which supports our statutory and Canonical objects and mission as a Catholic university.

The University has preserved its existing [Statement on Academic Freedom](#), which was endorsed in 2017 by the University's Trustees and Directors following comprehensive consultation, and which became effective on 1 January 2018. Our academic community has lauded this Statement for its reasonableness and for adequately protecting and empowering it when dealing with issues of academic freedom.

To reflect the Model Code, a supporting Policy: [Protecting Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech](#) ('the Policy') now complements the University's existing [Statement on Academic Freedom](#) and related policies, including Codes of Conduct for Staff and Students. The Policy was approved by the Board of Directors on 2 October 2020, following extensive consultation across the University involving staff, union representatives and students. The University has promulgated the Policy through a range of channels, including our policy website and staff and student newsletters. The Policy and the Statement were reviewed by Emeritus Professor Sally Walker and found to be mostly aligned with the Model Code.

## IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

Teaching and learning has always been central to the mission and function of the university. As the University's new strategy is developed, the University will seek to build on its strength and capacity for developing innovative learning, teaching and research experiences for staff and students. Fulfilling this mission will create the conditions necessary to improve access, reach and engagement, thereby enhancing student learning experiences. These aims will be driven by the following strategic priorities:

### **Digital learning**

- Build a robust technology infrastructure that enables secure, scalable, sustainable and seamless learning on and off campus;
- Improve student success, satisfaction, and retention through the use of transformative learning experiences, and intelligent technologies;
- Develop academics as leaders in the design and delivery of digitally enhanced programs;

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- Nurture productive relationships with internal and external partners and expert groups to increase our digital capacity and capability

### **Post graduate**

- Expand the reach of post-graduate academic programs nationally and internationally;
- Develop and implement new innovative post-graduate programs with industry partners, including micro credentials, in response to industry demand and future workforce trends.
- Promote and enhance Work integrated learning (WIL) components within our programs.

### **Job ready**

- Strengthen on campus, face to face learning models,
- Develop soft skills
- Extend practicum experience in workplace settings.
- Focus curriculum development on inter-disciplinarity, problem solving and ethical leadership
- Work ready graduates as demonstrated by graduate employment rates.

### **Mental Health**

Ongoing development implementation of a whole of institution approach to student Mental Health and Wellbeing through:

- Increasing awareness of Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Increasing awareness and access to preventive health and wellbeing services and programs
- Increasing awareness and access to crisis and urgent support in particular, timely access counselling services
- Increasing Staff capacity to effectively identify and support persons in need of Mental Health care in e.g. Mental Health First Aid Training
- Ongoing monitoring of student mental Health and wellbeing, and effectiveness of University Mental Health and Wellbeing strategies

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

**Research partnerships**

The University's objective is to generate high quality research through collaboration with our existing strong partners, especially Catholic health services, and Catholic Education, and to develop new partnerships with the community, industry, and social services.

Industry engagement strategies include collaboration with partners in our 3 Research Institutes, more joint and adjunct appointments to develop new research teams who will produce excellent research and activity that informs and supports the needs of the community, government, and industry. International research partnerships are also being further developed in areas of mutual strength, especially in the USA and the United Kingdom.

Research training for higher degree by research students at UNDA is further supported by industry engagement in supervisory panels.

**International Research Partnerships**

The university coordinates a due diligence process for international engagements and research partners in order to assess potential risks arising from new collaborative agreements. The university has adopted the *Guidelines for countering foreign interference in the Australian universities sector* and is overseeing integration of foreign interference risks into existing policies and providing staff in high risk disciplines with additional training to increase their awareness of the risks of foreign interference.

**Research impact**

The University is pursuing research that is aligned with the University's mission, with a focus on areas of national priorities, social impact, and the needs of service providers. Our research will significantly contribute to the impact and engagement agenda, and promote better engagement in areas of our strength – medicine, nursing, allied health, teacher education, philosophy, and religious education, law, business, and the arts. Our Indigenous research institute in the Kimberley is being funded to further develop and expand high quality and high impact research outputs in Indigenous health, education, environmental and cultural research and to attract Indigenous HDR students.

## IMPROVING STUDENT EQUALITY AND OUTCOMES

Central to the University's mission is providing students with opportunities to reach their aspirations and excel in their chosen professions. This enduring commitment is demonstrated through repeated achievement of excellence in the QILT survey results. In 2021, Notre Dame retained its position as the number one university in the country for Overall Experience. The Graduate Outcomes Survey also revealed that the University ranks in the top three Universities for Graduate Employability, earning higher salaries than the national average. As the University's new strategy is developed, the University will seek to build on its strength with the aim to provide every student equal chance of attaining success, irrespective of background. To that end, the University's three key priorities are:

1. Enabling Student Success;
2. Focus on Indigenous Students; and
3. Supporting low SES students.

**Enabling Student Success:** The Student Success team has been established with the goal of providing students study support and career preparation. Learning Advisors will help students with a range of academic advice and are available to meet with students daily. The Careers Service staff will help students with their career planning and preparation to boost employability.

Key measure of *Student Success* will include Student Completion rates and Student Employment rates.

**Focus on Indigenous students' success:** A key aspect of supporting Indigenous students is the University's endeavour to build academic and other 'life' literacies, to enhance Indigenous students' resourcefulness. It is important that academic skills and development is explicitly built into curricula at transitional stages of the student's development. Evidence suggests that Indigenous students benefit from well-designed curricula that make core skills explicit and build capacity. Transitioning to University will be made easier by providing Indigenous students pathways into University, modifying Admission criteria and providing bespoke scholarships that will provide students with the opportunity to excel in their courses.

Key measure of *Indigenous Success* will include number of Indigenous graduates and Indigenous graduates Employment rates.

**Increasing participation and success of Students from Low SES backgrounds:** In keeping with the pastoral care remit of the University and the priority to ensure their retention and completion, the University will implement the following strategies.

- Personal tutors and peer mentoring;
- Targeted talent development program (incl. pre-university outreach)
- Early Careers interventions (pre- and post-entry to assist student discernment and aptitudes);
- Integrated and supported pathways to study (outreach).
- Enhancing the mental health and wellbeing strategy (e.g. resilience training, counselling services) in addition to the free counselling already being provided;

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- **Bespoke scholarships for the length of the degree**
- **Specific support for first in family students.**

**Key measure of success for Students from Low SES backgrounds will include retention rates of Students from Low SES Backgrounds.**

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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  
The University of Notre Dame Australia

In the presence of:

by

FRANCIS CAMPBELL

HAYLEY COPPINGER

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

VICE CHANCELLOR

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)





Signature

Signature