UTS Pathways Plan 2025–2027





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Acknowledgement of Country

UTS acknowledges the Gadigal people, the Boorooberongal people of the Dharug Nation, the Bidjigal people and the Gamaygal people, upon whose ancestral lands our university stands. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the Traditional Custodians for these lands.

Message from the Vice-Chancellor

Education is transformational.

As Vice-Chancellor of this exceptional university, I am committed to ensuring that diversity is a guiding principle in all we do at UTS.

Our strength lies in the rich diversity of our students and the innovative approaches that open doors for those traditionally excluded from higher education. Through UTS pathways, we actively seek to attract and support students from underrepresented backgrounds those who might otherwise miss out on the opportunities higher education provides. These students not only transform their own lives but also enrich our university community. Quality education thrives when we embrace diverse perspectives, including different backgrounds, experiences and identities.

Our pathways programs are integral to building a more equitable future, extending beyond individual success. Pathways to higher education are essential for fostering inclusion, enhancing competitiveness and promoting fairness, benefiting communities through better employment, economic participation and health outcomes.

The UTS Pathways Plan represents our bold vision, reflecting our values and commitment to accessible education for all. The framework aims for systemic change, providing meaningful opportunities for more students to access higher education. Through partnerships with schools, collaborations with community partners and support for our students, we are dedicated to creating a future where every student, regardless of background, can succeed.

While we are proud of our progress, there is always more to be done. Together, we will innovate, strengthen partnerships, and ensure that UTS remains a champion of access, diversity and inclusion.

"Our strength lies in the rich diversity of our students and the innovative approaches that open doors for those traditionally excluded from higher education."

Professor Andrew Parfitt, Vice-Chancellor and President

Introduction

A diverse student body is essential for UTS. As a university with social justice at its core, we aspire to be a destination of choice for students who seek to contribute to a more equitable world. Widening participation is central to our strategic direction, reflecting our commitment to inclusiveness and transformative educational experiences that positively impact the lives of our students.

UTS will focus on creating opportunities for those previously denied access to higher education and emphasise that success is defined by where a student finishes, not where they begin.

The UTS Pathways Plan is dedicated to advancing educational access and equity by offering multiple entry routes into higher education for students from underrepresented backgrounds. It is grounded in the principles of widening participation, fostering inclusive academic environments, and supporting students throughout their educational journeys. The Pathways Plan represents a unified effort to ensure all students, regardless of background or circumstance, can succeed and thrive in higher education.

Under the Plan, UTS will offer more flexible and equitable opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds by embracing non-traditional pathways and reducing reliance on ATAR-based admissions. This includes scaling up current pathway programs, removing adjustment point caps, and dismantling structural barriers so that faculties can diversify their student profiles. The Plan prioritises First Nations and low socio-economic status (SES) students in line with UTS's commitment to social justice and inclusion, and to address the fact we are not meeting our previous targets for these students. It is closely aligned with the UTS Indigenous Research and Education Strategy, which offers detailed approaches to increasing Indigenous student participation.

While these groups are the initial focus, we remain dedicated to supporting a wide range of equity groups including:

- students from humanitarian backgrounds (refugees and asylum seekers)
- students with disabilities
- students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- women in non-traditional areas of study
- students from regional and remote areas.

UTS will continue to have tailored strategies aimed at facilitating access for these students. For instance, the UTS Access and Inclusion Plan outlines comprehensive measures to support students with disabilities, ensuring equal access and participation. Similarly, the Humanitarian Scholarship Program provides opportunities for refugee and asylum seeker students to thrive at UTS.

UTS continues to collaborate with internal and external partners to foster a robust support ecosystem for all equity groups and is committed to developing new plans that further address the needs of these equity groups.

Everyone should have access to education, regardless of their background or circumstances. By expanding and diversifying our entry pathways, we hope to attract and inspire new cohorts of students whose drive, talent and unique perspectives will make UTS and our wider society a better place. "A diverse student profile enriches the university experience for everyone. The UTS Pathways Plan plays a pivotal role in ensuring our campus mirrors the diversity of our society, fostering inclusion and broadening perspectives across the board."

Professor Vicki Chen, Provost and Senior Vice-President

Strategic pillars



Improving pathways for equity cohorts is a complex challenge requiring multiple, coordinated solutions. Access is often the most difficult and overlooked pillar in the student journey, and addressing this requires innovation and a commitment to creating sustainable, inclusive pathways. This challenge demands a holistic strategy that ensures that equity remains at the core of UTS's mission. The new plan is based on 5 key strategic pillars:

U@Uni Academy: a proven model

The U@Uni Academy has demonstrated remarkable success in widening participation for students from low-SES backgrounds. Since its launch in 2020, more than 1000 students have been offered places at UTS, with a conversion rate of 87%. In 2023, U@Uni Academy students achieved a success rate of 82.6%, which is comparable to the national average of 82.5% for students from low-SES backgrounds. This program

has proven its value and is now the flagship widening participation initiative at UTS. UTS will expand our Academy partner schools from 27 to 35 by 2027, working closely with them to increase the number of students successfully completing the program. Working closely with Jumbunna to attract more First Nations students through this pathway is a key priority with this expansion. UTS will explore opportunities to increase scholarships as recruitment and retention tools for U@Uni Academy students, to further enhance the program's impact.



Schools Recommendation Scheme: critical to attracting students from diverse backgrounds

UTS achieved a 93% student success rate through the Schools Recommendation Scheme (SRS) in 2024. underscoring its importance as an admissions pathway for equity cohorts. UTS will strengthen the SRS and continue to monitor and assess student outcomes to ensure it remains an effective tool for widening participation. In recognition of the strong performance of this cohort, UTS is reducing the ATAR requirement for SRS to 60 (from 69).

UTS's commitment to widening participation was recently recognised with a significant grant from the Brian M. David Charitable Foundation for the Strengths-Based Tertiary Pathway project. This project aims to redesign entry pathways for students from low-SES backgrounds by focusing on their skills and capabilities. In collaboration with Learning Creates, the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC), and the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre, UTS is co-designing and testing new application and selection processes, integrating a strengths-based approach. In recognition that the SRS relies heavily on administrators and educators within schools to support student applications, UTS will provide some support to schools using this pathway for UTS entry.

Enabling programs: innovative partnerships to invest in academic preparedness pre-entry

The UTS Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion (CSJI) and Jumbunna are co-developing an intensive 4-week, on-campus enabling program aimed at supporting First Nations students and students from low-SES backgrounds. This immersive program will provide students with essential academic preparation and a strong foundation for success at UTS.

Strategic pillars



Integrated effort and structural barrier removal

UTS is committed to a cohesive and integrated approach to widening participation, prioritising equity and opportunity for students from underrepresented groups. Through our implementation plan, we are working to remove structural barriers to access and success, such as eliminating adjustment point caps, guaranteeing places for First Nations students and reducing the ATAR requirement to 60 (from 69) for the Schools Recommendation Scheme (SRS). This collaborative effort spans load management, the student experience framework and schools outreach, ensuring alignment and synergy across these critical areas.

UTS Early Offers is currently being reviewed and redesigned to better target and support equity cohorts, ensuring these students have earlier access to opportunities that recognise their potential. The redesigned program for 2026 admissions will align with UTS's commitment to equity and inclusion, creating pathways that reduce barriers to higher education for underrepresented groups.

External funding and philanthropic support

UTS is developing a coordinated approach to securing external funding to support widening participation, ensuring that financial resources such as scholarships and stipends are distributed efficiently and in alignment with admission offers. This is critical for diversifying income streams through philanthropic contributions, corporate partnerships and grants. By strengthening our relationships with key external partners we can enhance support for student equity programs and better align funding with strategic priorities.

UTS's targets

UTS is committed to significantly improving the representation of both First Nations students and students from low-SES backgrounds in its undergraduate cohort to align with sector averages, thereby enhancing access and equity.

UTS's recalibrated participation targets for the undergraduate domestic cohort are set at 2% for First Nations students and 10% for students from low-SES backgrounds. UTS is dedicated to achieving annual increases in the total headcount of First Nations enrolments, with a goal of enrolling at least 500 students across undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts by 2027. The university is committed to continuously monitoring progress toward these targets and will assess opportunities to adjust and scale its goals as needed. "The UTS Pathways Plan embodies our commitment to building genuine partnerships with First Nations communities, breaking down systemic barriers and ensuring our educational offerings are accessible, inclusive and reflective of the cultural richness of the Indigenous peoples of this land."

Professor Robynne Quiggin, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement)

Implementation Plan

The UTS Pathways Implementation emphasises the necessity for a coordinated approach to pathway development. This is essential to effectively respond to the evolving needs of our community and students. By prioritising coordination among stakeholders, we will ensure that the successes of individual partners are celebrated collectively, fostering a culture of shared achievement. At the heart of this new approach is a commitment to better integrate our activities across the university, which will ultimately cultivate enduring relationships with all stakeholders involved. Widening participation at UTS is a shared responsibility embedded across the institution, reflected in this Pathways Plan's coordinated, whole-of-university approach.

#	Initiative	Implementation lead, key partners, executive sponsor	Outcomes	Timeline	Success indicators
Gua	ranteed places and pac	kaged support for Fi	st Nations students		
1	Develop a streamlined process for offering guaranteed places to First Nations students, packaged with a scholarship and subsidised accommodation	 Director, Indigenous Students & Community Engagement Pro Vice- Chancellor (PVC) (Students) Provost 	 Process developed Process implemented Process communicated Clear guidance on process implementation 	Commenced in Q1/2025 for 2026 admissions and ongoing	 Number of guaranteed places offered Offer acceptance rate Retention rate
Ехр	ansion of the Schools R	ecommendation Sche	eme (SRS)		
2	Improve the SRS and expand its range in Western Sydney and on the Central Coast	 PVC (Social Justice and Inclusion) PVC (Students) Provost 	Significant increases of the SRS applications year on year: - From 60 to 95 partner schools - From 460 to 700 applicants	Commenced in Q4/2024 and ongoing	 Number of SRS school partners Number of SRS applications to UTS Retention rate of SRS students

#	Initiative	Implementation lead, key partners, executive sponsor	Outcomes	Timeline	Success indicators
Sca	ling up non-ATAR pathv	vays (existing and new	N)		
3	Grow the U@Uni Academy cohort – in partnership with faculties – and support their transition to UTS	 PVC (Social Justice and Inclusion) Deans Provost 	Significant increases of the U@Uni Academy intake year on year: - From 27 to 33 partner schools - From 350 to 600 new participants per year - From 320 to 500 applications to UTS per year (Note: conversion rate is 87% for U@Uni Academy)	- Commenced in Q4/2024 and ongoing	 Number of U@Uni Academy school partners Number of students participating in the program Number of U@Uni students transitioning to UTS Retention rate of U@Uni students
4	Leverage the UTS Early Entry Portal (hosted by UAC) to facilitate direct early equity applications	 PVC (Students) PVC (Social Justice and Inclusion) Deputy Vice- Chancellor (DVC) (Education and Students) Provost 	Significant increase in the number of applications from students at Index of Community Socio- Educational Advantage schools applying for early entry, as well as the number of offers (conditional) issued	 Q2/2025 for 2026 intake and ongoing Conversion to enrolled student at Census date 1,594 (75%) 	 Number of applications Number of offers Conversion rate to enrolled student

#	Initiative	Implementation lead, key partners, executive sponsor	Outcomes	Timeline	Success indicators
5	Develop an enabling program for UTS (4-week intensive, on- campus)	 PVC (Social Justice and Inclusion) Director, Indigenous 	Program developed	Q1/2025	 Number of students enrolled in the enabling program Number of students completing the enabling program Number of students applying to UTS Retention rate
	Students & Community Engagement – PVC (Education) – Enabling program	Community Engagement – PVC (Education) – Enabling program	Program promoted	Q2/2025	
		working group co- chaired by CSJI and Jumbunna – DVC (Education and Students) – Provost	Program implemented	Q2/2025	
6	Develop an approach to recognising completion of other universities' enabling programs as an entry requirement for UTS	 PVC (Social Justice and Inclusion) PVC (Education) DVC (Education and Students) Provost 	 Approach developed Approach implemented Approach promoted Clear guidance for admission decisions for Lifetime Learner Experience Unit (LLE) and faculties 	- Q4/2025 - Q1/2026 - Q2/2026	 Number of students admitted to UTS Retention rate

#	Initiative	Implementation lead, key partners, executive sponsor	Outcomes	Timeline	Success indicators
7	Partner with Regional University Study Hubs and Suburban University Study Hubs to develop deep place- based partnerships in selected communities (Fairfield Connect, Western Sydney, Central Coast and partnering in regional NSW locations with high Indigenous populations).	 PVC (Social Justice and Inclusion) Deans Jumbunna Provost 	 Partnership agreements signed Collaborative programs developed Collaborative programs implemented 	Commenced and ongoing	 Number of partners Number of UTS students engaging with partners Quality of partnership
Inte	gration of equity target	s and strategic priori	ties into institutional pro	cesses and relate	ed strategies
8	Ensure the Load Strategy integrates UTS's new equity targets, including for	 Load Strategy Working Group Provost 	Strategy integrated	Q1/2025	 Number of students admitted to UTS by faculty Number of First Nations students Number of students from low- SES backgrounds Number of students from regional/remote areas
	demand-driven load for First Nations students and managed- growth places for		Strategy implemented	Ongoing	
	students from low- SES backgrounds and regional/remote students		Strategy communicated to LLE and faculties	Q1/2025	

#	Initiative	Implementation lead, key partners, executive sponsor	Outcomes	Timeline	Success indicators
9	Develop a university- wide Schools Outreach	– PVC (Students) – Jumbunna, CSJI,	Strategy developed	Q2/2025	- Number of students applying
	addresses both load– All internaland equity targets,stakeholdersincluding an integrated– DVC (Educationcommunicationsand Students)	Strategy implemented	Q3/2025	to UTS from each school and share of UTS applicants	
		including an integrated – DVC (Education	Strategy communicated	Q3/2025	of the school's total year 12 cohort – Offer acceptance rate
	promote the strategy and associated programs (enabler) to stakeholders		Clear guidance on school engagement priorities for LLE and faculties	Q3/2025 and ongoing	
10	Develop a First	- Pro-Vice-	Plan developed	Q1/2025	- Number of First
	Nations Recruitment and Retention	Chancellor (Indigenous	Plan implemented	Q2/2025	Nations students applying to UTS
	Plan, including a communications	Leadership and Engagement)	Plan communicated	Q3/2025	 Offer acceptance rate Retention rate
	approach to promote the strategy and associated programs to stakeholders	 CSJI, Faculties Provost 	Clear guidance on school engagement priorities for LLE and faculties	Q4/2025 and ongoing	

#	Initiative	Implementation lead, key partners, executive sponsor	Outcomes	Timeline	Success indicators
11	Develop an integrated internal and external communication and marketing plan to support the Schools Outreach Strategy	 Chief Marketing and Communications Officer (CMCO) Jumbunna, CSJI, PVC (Students) 	Plan developed Plan implemented	Q3/2025 From Autumn session 2025	 Number of First Nations students and students from low-SES backgrounds applying to UTS through equity admissions pathways Offer acceptance
	and Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Strategy to promote the associated programs	 DVC (Education and Students) 	Plan communicated	Ongoing	
	to prospective students and influencers		Clear and integrated communication to target communities	Ongoing	rate – Retention rate
12	Monitor application rates following the adjustments made to	 PVC (Social Justice and Inclusion), PVC 	Monitoring process established	For Autumn 2025 intake	 Number of students admitted through adjusted
	admissions settings and report findings to relevant committees	(Students), Jumbunna, Faculties	Reporting process established	SRS: for Autum 2026 intake	admissions settings – Quality of
		– Provost	Continuous Quality Improvement process established	Ongoing	the adjusted admissions processes

#	Initiative	Implementation lead, key partners, executive sponsor	Outcomes	Timeline	Success indicators
Dev	eloping discipline-spec	ific outreach and ma	rketing campaigns		
13	Establish a framework for delivering targeted cross- faculty, discipline- based outreach and marketing campaigns– PVC (Students), CMCO, Faculties, CSJI, Jumbunna – DVC (Education and Students)	Framework developed; budget identified	Q4/2025	 Number of students applying to UTS in target disciplines Offer acceptance rate 	
	that target equity cohorts for: - STEMM disciplines (Faculties of Engineering and IT, Science, Design, Architecture and		Cross-faculty campaigns included in faculty marketing and recruitment priorities	From 2026	-
	 Building, Health, Arts and Social Sciences) health professions traineeships and cadetships (Business) 		Campaigns implemented	From 2026 and ongoing	



"Equity lies at the core of everything we do at UTS. The Pathways Plan will help ensure students from underrepresented backgrounds have the support, resources and opportunities they need to thrive and succeed in higher education."

Professor Kylie Readman, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students)

Governance structure

The UTS Pathways Plan is a university-wide, multi-year initiative that requires a robust governance approach to ensure its effectiveness. The governance approach is designed to:

- ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of the plan
- facilitate collaborative decisionmaking among key stakeholders
- monitor progress against recalibrated targets and KPIs
- ensure alignment with UTS's broader strategic priorities, including the Student Experience Framework and the Indigenous Education and Research Strategy
- identify and mitigate risks to the plan's success
- enable agility in responding to changing external factors, such as government funding policies and student demand.

Pathways Plan Steering Committee

The Pathways Plan Steering Committee (PPSC) will oversee implementation, ensuring alignment with UTS's strategic plan and equity goals.

Membership

- Co-Chairs: PVC (Social Justice and Inclusion), and PVC (Students)
- Executive Manager, Student Access and Equity, CSJI
- Representatives from each faculty (e.g., Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning)
- Director, Indigenous
 Students & Community
 Engagement
- Chief Marketing and Communications Officer

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (External Engagement and Partnerships)
- Secretariat support will be provided by CSJI

The committee will meet quarterly to:

- review progress on key initiatives
- oversee the allocation of resources, including funding and staffing
- approve changes to the strategy or its implementation based on changing circumstances or feedback
- provide reports to the Vice-Chancellor's Social Justice and Inclusion Committee on progress, risks and outcomes if required
- ensure that any new and emerging pathways initiatives across UTS are first presented to this committee for strategic alignment with the Pathways Plan, thereby avoiding a fragmented approach to widening participation.

Governance structure

Operational Working Group

The Operational Working Group (OWG) will handle the day-to-day management and implementation of the Pathways Plan. This group will drive the tactical planning and ensure that operational aspects align with the overall goals. The OWG will meet monthly and be responsible for:

- coordinating crossinstitutional efforts to meet pathway targets
- managing the operational aspects of non-ATAR pathways, preparedness programs and student support mechanisms

- providing regular updates to the Steering Committee
- addressing immediate operational issues or bottlenecks.

Membership

- Co-Chairs: Executive Manager, Student Access and Equity, and Director, Indigenous Students & Community Engagement
- Head of Recruitment
- Head of Domestic Admissions
- Faculty General Managers
- Advisors as needed

Project-specific sub-groups

Sub-groups may be formed as needed to focus on specific areas of the strategy, such as the enabling program, marketing and communications, or specific faculty targets and actions. These sub-groups will report directly to the OWG and have set objectives and timelines for completion. Student voices will be incorporated into governance discussions.

Risk management

Risks will be identified at both strategic and operational levels. A core element of the UTS Pathways Plan is the ongoing monitoring and reporting of student success, progression, and retention, with a dedicated focus on First Nations students and students from low-SES backgrounds. CSJI and Jumbunna will play a pivotal role in systematically tracking and reporting participation and success rates, enabling initiatives to effectively address the unique challenges faced

by these students. UTS will also implement a new Student Experience Framework, designed to consider the needs of equity target groups and pathways students while integrating targeted support with services accessible to all students.

The PPSC will review risk reports quarterly, with mitigation strategies proposed and enacted by the OWG. The governance approach will be reviewed annually by the PPSC to ensure it remains fit for purpose and adaptable to the evolving needs of the UTS Pathways Plan. Recommendations for adjustments will be made based on performance data, feedback and changing external conditions. This governance approach will ensure that UTS can effectively implement the Pathways Plan, ensuring both operational excellence and strategic alignment with its broader equity and access goals.

Tracking progress, measuring impact

UTS will implement a structured framework for progress monitoring and reporting to ensure effective oversight of the Pathways Plan. This framework will include:

- Bi-annual progress reports, which will be submitted to the PSSC in March and September. These reports will assess outcomes related to the priority initiatives and track progress towards achieving established participation targets.
- An annual progress report will be presented to the University Leadership Team during the second quarter of each year. This comprehensive report will provide insights into the effectiveness of the priority initiatives and highlight areas for further development.
- An annual progress report for the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) and the Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP) to demonstrate compliance and impact at the national level.

UTS will actively incorporate student voices in the implementation of the Pathways Plan to ensure it reflects their diverse experiences and needs. "Collaboration is key to widening participation. The UTS Pathways Plan creates opportunities for cross-institutional partnerships, enabling us to work together to develop innovative solutions that expand access to education for all."

Amy Persson, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Social Justice and Inclusion)

Development of the Pathways Plan

The UTS Pathways Plan has been developed by the Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion in close consultation with staff across the university and with guidance from the Provost and Senior Vice-President, and the DVC and Vice-President (Education and Students). The PVC (Social Justice and Inclusion) convened a Pathways Plan Steering Committee comprised of:

- Chair: Amy Persson, PVC (Social Justice and Inclusion).
- Sonal Singh, Executive Manager, Student Access and Equity.
- Jacqui Wise, PVC (Students).
- Maree Graham, Director, Indigenous Students & Community Engagement.
- Tracy Chalk, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer.

- Professor Willa Huston, Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Science.
- Professor Sara Denize, Associate Dean (Education), Faculty of Business.

Dr Nadine Zacharias, Managing Director of specialist consulting firm Equity by Design, supported the plan's development process as an external consultant.

Looking ahead, UTS is steadfast in its commitment to creating inclusive and transformative pathways that empower equity groups to access and succeed in higher education. The UTS Pathways Plan has been co-developed with the UTS community, reflecting our collective vision for equity and opportunity. As one U@Uni Academy student shared, 'This pathway has shown me that my background is not a barrier but a strength, and it has given me the confidence to reach for my goals.' By removing structural barriers, amplifying student voices, and fostering collaboration across the university, we are building a future where opportunity and excellence go hand in hand. Together, UTS will drive meaningful change and set a new standard for equity in education.

"This pathway has shown me that my background is not a barrier but a strength, and it has given me the confidence to reach for my goals."

U@Uni Academy student

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