

# EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY ACTION PLANS 2023–2025



*We value every person every day*



# EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

This Strategy complements and supports the University's Looking Ahead Strategic Plan (2020-2025), which highlights the values of equity and excellence. The University is committed to being a leading advocate and driving force for excellence and equity in higher education and to supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of its students and staff. We explore the challenges of varied lived experiences and disadvantaged communities.

## ACTION PLANS

These five Action Plans should be read along with the University of Newcastle Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2023-2025. The purpose of the Strategy and Action Plans is to mature the University's approach to EDI, including integrating EDI principles across all practices, activities, and policies of the University of Newcastle.

## FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES

The University community will be a culture of care and belonging for students and staff, which is built on five foundation principles:

1. *The University community strives for universal non-discrimination*
2. *The University community strives for full and effective inclusion*
3. *The University community strives for full and effective accessibility*
4. *The University community believes in the equity of people*
5. *The University community believes in equality of opportunity*

## EQUITY

Equity seeks to create fairness and justice for marginalised people. Equity is different to equality as it is not just about providing an equal distribution of resources. The practice of equity recognises disadvantage and power imbalances and the need for tailored, intentional, and comprehensive approaches to provide genuine pathways of access. Equity also includes challenging inequitable systems, so access and inclusion increase.

## DIVERSITY

Diversity is recognising a range of human differences, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, and religious and political beliefs.

## INCLUSION

Inclusion is the act of providing access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised. Some examples of inclusion are providing alternate pathways or access, classroom adjustments, or additional time for tasks. Inclusion relies on an understanding of both equity and diversity to support communities of people to participate and succeed meaningfully.

# EDI STRATEGY GOVERNANCE

The University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plans have more than 50 anticipated outcomes to be delivered across three years.

Each outcome is assigned a Lead, Support and Accountable staff or portfolio area to ensure the effective and efficient pursuit of success.

- The role of Lead is to implement the outcome via the designated action(s).
- The role of Support is to assist in implementing the action(s).
- The role of Accountability is to deliver the action(s).

Creating and fostering an inclusive and equitable university will require a whole-of-university effort. The EDI Unit (Academic Division) will oversee the strategy and action plans. However, ensuring successful outcomes ultimately resides with the University's Executive Committee.



# ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
AD EDI	Assistant Dean(s) - Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
BP	Business Partner(s)
CEEHE	Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education
DTS	Digital and Technology Solutions
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
EC	Executive Committee
EDI	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
FSC&E	Future Students, Communications and Engagement
HOS	Head(s) of School
HRS	Human Resource Services
HSW	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
IFS	Infrastructure and Facilities Services
IS&L	Indigenous Strategy and Leadership
IT	Information Technology
LDTI	Learning Design and Teaching Innovation
PALS	Pathways and Academic Learning Support
PVC	Pro-Vice Chancellor
SABE	School of Architecture and Built Environment
SE	Student Engagement
SMG	Senior Management Group
SPP	Strategy, Planning and Performance
VC	Vice-Chancellor
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

## MEASURING PROGRESS

Mechanisms for measuring EDI Action Plan accountability and progress will be co-designed with equity cohorts. Measurements will enhance and build upon those articulated in the University's Looking Ahead Strategic Plan. The design process will use a participatory method like the method used to design this EDI Strategy. There will be clear goals in place that are both quantitative and qualitative, data-driven, and measurable. Data will be reviewed and reported to the University's EDI Committee and Executive Committee consistently to assess if targets are being met effectively and, if not, how to modify them accordingly.

# EDI STRATEGY FOCUS AREA 1

We will engage, listen to and co-design policies and procedures with our equity cohorts

**Action Plan 1:** Policy and Procedure Approach

**Strategy Link:** Looking Ahead Strategy – Inspiring People, Engagement

OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TARGET DELIVERY YEAR(S)	ACCOUNTABILITY	STUDENT / STAFF
1.1 Ensure diverse staff and student representation in co-designing and reviewing policies and strategies.	Targeted consultation with each equity cohort annually to assist with co-designing and policy reform.	EDI Policy Subcommittee	EDI Unit, HRS	2023, 2024, 2025	University Lead EDI	Student & Staff
1.2 Ensure confidential engagement with people from equity cohorts.	Conduct an annual 'have your say' forum to supplement student and staff engagement surveys to inform practice.	EDI Unit	Student Communications, HRS, SPP	2024, 2025	University Lead EDI	Student & Staff
1.3 Ensure diverse representation on committees.	Support equity cohorts' experience as committee members to inform committee practice and process.	HRS, AD EDIs	EDI Unit	2023, 2024, 2025	Senior Manager Talent and Acquisition, AD EDIs	Student & Staff
1.4 Prioritise physical and psychological safety when consulting with students and staff.	Develop, implement and monitor the use of safe consultation guidelines.	EDI Unit	AD EDIs, IS&L, Student Collectives, HRS	2024, 2025	University Lead EDI	Student & Staff
1.5 Ensure communication is appropriate and respectful.	Co-design, implement and monitor the use of language and communication guidelines.	EDI Unit	AD EDIs, IS&L, Student Collectives, HRS	2023, 2024, 2025	University Lead EDI	Student & Staff
1.6 Collect quantitative, qualitative, and historical data from equity cohorts that builds understanding about EDI issues.	Increase capture of demographics and intersectional data through building trust.	EDI Unit, HRS, IS&L, AD EDIs, CEEHE, Research Subcommittee	SPP	2023, 2024, 2025	University Lead EDI, Director of CEEHE, PVC IS&L	Student & Staff

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OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TARGET DELIVERY YEAR(S)	ACCOUNTABILITY	STUDENT / STAFF
1.7 Provide research-informed advice and support the recruitment, retention, and career progression of people from diverse backgrounds.	1.7a Support managers to understand diversity through workforce planning and retention strategies.	EDI Unit, CEEHE, Wollotuka	HRS, BPs, SPP	2024, 2025	University Lead EDI, Chief People and Culture	Staff
	1.7b Implement inclusive practices that support staff with diverse backgrounds.	EDI Unit, CEEHE, Wollotuka	HRS, BPs, SPP	2024, 2025	University Lead EDI, Chief People and Culture	Staff
1.8 Achievement of five Athena Swan Cygnets as pathway to Silver accreditation and implement further actions.	Support Athena Swan Working Group.	PVC Academic Excellence, DVC Academic	EDI, HRS, IS&L, AD EDIs	2023, 2024	PVC Academic Excellence	Staff
1.9 Ensure policies and procedures uphold the five EDI Foundation Principles.	1.9 Review existing and new policies and plans to ensure EDI Principles are upheld.	EDI Policy Subcommittee	EDI Unit, HRS	2023, 2024, 2025	University Lead EDI	Student & Staff

# EDI STRATEGY FOCUS AREA 2

We will strive to create psychological and physical safety for everyone

Action Plan 2: Safety for Everyone

Strategy Link: Looking Ahead Strategy – Engagement

OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TARGET DELIVERY YEAR(S)	ACCOUNTABILITY	STUDENT / STAFF
2.1 A person's chosen identity will be respected and unquestioned.	Review existing guidelines for inclusive engagement practices related to identity.	EDI Unit	AD EDIs, Division EDI Leads	2023	University Lead EDI	Student & Staff
2.2 Privacy will be respected.	Provide learning opportunities so everyone understands and abides by the University's Code of Conduct, particularly when personal information has been disclosed.	HRS	HRS	2023, 2024, 2025	Chief People and Culture Officer	Student & Staff
2.3 Digital space will be inclusively and safely designed to ensure equity of access to a high quality for all students.	Develop, implement and monitor the use of guidelines for interacting appropriately online.	EDI Unit, HoS	IT, HRS	2023, 2024, 2025	University Lead EDI	Student & Staff
2.4 Digital learning and resources will be provided to enable accessibility for students who cannot access learning on campus due to a range of inequalities.	Monitor digital platforms to ensure respectful and inclusive information.	FSC&E	EDI Unit	2023, 2024, 2025	University Lead EDI	Student & Staff

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OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TARGET DELIVERY YEAR(S)	ACCOUNTABILITY	STUDENT / STAFF
2.5 All people's rights will be respected.	Co-create a diversity pledge and inclusive protocol to be incorporated into public forums; e.g., "We seek to empower the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or financial status".	EDI Unit	IS&L	2023	University Lead EDI	Student & Staff
2.6 Students on placement/WIL have the right to psychological and physical safety.	Develop, implement and monitor guidelines for the wellbeing of students on placement/WIL	EDI Unit, AD EDIs	HSW	2023	University Lead EDI	Student

# EDI STRATEGY FOCUS AREA 3

## We will grow our inclusive leadership

**Action Plan 3:** Inclusive leadership for Senior Staff and Executive

**Strategy Link:** Looking Ahead Strategy: Inspiring People

OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TARGET DELIVERY YEAR(S)	ACCOUNTABILITY	STUDENT / STAFF
3.1 Ensure diverse leadership across Schools, Colleges, Divisions and the Executive Committee and all other leadership groups.	Facilitate targeted opportunities for career progression and mentoring sponsorship for equity cohorts.	Senior Leadership	HRS	2024, 2025	VC, DVCs, PVCs, HOS	Staff
3.2 Develop all senior leaders and executives to be EDI Champions.	3.2a Schedule Inclusive Leadership Training (e.g., delivered via Serendis and other complementary training) for SMG and Heads of School Groups.	University Lead EDI, SMG, Heads of School	EC, HRS	2023, 2024, 2025	University Lead EDI	Staff
	3.2b Develop, implement, and monitor reverse mentoring programs where senior leaders are mentored by equity cohorts.	University Lead EDI, AD EDIs, Divisional EDI Leads	EC, HRS	2023, 2024, 2025	University Lead EDI	Staff
3.3 Senior leaders and executives prioritise and embed EDI in all meetings.	EDI is a standing agenda item at all School, College, Division and Executive meetings and is a consideration in all decisions-making.	DVCs, PVCs, HOS, AD EDIs, Divisional EDI Leads	HRS, EDI Unit	2023, 2024, 2025	Senior Leadership	Student & Staff

# EDI STRATEGY FOCUS AREA 4

We will build the capacity of students and staff

**Action Plan 4:** Inclusive behaviours for academic and professional staff

**Strategy Link:** Looking Ahead Strategy – Inspiring People

OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TARGET DELIVERY YEAR(S)	ACCOUNTABILITY	STUDENT / STAFF
4.1 The University is a leader in EDI policies and practices.	Benchmark EDI evidence-based practices across Australian Universities.	EDI Lead	EDI Unit	2024	University Lead EDI	Student & Staff
4.2 Implement a continuous cycle of learning related to EDI.	Prepare matrix to identify gaps in EDI training and develop and promote training as required.	EDI Unit	IS&L, AccessAbility, HRS	2023, 2024, 2025	University Lead EDI, AD People Strategy and Development	Student & Staff
4.3 Recognise and address/redress direct and indirect discrimination.	4.3a Ensure discrimination matters are explicitly considered in complaints policies and procedures.	EDI Unit	HRS, IS&L, ALLY	2023, 2024, 2025	University Lead EDI	Student & Staff
	4.3b. Communicate a zero-tolerance of discrimination to students and staff.	EDI Unit	HRS, IS&L, ALLY	2023, 2024, 2025	University Lead EDI	Student & Staff
4.4 Ensure students' reasonable adjustment plans (RAPs) are appropriately developed and implemented.	Build academics' capability with implementing RAPs through compulsory Disability Confidence training, and other resources.	AccessAbility, EDI Unit, LDTI	EDI Unit, AD EDIs, HRS	2024, 2025	AD - Student Wellbeing	Students
4.5 Ensure that staff workplace adjustments (physical and digital) are available and appropriately implemented in a timely manner.	Investigate evidence-based practice to inform a workplace adjustment guide and offer training to all managers.	HRS	EDI Unit, HSW, IFS	2024, 2025	AD - Wellbeing, Health and Safety	Staff

# EDI STRATEGY FOCUS AREA 5

We will endeavour to make the University accessible

**Action Plan 5:** Accessibility

**Strategy Link:** Looking Ahead Strategy – Reimagining Our Campuses, Campus Accessibility, Digital Excellence  
Disability Inclusion Action Plan

OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TARGET DELIVERY YEAR(S)	ACCOUNTABILITY	STUDENT / STAFF
5.1 Provide new and refurbished buildings with enhanced accessible facilities, beyond the minimum standards in the National Construction Code.	Incorporate compliance with AS1428.2:1992 'Design for access and mobility Part 2: Enhanced and additional requirements - Buildings and facilities into new buildings and refurbishment projects.	IFS	EDI Unit, AccessAbility, HRS	2023, 2024, 2025	Director IFS	Student & Staff
5.2 Outdoor paths will be accessible.	5.2a Audit footpaths and kerb ramps (including TGSIs) and systematically upgrade. (This is an ongoing program of works that will extend beyond 2025 and will coordinate investment with campus masterplan strategies.)	IFS	EDI Unit, HRS	2024, 2025	Director IFS	Student & Staff
	5.2b Ensure an accurate site map is integrated with existing tools to identify the accessible paths of travel and provides access information publicly, e.g. myUni app.	FSC&E, SE	IFS, IT	2023	Director IFS	Student & Staff

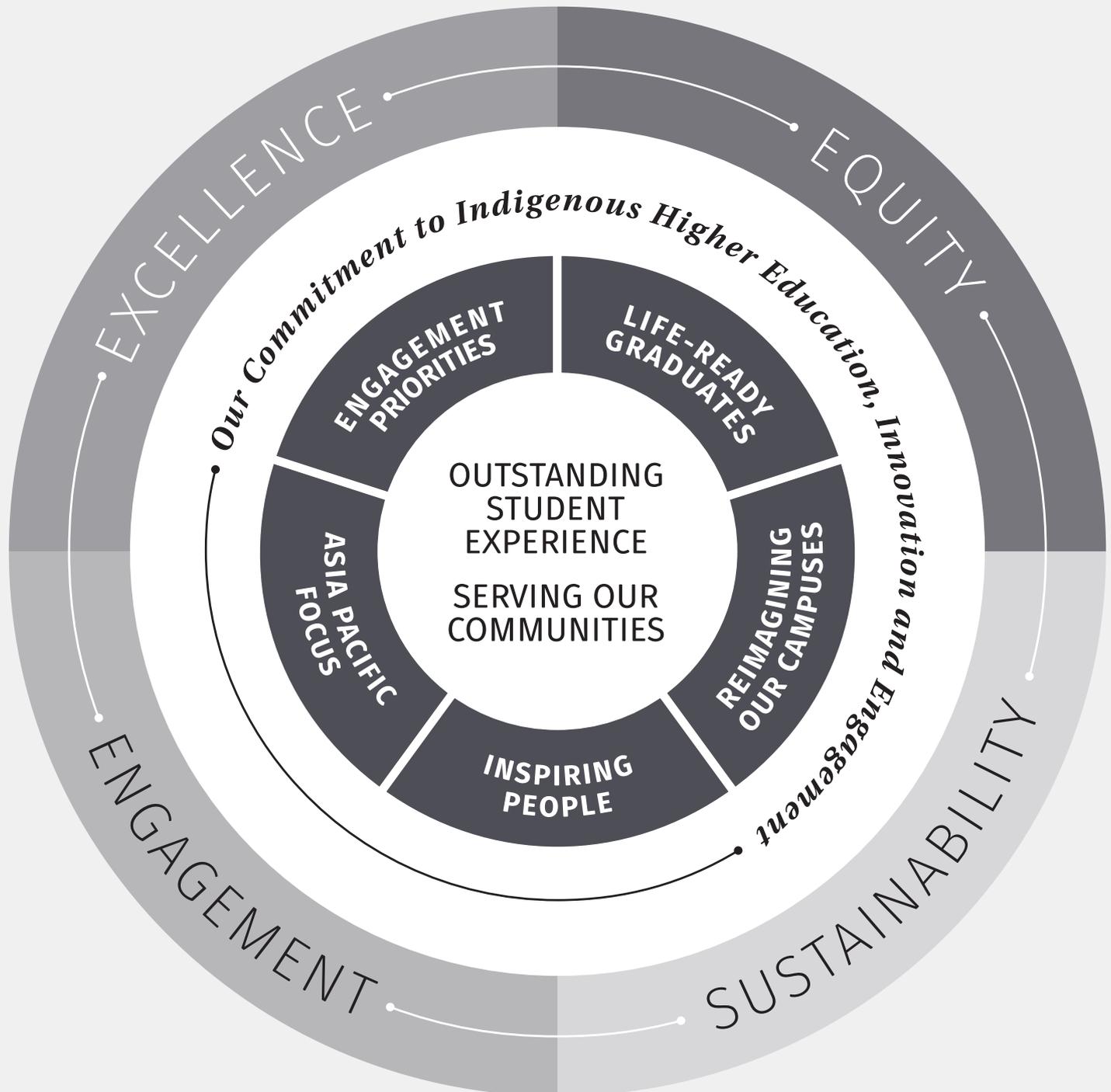
OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TARGET DELIVERY YEAR(S)	ACCOUNTABILITY	STUDENT / STAFF
	5.3a Create a strategy for accessible toilets, adult change facilities (Changing Places), and gender-inclusive toilets to guide IFS projects.	IFS	EDI Unit	2023	Director IFS	Student & Staff
5.3 Accessible toilets will be available throughout our campuses.	5.3b Implement strategy for accessible and gender inclusive toilets, including upgrading accessible toilets. (This is an ongoing program of works that will extend beyond 2025 and will coordinate investment with campus masterplan strategies.)	IFS	EDI Unit	2023, 2024, 2025	Director IFS	Student & Staff
	5.3c Provide appropriate number of parents rooms to support our ongoing Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace accreditation. IFS to upgrade interior design guidelines.	IFS	EDI Unit	2023, 2024, 2025	Director IFS	Student & Staff
5.4 A variety of safe, learning, culturally appropriate, and social spaces will be available throughout our campuses.	5.4a Continue to increase dedicated spaces for our community such as quiet, low-sensory, culturally appropriate rooms for our equity cohorts (two per year).	IFS	EDI Unit, AccessAbility, AD EDIs, Wollotuka, Library	2023, 2024, 2025	Director IFS	Student & Staff
	5.4b Integrated with the site map referenced in 5.2b.	FSC&E	EDI Unit, IFS	2023, 2024, 2025	Director IFS	Student & Staff
	5.4c Create an opportunity for students in SABE to contribute student-led designs to IFS community space projects.	IFS, SABE	EDI Unit	2024, 2025	Director IFS, SABE	Student & Staff
5.5 Accessibility standards will be adhered to by partners and third parties.	Monitor the use of IFS Access Design Guideline.	IFS	EDI Unit	2023, 2024, 2025	Director IFS	Student & Staff

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OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TARGET DELIVERY YEAR(S)	ACCOUNTABILITY	STUDENT / STAFF
5.6 Ensure access to existing and future digital resources and tools to support diverse needs.	5.6a Systematically review the website/ programs/software against current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) criteria to ensure information is accessible.	DTS	EDI Unit, HRS	2023, 2024, 2025	Chief Information Officer	Student & Staff
	5.6b Develop, implement, and monitor the use of a digital accessibility audit tool to improve existing digital content.	DTS	EDI Unit, HRS	2024, 2025	Chief Information Officer	Student & Staff
5.7 Ensure our social media is accessible.	Develop, implement, and monitor the use of social media accessibility guidelines.	DTS, FSC&E	EDI Unit, Communicator Network	2024, 2025	Chief Information Officer	Student & Staff
5.8 Ensure staff understand digital accessibility capability.	Develop and implement a communication strategy to promote awareness of accessible services and facilities.	DTS	EDI Unit, HRS	2023, 2024, 2025	Chief Information Officer	Student
5.9 Ensure all students have access to high quality, inclusive and enabling teaching and learning courses and materials.	Develop, implement, and monitor the use of a checklist that audits all learning materials to identify ways to improve teaching and learning.	LDTI, AccessAbility	AD EDIs, University Lead EDI, PALS, CEEHE	2023, 2024, 2025	ADLDTI, AD Student Wellbeing	Staff
5.10 Ensure academics understand, apply and have time for accessible communication support for students.	Develop, implement, and monitor the use of alternate communication supports for teaching staff, e.g., sign language interpreter, closed captions, descriptive texts used with images.	LDTI	AD EDI, University Lead EDI, AccessAbility, IT, Resources Division	2023, 2024, 2025	AD LDTI, University Lead EDI	Student

OUTCOME	ACTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TARGET DELIVERY YEAR(S)	ACCOUNTABILITY	STUDENT / STAFF
5.11 Ensure LDTI and academics understand and apply principles of Universal Design for Learning.	Develop, implement, and monitor the uptake of a Universal Design for Learning module for teaching staff.	LDTI	AD EDIs, University Lead EDI	2023, 2024, 2025	AD LDTI, University Lead EDI	Staff
5.12 All digital learning experiences will be governed by evidence-based EDI practice.	Develop, implement, and monitor the use of an access checklist for online University courses.	LDTI	EDI Unit, IT, HRS	2023, 2024, 2025	AD LDTI	Staff
5.13 Academics will use evidence-based pedagogies and adaptive techniques to support diverse learners.	Provide grants to assist academics transition their courses to accessible formats.	LDTI	EDI Unit	2024, 2025	AD LDTI	Staff
5.14 All events will be accessible.	5.14a Develop, implement, and monitor the use of an event accessibility checklist.	FSC&E, SE	EDI Unit	2023, 2024, 2025	HRS	Student & Staff
	5.14b Develop, implement, and monitor the use of an events accessibility evaluation so that all university-wide events are fully accessible.	FSC&E, SE	EDI Unit	2023, 2024, 2025	HRS	Student & Staff

# 'LOOKING AHEAD' STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025



## ACCESSIBLE IMAGE DESCRIPTION

This image is used in the University's "Looking Ahead" Strategic Plan. It is a series of nesting circles. The inside circle reads, "OUTSTANDING STUDENT EXPERIENCE and SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES. The next outer circle is divided into five sections as follows: Life Ready Graduates, Reimagining Our Campuses, Inspiring People, Asia Pacific Focus, and Engagement Priorities. The next outer circle is a continuous line that reads, Our Commitment to Indigenous Higher Education, Innovation and Engagement. The final outer circle reads, Excellent, Equity, Sustainability, and Engagement across in four quadrants.



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