



# Listening, Challenging, Supporting

The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education &  
Student Experience Portfolio Strategy,  
2021-2025



**UNSW**  
SYDNEY



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bedegal people (Kensington Campus), the Gadigal people (Sydney CBD and Art & Design Campuses) and the Ngunnawal people (UNSW Canberra – ADFA) as the traditional custodians of the lands on which UNSW campuses are located. We acknowledge the First Nations Peoples as the First Educators on these lands and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.



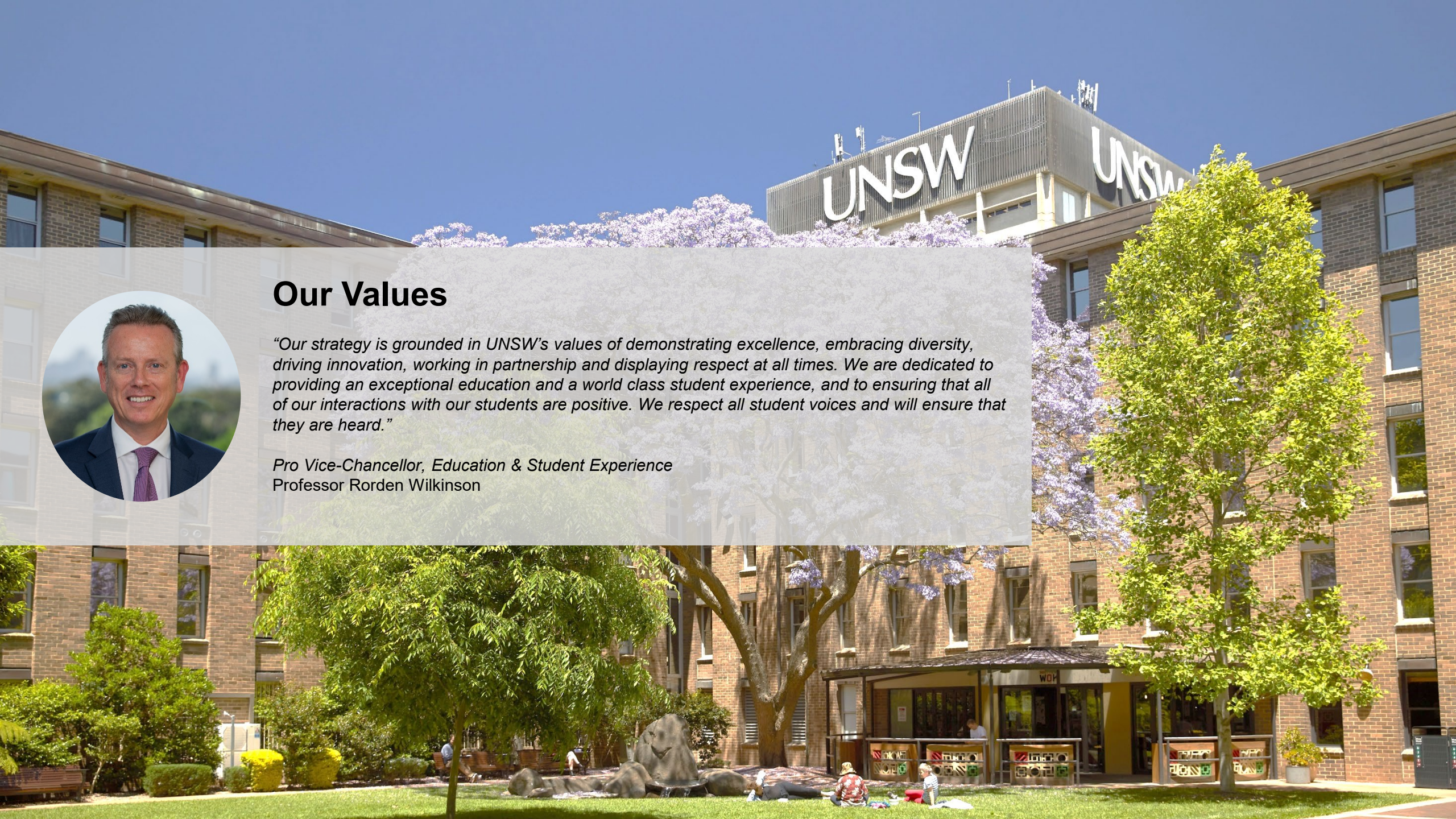




## Our Values

*“Our strategy is grounded in UNSW’s values of demonstrating excellence, embracing diversity, driving innovation, working in partnership and displaying respect at all times. We are dedicated to providing an exceptional education and a world class student experience, and to ensuring that all of our interactions with our students are positive. We respect all student voices and will ensure that they are heard.”*

*Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education & Student Experience*  
Professor Rorden Wilkinson







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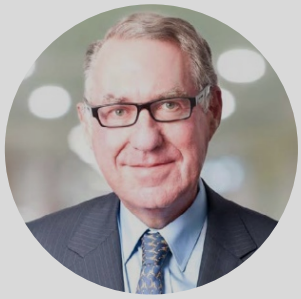
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## Our Vision

By 2025, we will be recognised globally for the distinctiveness of our education and for the quality of our student experience. We will be a leader in the provision of onsite and digital learning. We will invest in our academic staff, increase the quality of our student services, refine our curriculum and modes of assessment, and continue to innovate in the delivery of our education and student experience in and beyond the classroom.







“Education can fundamentally change and improve people’s lives. The journey of learning and discovery and the time spent at university can be absolutely transformational for individuals, and that’s what students hope for in a university experience. We have very intentionally elevated educational excellence and the student experience as some of the key priorities driving our work.”

*UNSW Chancellor*  
David Gonski AC



“UNSW has given me the chance to participate in improving the university experiences for my fellow and future students. The journey I went on with the team to develop this has given me confidence that we are heading in the right direction.”

*UNSW SRC President 2020*  
Manu Risoldi

## Our Education and Student Experience Journey

UNSW has long-standing traditions of discovery, innovation and entrepreneurship. We have been influencing individuals, communities and societies for more than seven decades. We have been creating new knowledge through our research and passing it on through our teaching to transform and improve lives worldwide since our students first joined us; and we have consistently been preparing our graduates to navigate, understand and embrace the opportunities and challenges of each new era.

The relevance of a modern university lies in its overall impact on local and global societies. This starts with our students. They put their trust in us to deliver a transformative university experience. Once they graduate, they leave an impression on the world for decades to come. Our work honours the trust students place in us and prepares them for the opportunities and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We have consistently invested in educational excellence and the student experience throughout our history. Our intention now is to do so more than ever before.

Since the release of UNSW 2025 Strategy, a ten-year strategic plan acknowledging our educational impact and the importance of elevating our educational excellence, we have driven forward a range of strategic priorities. The new education and student experience strategy – “Listening, Challenging, Supporting” – is the latest stage in the drive to realise our ambitions. It aligns with and presses forward the goals of our UNSW 2025 strategy; and it seeks to improve the student experience and ensure that our students leave UNSW as the very best job-ready graduates and positive contributors to society.



“UNSW has a global reputation for excellence and the education of our students is at the heart of our work. When students join our community, they engage with new ideas, passionate educators, and a diverse group of peers. We emphasise the importance of teaching excellence in guiding the lives and careers of our students, and we are committed to providing them with outstanding university experiences.”

*President and Vice-Chancellor*  
Professor Ian Jacobs



“As a director on the Arc Board I feel that student leaders are heard, and as a student at UNSW I am happy that we are encouraged to speak out. There are a number of ways to connect with the university when providing feedback on my experience, but the easiest is a simple conversation with my educators.”

*Chair of the Arc Board*  
Sahana Nandakumar



2015

UNSW 2025 Strategy launched

# UNSW Strategy 2025

## Elevating educational excellence

In 2015, our strategy laid four foundation pillars of UNSW's Scientia Education Experience:

- the value of communities;
- the importance of feedback and dialogue;
- the drive for inspired learning through inspiring teaching; and
- the use of the latest technologies to provide a cutting-edge digital education.

Working in partnership with faculties we invested in a number of flagship initiatives. These included the establishment of the Education Focussed academic pathway, the Scientia Education Academy, Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Central, UNSW Online and the Inspired Learning Initiative with its Digital Uplift program. The achievements of these initiatives have been substantial and have contributed to developing a unique and high-quality educational offer at UNSW.

2019

UNSW 3+ implemented

Consultation on UNSW 2025 strategic progress

## Augmenting the student experience

In 2019, a university-wide consultation resulted in the UNSW Strategy Update, celebrating achievements so far and reflecting on improvements. This process reiterated the importance of pursuing educational excellence and introduced a renewed and strengthened focus on the student experience, emphasising the distinctiveness of a UNSW education.

## Pro Vice-Chancellor Education & Student Experience

This new focus led to the expansion of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education's remit to include student experience and to the appointment of Professor Rorden Wilkinson as the inaugural Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education & Student Experience (PVCESE). Several student-facing and education-focussed teams joined the expanded PVCESE Portfolio and have been brought together in four interrelated pillars. These are:

- Education – led by Professor Louise Lutze-Mann;
- Experience – led by Associate Professor Leanne Piggott;
- Wellbeing – led by Neil Morris; and
- Educational Innovation – led by Associate Professor Simon McIntyre.

Each team within the Portfolio contributes to the realisation of our Education and Student Experience strategy, providing leadership and key services to our students and our academic community.

2020

UNSW 2025 Strategy updated

New organisational structure of PVCESE

Education & Student Experience Strategy 2025 launched

2025

## Celebrating UNSW

- › **Award winning educators**  
Our award winning educators have been recognised for delivering academic excellence with impact in local, national and international teaching awards.
- › **Most employable Australian graduates**
  - In 2020 & 2021 UNSW won the Australian Financial Review Most Employable University award for outstanding graduate employability.
  - UNSW remains consistently above the overall sector result year on year since 2016, in QILT Graduate Outcome Survey
- › **2020 Top graduate outcomes**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> in the Go8 for undergraduate employment levels
  - 1<sup>st</sup> in the Go8 for median salaries for undergraduates
  - 1<sup>st</sup> in Australia for postgraduate median salary.
  - In the top 6% globally for graduate employability



Photo: GradConnection. 2021 Presentation event: Professor Mark Uncles, Deputy Dean, Education, UNSW Business School; UNSW Bachelor of Information Systems (Hons), Co-op scholar, student Jessica Lawson; and Associate Professor Leanne Piggott, Director of Experience, PVCESE.

# How we have developed our strategy

Building on the strong foundations of the university's ten-year plan, our Education & Student Experience Strategy is the product of genuine collaboration with students, student leaders, and the UNSW academic and professional staff communities. Some of the key forums, community groups, consultations and mechanisms that have directly fed into the development of this strategy are:

- The Student Representative and Postgraduate Student Councils
- The student organisation Arc
- Student forums and focus groups
- Student surveys
- Management Board and the Senior Leadership Team
- Academic Board
- The Heads of School Forum
- The Scientia Education Academy
- The Education Focussed Community
- Student voice and faculty roadshows
- UNSW alumni

Throughout the consultations, three words have shaped our conversations:



These words are the title of our strategy for good reason.

A partnership between students and staff lies at the heart of a world-class education and an exceptional student experience. Meaningful dialogue wherein both sides are able to speak and be heard is our foundry for success and the anchor of our strategy. Our commitment is to challenge ourselves and our students in the education that we provide. Closely analysing the quality of our student experience is our mechanism for improvement. Our determination is to improve the support we provide students who put their trust in us by choosing to study at UNSW. Our motivation is reflected in supporting and investing in our staff, who dedicate their time to providing the education and sharing the knowledge future generations need to succeed.

*"The purpose of this strategy is to provide direction in the pursuit of a world class education and student experience. Our vision is to be among the very best in Australia and the world."*

*Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic & Student Life  
Professor Merlin Crossley*





# Our Initiatives

We will achieve our vision by pursuing 16 initiatives in four areas:

- Acting on Insight;
- Educators of Excellence;
- A Demanding Standard; and
- Building Community.

We will build on our achievements and accelerate our existing strategic initiatives.

We will pursue new initiatives, continue to support faculties and our students, and provide targeted interventions where needed.

Our markers of success will enable us to judge our progress in delivering an unrivalled education and student experience.

These markers and our key drivers – listening, challenging and supporting – will complement the more detailed Key Performance Indicators set by our Council and our portfolio's leadership team.

Our goal is to enable our students to realise their ambitions, and to grow, develop and contribute positively to a better world. We want our graduates to be prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and we believe our initiatives provide the means, vehicles and pathways for their journey ahead.



"I was part of the Moodle taskforce group, providing a Post Graduate voice, as we aim to create an organic learning platform for students. I also had the opportunity to present at Academic Board about the PG student experience survey that PGC launched, the attention and comments gave me a great sense of belonging to the UNSW community."

*Arc PGC President 2020*  
Xi (Brenda) Shi







# Acting on Insight



**Taking surveys seriously**

Listening to students and staff, and acting on their feedback, are essential prerequisites for the realisation of a fulfilling university experience. We will prioritise the critical insights from our two major surveys – the QILT SES and myExperience – and we will ensure strategic and purposeful dissemination of the results through staff and student dashboards. We will continue to seek ways to listen to student voices, and demonstrate that we are listening and responding through multiple and inclusive feedback mechanisms. We will survey our staff to ensure that all viewpoints are brought together in the continual improvement of our education and student experience.



**Students as partners**

The voices of our students are at the centre of creating an authentic and engaging university experience. They are the barometer for determining the success of our support. We will invite our students to challenge us by sharing their perspectives and taking part in key decisions. We will seek their guidance and reflect on student data to stimulate new approaches. We will build strong student partnership and mentorship models, ensuring that their voice informs every decision we make. A new university Student Advisory Council will underpin our partnership, provoke reflections, share experiences and encourage better outcomes.



**Better connections**

We will grow students' sense of connectedness, from the moment they receive an offer, through to graduation and beyond. We will augment our comprehensive Preparation Program, a key pathway to UNSW degrees. We will continue to reach out to our alumni to learn how to enhance our student engagement and provide more effective mechanisms of support. We will nourish vibrant student communities, encouraging them to be innovative and collaborative and prepare our graduates for the challenges that lie ahead.



**More effective support**

One of the strengths of UNSW is the diversity of our student population. Driven by insights, we will develop targeted support for students of all backgrounds and abilities. We will introduce mechanisms to reach out to students in need. And we will continue to provide adaptive online resources for just-in-time support, equitable learning adjustments, peer mentoring programs and one-on-one meetings with academic learning facilitators.

## Markers of success

- Increased participation in our student surveys
- Improved student survey outcomes
- A Student Advisory Council
- Enhanced support mechanisms informed by student feedback



# Educators of Excellence



Investing in educators

To deliver an outstanding education, we will listen to and invest in the capabilities and competencies of our staff. We will challenge colleagues to deliver excellence in their teaching based on insights drawn from student feedback, our award-winning educators and scholarly inputs. We will support our academics to develop inspiring educational content and digital proficiency for effective delivery in physical and virtual environments.



Helping students succeed

We will continue to celebrate, recognise our outstanding educators and help share their knowledge and practice with the whole of our community. We will champion a program of continuous professional development, designed to develop reflective educators who are committed to continuous improvement. We will invigorate and expand our Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FUL) program, embed a supportive and encouraging peer review of teaching, and introduce targeted course enhancement initiatives. We will build on the successes of the Education Focussed community, the Scientia Education Academy and our academic colleagues more broadly to continue to foster a collegial and supportive culture in which to explore new ideas.

We will help our students succeed, supporting them in and beyond their physical and virtual classrooms. Our students and staff will work together as partners to discover and break down barriers to student success. Dedicated teams, coupled with accessible online resources and peer networks, will ensure equitable access to learning for all, alongside targeted support for academic learning.



Championing employability

We will prepare our students to be job-ready graduates by developing their employability skills through a distinctive new roadmap, that connects sector specific deep dives for students and employers. We will enable UNSW graduates to be the creators of their own careers – championing their own unique paths using the technical capability, social networks and cultural engagement that they acquire during their time at UNSW.



Modern curriculum

Outstanding education requires curricula that meet the needs of the mid twenty-first century. We will champion local and global experiences, develop authentic assessment informed by real-world practice, and co-design content where practicable with student partners, alumni, industry, government and community partners. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is an important part of this initiative to provide students with the opportunity to narrow the gap between theory and practice. So, too, is supporting students to experience studying overseas through our Exchange and Study Abroad programs that provide opportunities to develop attributes of cultural competency and global citizenship.



## Markers of success

- Effective Educational Communities of Practice
- A roadmap for student academic, social and personal success
- Increased student uptake of curricular and co-curricular employability experiences
- Diverse and challenging curriculum



# A Demanding Standard



Assessment and feedback

Assessment is at the core of the student experience. We will combine high quality in-person and online learning materials with relevant, intuitive and seamless digital assessment capability. We will ensure that every assessment task offers an opportunity for learning through the provision of on-time and appropriate feedback in digital formats. Students will be able to build portfolios of their work to demonstrate learning achievements as a lasting record of their accomplishments.



Quality course content

We are committed to providing students with a consistent, clear and organised learning experience through the development of a simpler, easier to use digital learning environment. Key course information such as learning outcomes, weekly schedules, assessment briefs and support will be standardised and delivered to students in a consistent format across the university. This will be automated where possible to reduce the administrative burden on academic and professional staff, enabling them to spend more of their time delivering a quality learning and student experience.



Data for learning—staff and student dashboards

We will invest in upskilling and supporting staff in the creation of rich, engaging, high quality learning materials to support authentic, active learning experiences. Underpinning this will be the establishment of a centralised catalogue of available course content highlighting best practice. We will champion an open, collaborative sharing culture, reducing duplication and creating greater efficiencies in course design and production. We will also measure and evaluate student engagement to help refine the design and production of learning materials.



Education technology for the future

Every student's learning journey is unique. The creation of a student dashboard will support a more personalised UNSW experience. The dashboard will present timely and context appropriate personalised information that will enable students to check their progress as well as delve deeper into their academic performance. It will allow students a safe environment to offer forward actionable feedback about their student experience. Our staff dashboard will support and enable the monitoring of teaching and course design quality, accessing personalised support services and professional development, and progressively build a portfolio of academic achievement.

UNSW's vision for educational technology is an inclusive, intuitive ecosystem that offers students and staff a seamless and personal experience driven by the insightful use of data. Technology should be an invisible enabler of new and exciting ways of learning. Our students and staff will benefit from working within a technology landscape that is effective, efficient, adaptive and responsive to change. We will foster an innovation culture in which staff and students are given space and support to experiment with new ways of using new technology in the classroom – evaluating and integrating the most promising technologies into a digital ecosystem for the benefit of the entire UNSW community.



## Markers of success

- Improved assessment model
- Enhanced course content standards
- Student & staff dashboards
- Improved digital education ecosystem





# Building Community



**A sense of belonging**

UNSW will be an exemplar university in nurturing impactful life-long relationships. We will rapidly expand our array of touch-points with students and embed a strong community feel and sense of belonging throughout the student journey, from the moment they start to the moment they graduate and beyond. We know from experience that enabling a sense of belonging – in physical and virtual settings – is the catalyst for creating exceptional student experiences, enduring friendships and strong emotional bonds.



**Community on campus**

Building a strong student community relies on a thriving physical campus that is engaging and inclusive, that supports and facilitates our student community's aspirations in sport, music and other activities. We will continue to increase students' opportunities to influence their learning and recreational spaces, as well as digital communities, to help them grow and connect with each other. To create a broader sense of community we will adopt more proactive and collaborative approaches with local communities and businesses to help foster a deep sense of belonging.



**A healthy and active university**

At the centre of the UNSW student community will be a strong sense of health and wellness, and a capacity to understand not only resilience but to be aware of others' mental wellbeing. Through the implementation of our mental health and wellbeing strategy, we will support students and provide care and education to help them navigate and understand their own health needs and encourage an active lifestyle. A UNSW student – regardless of their field of study – will be a graduate with a strong understanding of mental health and personal resilience.



**Celebrating cultures**

In partnership with our student organisation Arc, our elected student leaders and our student partners, we will augment pride in our student experience and improve opportunities for, and connections with, our diverse student community. We will increase our support for inclusive student engagement opportunities such as sport, cultural and inter-faith groups, performing arts, and many more. We will continue to seek opportunities to celebrate the invaluable, diverse cultures and perspectives that our student and staff communities bring to our university, enriching our present as well as our future.

## Markers of success

- Increased participation in community-building programs
- New dedicated programs that connect with UNSW outside of classroom
- Mental health & wellbeing strategy implemented
- Successful and well attended student events





**UNSW**  
SYDNEY

This strategy was developed by Office of Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education & Student Experience, in partnership with all UNSW stakeholders.