UNSW SYDNEY

Widening Participation Strategy 2030

Access, Equity & Inclusion
UNSW Sydney

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"We know that our pursuit of excellence and ability to improve the world around us can only be truly achieved if our University community accurately reflects the breadth of society around us. To achieve excellence and to create a just society our student cohort must be broad and diverse."

Attila Brungs
Vice-Chancellor and President UNSW Sydney

From the Vice-Chancellor

At UNSW Sydney, we are dedicated to enhancing access, participation and graduate success for all students. UNSW's vision – to improve lives globally through innovative research, transformative education and commitment to a just society – underpins everything we do.

We know that our pursuit of excellence and ability to improve the world around us can only be truly achieved if our University community accurately reflects the breadth of society around us. To achieve excellence and to create a just society our student cohort must be broad and diverse.

Our commitment to equity runs deep, not only because it promotes social justice, but because a diverse student body brings with it more diverse perspectives and experience, promoting innovation and creativity, as well as fostering greater empathy and understanding among decision-makers, professionals and the wider community.

When students come to UNSW, we want them to experience the same level of engagement, participation, achievement and success throughout their university life and into their careers. We want to support students to succeed while at University and beyond, and to benefit from UNSW's nation-leading employability rate.

To ensure the foundations to support student equity are in place, Access, Equity & Inclusion (AEI) has been established to lead the University's primary strategy for widening participation, the Gateway Admission Pathway and Program (GAPP).

Since its inception, the GAPP has accelerated UNSW's low-SES access rate. Building upon this success, in August 2022, UNSW committed to a new ambitious target – The Gateway Equity Target – where 25 per cent of commencing domestic undergraduates are from low-socioeconomic backgrounds and/or socio-educationally disadvantaged schools (Gateway partner schools) over the next five years.

But access is only one half, the other is success. The Gateway Equity Target is the cornerstone of a whole-of-institution commitment to ensuring a more equitable, diverse, inclusive UNSW and successful student body. By encompassing students from Gateway schools, UNSW will reach additional equity cohorts that are also underrepresented in the UNSW community, including students from regional and remote, Indigenous, and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Migrant and Refugee (CALDMR) backgrounds. By providing appropriate support, we ensure our equity cohort can attain the same success as our broader student cohort.

This strategy outlines how we will ensure our University undergraduate community is reflective of the diversity of our population to drive innovation and enrich teaching, research, and the student experience.

Attila Brungs
Vice-Chancellor and President
UNSW Sydney

From the Director

Access, Equity & Inclusion (AEI), activates UNSW's strategic commitment to increasing access to higher education for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds and ensuring an inclusive staff and student community.

Our goal is for 25 per cent of commencing domestic undergraduate students to be from a low-socioeconomic background and/or socio-educationally disadvantaged school (Gateway partner school).

This Gateway Equity Target anchors an ambitious new plan for widening participation at UNSW. It does this through a university-wide commitment that spans the full student lifecycle from pre-access through to employability and graduate success.

Our theory of change and strategic approach acknowledges the complex nexus of socioeconomic and educational disadvantage, educational attainment, and opportunity in Australia. We have prioritised bold reforms to the Gateway Admission Pathway that include UNSW's first unconditional offer and more alternative entry options for students who may not meet adjusted ATAR requirements of early conditional offers.

Core to this strategy is an expanded educational outreach program that works to develop students' learner identity and confidence in order to successfully navigate their transition from high school to university. We will also continue to provide reliable sources of information about further education and career possibilities so students are better placed to make informed choices that are right for them.

Ensuring effective financial, academic and social supports and inclusive teaching and learning practices that maximise positive student participation, retention and success are ongoing priorities. These are embedded across the strategic drivers for The Gateway Equity Target and have been reinvigorated in the context of an equity in higher education reform agenda.

I would welcome your engagement with the Widening Participation Strategy and Gateway Equity Target-linked efforts to improve access and participation at UNSW for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

Mary Teague
Director, Access Equity & Inclusion
Division of Equity Diversity & Inclusion

Widening Participation Strategy 2030

A university-wide commitment: The Gateway Equity Target

A bold new vision for student access and success at UNSW.

The Gateway Equity Target aims for 25 per cent of commencing domestic undergraduate students to be from a low-socioeconomic background and/or socio-educationally disadvantaged school (Gateway partner school) by 2027.

Background to the target

The Gateway Equity Target recognises that educational opportunities are heavily linked to socio-educational (school) advantage and socioeconomic (home) status, with the two often interrelated.

Entrenched socioeconomic inequality unfairly impacts access to university and career opportunities for young people from historically underrepresented backgrounds in higher education.

UNSW's 2025 Strategy initially set a target for 15 per cent of the undergraduate cohort to be from a low-socioeconomic background. By 2022, accelerated progress towards this target provided the foundation for a more ambitious commitment.

Transforming our undergraduate community

UNSW is committed to having an undergraduate community that is reflective of the broader Australian population and enabling access, participation, and graduate success for students from equity cohorts.

The Gateway Equity Target explicitly measures students enrolling at UNSW who are from a low-SES background[1] and/or one of 380 Gateway partner schools[2]. The target supports students from other equity groups who both reside in low-SES areas and attend Gateway schools at higher rates. This includes students from regional and remote areas, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Migrant and Refugee (CALDMR) backgrounds, and students who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

1 Socioeconomic status is determined by the Australia Bureau of Statistics socioeconomic Index for Areas (SEIFA) – Index of Education and Occupation and is based on the students' first residential address.

2. A Gateway school is a school with a three-year average ICSEA at or below 1000 or a three-year average proportion in the bottom quarter of socio-educational advantage at or above 25 per cent.

A holistic plan of support across the student lifecycle

UNSW is committed to ensuring that incoming students have a positive student experience that considers their specific requirements, and that academic and professional staff receive the appropriate support and resources required to develop and advance the key components that will lead us to reach the target.

Overall, there are eight key components to achieve The Gateway Equity Target:

1. **Gateway Admission Pathway and Program**
2. **Alternative Entry Options**
3. **Scholarships**
4. **Support Programs**
5. **Academic Support**
6. **Resources**
7. **Work Integrated Learning**
8. **Staff Training**

Division of Equity Diversity & Inclusion: Access, Equity & Inclusion's role

Access, Equity & Inclusion is part of the Division of Equity Diversity & Inclusion, and leads the overarching strategic approach in reaching The Gateway Equity Target. We lead the pre-Access and Access areas which includes the Gateway Admission Pathway and Program and contribute subject matter expertise in student equity. We work across UNSW to ensure student participation and success, spanning academic and wellbeing support for underrepresented students. We ensure this is evidence informed and fit for purpose across all stages of the life cycle.

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A short history of student equity at UNSW and in higher education

1990

The national equity agenda was established after "A Fair Chance for All" was published by the Department of Employment, Education and Training. It set a clear policy agenda and focused on six equity target groups which are still in place today. It also put the onus on universities to take responsibility for ensuring their institutions were accessible and reflected the demographics of our country.

2007

UNSW launched Aspire as a small-scale pilot outreach program with two partner schools in metropolitan Sydney. The initial program design and model was called AimHigh and based on the Aimhigher initiative from the UK, which had been going since 2001.

2008

The Bradley Review into Australian Higher Education led to the government committing significant funding for outreach programs. This was to support teaching and learning, improve access and outcomes for students from low socioeconomic status (low-SES) backgrounds, build new links between universities and disadvantaged schools, reward institutions for meeting agreed quality and equity outcomes, improve resourcing for research and invest in world-class tertiary education infrastructure. Institutions could now implement major initiatives purposely designed to raise the awareness, aspiration and capacity of students from underrepresented groups in higher education.

2010

A comprehensive national equity program, the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) was launched. It provided supplementary funding to universities to build the aspirations and capacity of students from low-SES backgrounds to participate and succeed in higher education.

2012

Aspire was awarded Programs that Enhance Learning for Widening Participation at the Australian Awards for University Teaching by Universities Australia.

2013

The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), a research and policy centre funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment, was established, based at Curtin University. The NCSEHE provides national leadership in student equity in higher education, connecting research, policy and practice. Aspire was awarded a HEPPP funding grant of $453,102 for the Building Academic Capabilities project, to assist students in developing skills and literacies that enable success in university study.

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2014

Aspire was awarded $250,000 from Google, as a finalist in the Google Impact Challenge, Australia. It also received a $343,000 National Priorities Pool (NPP) grant for the Aspire Community Hub, a pilot of an alternative model for addressing the widening participation agenda.

2015

Aspire was awarded $173,460 in NPP funding for a project to build computer literacies in rural schools. Under the UNSW 2025 Strategy, the University set an equity target for the undergraduate population to reach 15 per cent of students from low-SES backgrounds by 2025.

2016

Aspire received Australian Rural Education Awards (AREA) for projects that support new and creative thinking in professional practice to improve student outcomes in regional settings. Aspire was also awarded over $823,000 in combined NPP funding to fund five separate outreach projects targeting students from low-SES and regional and remote backgrounds.

2017

The University established the role of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Equity Diversity & Inclusion, and the Division of Equity Diversity & Inclusion (EDI). AimHigh was moved from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic to sit as one arm of EDI.

2018

Aspire received further Australian Rural Education Awards. UNSW strategic funding was also received, representing a substantial shift from year-on-year HEPPP funding and reflecting an institutional commitment to improving the access rate of underrepresented students to UNSW and higher education.

2019

Two papers on rural students' progress to higher education and the impact of widening participation programs were published (Carrillo-Higueras, Walton, 2019).

2020

AimHigh was renamed and restructured as Access Equity & Inclusion. Building on the success of the Aspire program, shifts were made to prioritise new initiatives such as the Gateway Admission Pathway and Program – a targeted strategy which prepares students for university earlier in their academic career and an equitable admission pathway to UNSW. The NSW Equity Consortium, a five-year partnership with University of Technology Sydney, Macquarie University and five partner schools in Greater Western Sydney was formed. The partnership delivered a whole-of-cohort literacy-focused program to students in Years 7-9 and progressed a practice-led research study to understand how students engaged with the program. The funding model for higher education and student equity went through reform with the introduction of the Federal Government's Job-ready Graduates Package worth $400M over five years.

2021

IRLSAF (Indigenous, Regional and low-SES Attainment Fund) was introduced in January 2021. This model aligns existing funding combining several other funding sources. The new model (implementation from 2024) allows universities to use their funding more flexibly for the targeted cohort of students. The NSW Equity Consortium was awarded a $500,000 grant by the NSW Department of Education as part of the Collaboration and Innovation Fund to expand the program to include a Year 10 careers exploration component in partnership with TAFE. UNSW awarded over $4M to 1316 newly enrolled underrepresented students. This included up to $6,000 per student who came through the Gateway Admission Pathway. $36,000 grant from the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) for the research "University responses to enhancing Equity in the post-COVID landscape", which was done in collaboration with Western Sydney University, University of Technology Sydney and Macquarie University.

2022

UNSW introduced a new equity target – The Gateway Equity Target – where 25 per cent of commencing undergraduates are from low-SES backgrounds and/or socio-educationally disadvantaged schools (Gateway partner schools) by 2027. The Federal Government announced funding of 20,000 additional university places for students from underrepresented backgrounds to address skills shortages in certain industries. UNSW partnered with the University of Sydney and the University of Wollongong on a two-year project which supports the transition of equity cohorts to university with a regional focus. The project received $350,000 in funding from the NSW Department of Education as part of the Collaboration and Innovation Fund. In November the Federal Minister of Education announced details of a 12-month review of higher education (Australian Universities Accord).

2023

The Australian Universities Accord Interim Report suggested five priority actions emerging from initial consultation with the higher education sector and outlined various areas for further consideration which specifically targeted student equity outcomes. All priority actions were endorsed by the Minister of Education for Commonwealth Implementation, including several measures with the potential to directly benefit students from equity backgrounds such as the cessation of the "50 per cent pass rule" introduced by the 2020 Jobs-Ready Graduate Package.

The case for action

Students from educationally and socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds are persistently underrepresented at university in Australia and at UNSW.

Figure 1. Participation rates of students from low-SES backgrounds nationally, at Go8 universities and UNSW 2011 – 2020 (rates in the years 2016 – 2020 draw on 2016 census data).

The current state of play

Widening participation to cohorts underrepresented at university has been central to higher education policy in Australia for several decades, led by the Dawkins Reforms in the 1990s and then the 2008 Bradley Review. However, despite this long history of higher education reform being a national priority, by the age of 24, only 18 per cent of Australians from the lowest SES backgrounds have a university degree, compared to 67 per cent of students from the highest SES backgrounds (Lamb et al., 2020).

The proportion of undergraduate students from low-SES backgrounds at Australian universities in 2020 was 16.8 per cent. However, low-SES students comprise only 9.4 per cent at Group of Eight (Go8) universities, with UNSW reaching just 10.1 per cent (Figure 1). These figures fall well short of the national target of 20 per cent low-SES participation set for 2020 by the Bradley Review in 2008.

Even when access to higher education is achieved, students from low-SES backgrounds are more likely to drop out within the first two years of study (Mcmillan, 2015). Further, graduates from underrepresented backgrounds may be less likely to find full-time employment and tend to earn less compared to their high-SES counterparts (Carroll & Li, 2022). These figures necessitate action. In particular, a whole-of-student-lifecycle approach is required, which supports students to access university, to succeed and to transition out of university to graduate employment.

A "pipeline of privilege"

Australia has one of the most socially segregated schooling systems among high-income countries (OECD, 2018). Such disparities in the Australian school system can result in vastly different educational opportunities and experiences available to students of different backgrounds. Disparities in educational opportunity often translate into disparities in educational attainment, perpetuating a "pipeline of privilege" which further advantages students from more privileged backgrounds, while precluding the possibility of university for many young people (Harvey et al., 2016; Greenwell & Bonner, 2022). To make matters worse, social segregation in the Australian schooling system has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic, with significant numbers of parents/caregivers moving their children to attend the wealthier independent and Catholic schools (ABS, 2023). Without change, higher education will continue to be a space that endorses the potential of students based primarily on their social background (Bunn & Burke, 2020).

ATAR: The primary barrier

The primary barrier to a university education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds in Australia is academic attainment in secondary school, measured by the ATAR or equivalent (Gale and Parker, 2013). Consequently, students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds may be less likely to gain university entry, particularly to elite institutions, such as the Go8, with more competitive ATAR entry requirements.

Because it is sensitive to the effects of opportunity, the ATAR is a flawed measure of students' potential to succeed at university. In fact, concerns that increased enrolments of students from disadvantaged backgrounds lead to declining academic standards have proven unfounded (Pitman et al., 2015). Evidence is mounting that once at university, students from disadvantaged backgrounds are performing on par, if not outperforming their more advantaged peers (Harvey & Burnheim, 2013), suggesting that the ATAR tends to inflate the academic potential of students from higher SES backgrounds to the exclusion of students with just as much potential from less privileged backgrounds (Li & Dockery, 2014).

The benefits of a university education

Because university provides critical opportunities for personal and intellectual development (Kromydas, 2017) access should be distributed more fairly on social justice grounds alone (Gale & Tranter, 2011). University also provides the basis for achieving significant individual socioeconomic advancement and intergenerational mobility and therefore plays a crucial role in levelling the socioeconomic playing field (Daly et al., 2015).

Across OECD countries (including Australia), full-time workers with a higher education qualification earn on average around 50 per cent more than those with only secondary school attainment (OECD, 2022). According to one Australian study, the financial premium of attaining a bachelor qualification over a lifetime is $1.1 million for male graduates, and $800,000 for female graduates (Norton, 2012). This financial inequality is exacerbated by the fact that students from low-SES backgrounds remain under-represented in fields of study that lead to careers with the highest private financial return (Cakitaki et al., 2022). Given that a university education will be required to be eligible for many jobs in the foreseeable future, without improving university access and graduation rates for underrepresented students, there is a risk that the economic gap between those with and without a university education will widen further (Productivity Commission, 2022).

Theory of change

At UNSW, Access, Equity & Inclusion's work is underpinned by an overarching theory of change that articulates the impact we intend to have. Within this we have four evidence-based mechanisms (The Map, Compass, Key and Guide), nested within the overarching theory of change.

Each aspect of our theory of change is explained on the right, including underlying assumptions and the intended impact.

The Map

Improving students' understanding of university to aid informed decision-making about post-school options

The Compass

Enhancing students' learner identity and confidence to successfully navigate their educational journey

The Key

Enhancing students' academic attainment and reducing barriers to entry for expanded post-school study options

The Guide

Providing students with trusted information from current university students from equity backgrounds

UNSW Widening Participation: Theory of Change

Nested theories of change

The Map: Possibilities

Unlike their more advantaged counterparts, students from disadvantaged backgrounds may not have access to accurate knowledge about higher education in their social networks (Andrews, 1999; Harvey-Beavis & Robinson, 2000; Young, 2004). Many of these students will be the first in their families to go to university, making it difficult to obtain first-hand insights (Vernon et al., 2019). This lack of familiarity can result in students feeling less equipped to make decisions about their post-school futures and perceiving university as a distant and far-fetched option (Griffin et al., 2011; Stone et al., 2022). Further, a lack of first-hand information may lead to difficulties adapting to university life, academic culture and connecting with students and staff (Fleming & Grace, 2015; Mckay and Devlin, 2014).

By providing a reliable source of information about further education and career possibilities, we will support students to make informed decisions, increase motivation and perceptions of control, and reduce uncertainty surrounding transition to university.

The Compass: Navigational capacity

The development of a positive learner identity is an important contributor to success in secondary school, higher education and for lifelong learning. A positive learner identity refers to how students perceive themselves as learners, including their beliefs, attitudes, and self-concept in relation to their academic abilities, their understanding of their learning strengths and weaknesses and of the curiosities, passions and interests that motivate them to learn (McFarlane, 2018; Whitaker, 2019). Students with a strong learner identity are motivated, resilient, confident in their skills, and engaged in their learning, which leads to positive educational outcomes and a strong sense of belonging at university (Lawson, 2014; Bluic et al., 2011). The development of a positive learner identity is strongly influenced by academic and social contexts, meaning that students from disadvantaged backgrounds may experience greater challenges in developing and maintaining positive learner identities when they have fewer opportunities to positively experience educational settings and learning success (Gold, 2021; Verhoeven et al., 2019; Lawson, 2014; Trowler, 2010).

By supporting students to build a positive learner identity, we will provide them with the tools to successfully navigate their education journey and build confidence, motivation and a sense of belonging in higher education settings.

The Key: Academic attainment

Academic attainment in high school represents the primary barrier to higher education for underrepresented students (Gale and Parker, 2013).

By providing educational opportunities to students who may not otherwise have access, we aim to enhance educational outcomes so that a range of tertiary study options are available to them.

In addition, we acknowledge that the ATAR is not the only measure of a student's potential to succeed at university.

By providing an alternative pathway to UNSW with a reduced ATAR requirement, we make UNSW more accessible to students with the potential to succeed.

The Guide: University Ambassadors

University Ambassadors act as a trusted and reliable source of information for students who can identify with them (Slater et al., 2003). They act as a critical source of 'hot' knowledge, in contrast to 'colder' information resources such as websites or brochures (Austin & Hatt, 2005; Slack et al. 2014). In addition to being a trusted source of information, University Ambassadors can support students to develop a positive learner identity, spark curiosity in specific academic areas and expand students thinking about the future through modelling their own education journey (Cupitt et al., 2015).

By engaging current university students from equity backgrounds to facilitate our programs and provide authentic information, we aim to provide information that can be trusted by students and support them to see themselves at university.

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UNSW Widening Participation: Nested Theories of Change

The Map

Behaviour

Students:

- choose post-school options that suit their learning strengths, interests, values and career goals
- write strong early offer applications
- successfully transition to university

Behaviour change assumptions

- Students understand why the information being provided is important and don't already have the information
- Information presented is relevant to the interests, values and goals of the student and that students don't already have established post-school goals
- Students are not limited in making decisions by financial barriers/have access to scholarships

Capacity

Students:

- develop knowledge of available degrees and the opportunities and benefits of higher education
- develop understanding of what studying at university is like and the opportunities and benefits of higher education
- develop an understanding of how to apply for the Gateway Admission Pathway and what makes a good personal statement
- feel confident to submit a successful Gateway Admission Pathway application
- feel confident that they access their desired degree and achieve their educational goals
- feel prepared to make informed decisions about their post-school future

Capacity change assumptions

- Effective collaboration with Future Student Recruitment and UNSW faculties produces engaging, clear, non-overlapping and well-aligned content

Engagement

The Compass

Behaviour

Students:

- choose post-school options that suit their learning strengths, interests, values and career goals
- successfully transition to university

Behaviour change assumptions

- Options presented are accessible and achievable for students
- Students are adequately supported as they transition to university

Capacity

Students:

- develop their understanding of their learner identity and how it links with higher education and career options
- develop the ability to write about and present themselves persuasively and with confidence
- develop a sense of belonging at university and at UNSW and identify as a future university student
- begin to map out their path from school to higher education to career

Capacity change assumptions

- Facilitators are welcoming and demonstrate care for and understanding of the experiences of and barriers faced by students from underrepresented backgrounds
- Personal narratives presented by UAs are clear, compelling and relatable and students can see themselves in those narratives

Engagement

The Key

Behaviour

Students:

- apply new knowledge and strategies to achieve increased attainment at school and achieve their required adjusted ATAR
- apply new knowledge and strategies for study at university

Behaviour change assumptions

- Students are on an ATAR pathway
- Students are motivated to perform well
- Students are accepted to university

Capacity

Students:

- develop their motivation for HSC success
- develop their understanding of how to perform well in HSC exams
- develop study strategies to support their HSC performance
- feel less stressed and more confident about their HSC

Capacity change assumptions

- HSC sessions are delivered by experienced HSC teachers and markers and are pitched at right level

Engagement

The Guide

University Ambassadors:

- Act as reliable sources of information
- Support students to develop a positive learner identity
- Spark curiosity in specific academic areas
- Expand student thinking about the future by modelling their own learner journey.

Widening Participation Strategy 2030

Our approach

UNSW takes a multifaceted, holistic approach to enact our commitment to ensuring students from underrepresented backgrounds have equitable access to higher education and are set up to succeed.

Acknowledge socio-educational disadvantage

Rather than focusing solely on the individual circumstances of students, we take a schools-based approach. This recognises the centrality of educational disadvantage and systemic educational inequities within the schooling system. We partner with schools with lower levels of educational advantage to reach students from backgrounds historically underrepresented in higher education. In doing so, we also reach students from other equity groups, including students from regional and remote areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and culturally and linguistically diverse students, all of whom attend these schools at higher rates.

Enhance educational outcomes through enrichment programs that reduce barriers to entry

Historically, much of the widening participation agenda has followed the UK model, which focussed on aspiration raising. However, our programs deliberately shift away from aspiration raising and focus on enhancing student educational outcomes. This reflects the fact that studies show students from educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds have similar levels of university aspiration to their more advantaged counterparts.

We collaborate and enlist the expertise of UNSW staff and students, faculties, teachers, leading Non-Government Organisations and third-party education providers to co-design curriculum-linked academic enrichment opportunities. These programs take a strengths-based approach, allowing students to identify and build upon their existing skills and passions to increase their preparedness for, and success at, university. We use multimodal learning experiences to cater for diverse student needs and deliver our programs through sustained engagement for cumulative impact. We will continue to develop targeted admission pathways linked to our programs that provide expanded opportunities for university access and program choice.

Role model success through students as partners

To ensure our programs are relevant and resonate with the students we work with, we take a students-as-partners approach and involve UNSW University Ambassadors from underrepresented backgrounds in the design and delivery of our programs. These paid employment opportunities for students are mutually beneficial and an opportunity to form a dedicated community that encourages an enhanced sense of belonging in higher education. University Ambassadors serve as powerful role models, and extend effective support in the pre-access and access phase of the student lifecycle.

Form collaborative partnerships

To develop strategic initiatives that complement the national equity agenda we work in partnership with a diverse range of internal and external partners. Partnering with schools, other universities, government and industry ensures innovative, sustainable, evidence-informed, and evaluated approaches to widening participation. We engage in practice-led research and draw on institutional expertise to inform student learning experiences and enhance school capacity through professional learning.

Grow careers-based knowledge and industry networks

We recognise the importance of demonstrating where a university education can lead. We do this by collaborating with UNSW faculties to create interactive experiences that showcase various disciplines of study and expansive career options. We will draw on our links with workplace and industry partners to provide access to real work experience and early career networks that support the establishment of 21st-century skills and capabilities required to succeed in the workforce.

Build a philanthropic base

Students who overcome structural barriers to access university often require financial resources to support the costs associated with study. To support them, we will form purposeful philanthropic partnerships to generate a suite of ongoing equity and accommodation scholarships.

Drive best-practice approaches to support equity groups across the student life cycle

While we will play a leading role in advocating for structural change and the removal of access barriers to UNSW, we strive for more than just student access to university. We aim to provide students with the targeted academic, social and wellbeing support required to fully participate at university and succeed after graduation. We will work to ensure strategies, policies and programs at the University are relevant and responsive to the needs of students from underrepresented backgrounds. This includes advising and contributing to the development of resources that support students' early transition and first-year experiences, creating training modules to inform staff on best-practice approaches for engaging and supporting equity cohorts, and coordinating reviews and providing recommendations for new and improved student support services.

Lead a strategic university-wide approach to addressing student equity

To position UNSW as a leader in student equity we undertake strategic advocacy. This includes contributing to relevant UNSW and Go8 submissions, advising on government funding for aligned programs of work, providing institutional responses on equity cohorts for policy reform at a national level, and acting as a central point of contact on student equity for the University.

A clear conceptual framework for impact

Our work is underpinned by an evidence-based theory of change that guides how we evaluate our social impact and continuously improve programming and meet outcomes. It outlines how we intend to build student capacity and reduce barriers to entry which is discussed in more detail on pages 16-21.

Widening Participation Strategy 2030

Access, Equity & Inclusion Strategy – Goals, Objectives, Outputs and Outcomes

This documents all goals, objectives, outputs and outcomes from the umbrella Access, Equity & Inclusion strategy that relate to widening participation (it excludes those unrelated to widening participation). It shows how we will work with and beyond the University to achieve The Gateway Equity Target.

Note on measurement: Student underrepresented groups include: students from Gateway schools, students from low-SES backgrounds, students from regional and remote areas and Indigenous students.

Widening Participation Strategy 2030

Goal 1: Improve access to higher education and UNSW for students from underrepresented backgrounds by enhancing the educational capacity of students and schools.

Work Area	Objective	Output Measures	Outcome Measures
Widening Participation	Continue to develop targeted admission pathways linked to the educational outreach program to provide expanded opportunities for student access and program choice	– Number of programs available to underrepresented students through the pathway – Increased number of underrepresented students who are eligible to apply through the pathway through pathway reforms	– Increase in pathway applications, offers and enrolments from underrepresented students – Increased number of Gateway schools represented in pathway applications, offers and enrolments – Increased number of Gateway schools previously unrepresented at UNSW represented in pathway applications, offers and enrolments – Increased diversity of degree programs selected by students enrolling through the pathway – Increased conversion rate from program to pathway application, early offer and enrolment – Increased conversion rate from pathway application to early offer and enrolment

Work Area	Objective	Output Measures	Outcome Measures

Widening Participation	Co-design innovative learning experiences, including curriculum-linked academic enrichment and leverage UNSW strengths in research, teaching and learning to support identified school needs	– Number of unique (in-house designed) learning experiences delivered across the year
		– Number of underrepresented students engaged in educational outreach programs across the year (in school, online and on campus)
		– Number of professional learning workshops opportunities delivered for school educators
		– Number of school educators engaged in professional learning
			– For students engaged through the educational outreach program:
			  – An increased understanding of university and ability to make meaningful links between personal interests and capabilities, future study options and careers (The Map)
			  – An enhanced learner identity, confidence in navigating their education journey and sense of belonging at university (The Compass)
			  – An increased mastery of key academic skills and capabilities (The Key)
			– School educators engaged in professional learning opportunities report enriched teacher/school leader/school capacity

Widening Participation	Engage UNSW students as co-designers, facilitators, mentors, powerful role models and partners for change	– An increased number of UNSW students from underrepresented backgrounds engaged as students as partners in the educational outreach program	– For students engaged through the educational outreach program: – An enhanced learner identity, confidence in navigating their education journey and sense of belonging at university (The Compass)

Widening Participation	Effectively communicate targeted admission pathways, scholarships and other higher education access opportunities to students from underrepresented backgrounds and their key influencers	– Number of students engaged in educational outreach workshops and sessions that communicate the pathway and other access opportunities
		– Number of click-throughs in email communications
			– For students engaged through the educational outreach program:
			  – An increased understanding of the Gateway Admission Pathway and other access options (The Map)
			  – Increased confidence in meeting their educational goals (The Compass)
			  – An increased sense of belonging at UNSW and identity as a future UNSW student (The Compass)

Goal 2: Establish UNSW as a preferred university for students and staff from underrepresented backgrounds.

Work Area	Objective	Output Measures	Outcome Measures
Widening Participation	Develop strategic collaborative partnerships with secondary schools, other universities, workplace partners and leading NGOs to develop creative, sustainable, evidence-informed and evaluated approaches to widening participation	– Increased proportion of Gateway schools engaged in educational outreach program – Increased number of students engaged in educational outreach program through partner organisations – Expanded depth of educational offerings available to students and schools through UNSW, NGO and workplace partnerships	– Increase in UAC preferences and first preferences from underrepresented students – Increased applications, offers and enrolments from students engaged through NGO partnerships.
Widening Participation Diversity and Inclusion	Embed longitudinal, mixed-methods research and impact evaluation frameworks across key initiatives prioritising the contributions of students, staff, schools and key influencers	– A tailored theory of change is developed and maintained for all components of work – Number of publications generated from research – Improved collection and distribution of internal program data to report on program impact – Improved quality, visibility and utilisation of equity data across the University.	– Program of work is continually improved to meet intended outcomes and impact

These goals are part of a broader whole of institution strategy to support Equity, Diversity & Inclusion at UNSW.

Goal 4: Improve opportunities, support and outcomes for students and staff at UNSW who are underrepresented in higher education through community engagement and the development of collaborative partnerships both internally and externally.

Work Area	Objective	Output Measures	Outcome Measures
Widening Participation	Contribute subject matter expertise to work across the University to ensure academic and wellbeing support for underrepresented students is evidence informed and fit for purpose across all stages of the lifecycle	– Representation on groups and committees governing the student experience and academic support at UNSW – Papers on student support best practice contributed to UNSW governance groups and committees – Strategic papers and submissions on student equity in Higher Education	– Increased first-year retention rates for underrepresented students.
Widening Participation	Expand opportunities for UNSW students to co-design and lead innovative and inclusive learning experiences for students from underrepresented backgrounds	– An increased number of UNSW students from underrepresented backgrounds engaged as students as partners in the educational outreach program	– For students as partners: – Development of graduate attributes and a deepened understanding of equity and social justice

Widening Participation Strategy 2030

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UNSW
My journey
to UNSW

"Our Gateway Equity Target and Widening Participation Strategy is part of a whole institution commitment for under-represented students to succeed at UNSW."

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