



UNE Student Support Plan

November 2023

Purpose

Aims & Objectives

The *UNE Student Support Plan (UNE SSP)* has been designed to articulate, consolidate and scale-up supports to UNE students across the whole organisation. While it is designed to deliver supports to all students, students who most require supports are prioritised, responding to principles of diversity, equity and inclusion. The *UNE SSP* is a continuous improvement measure, building-upon long-standing strategies and approaches.

The *UNE SSP* is situated in the context and predominant cohort characteristics of UNE, and aligned with [UNE's Future Fit Strategic Plan](#).

It is grounded and enacted through a University-wide integrated service model, with oversight, coordination and a high-proportion of its delivery through the Student Experience Portfolio and thereby under the leadership and oversight of the Executive Principal Student Experience. Success is predicated on responsively meeting emerging challenges and extensive collaboration across University areas and teams.

The overall aims of the *UNE SSP* are to deliver student supports which are:

- Multi-directional, as requested by students and/or as suggested by the University.
- Transparent and therefore findable by students.
- Appropriate, in relation to when and how supports are needed.
- Multi-faceted and delivered through multiple means.
- Efficacious and fit-for-purpose.
- Loaded and targeted where supports are needed most,
- Featuring diversity, equity and inclusion.

The overall objectives of the *UNE SSP* are to:

- Apply data to evaluate and continuously improve student supports.
- Incorporate good practice established through benchmarking and research, while nuancing to UNE contexts and student cohorts.
- Join-up student support activity University-wide.
- Provide a quality-assured HESF-aligned framework for student support.
- Project manage the delivery and status of activities and initiatives.
- Report, discuss, evaluate and continuously improve student supports.
- Activate student voice, leadership and agency in student supports.

The overall outcomes of the *UNE SSP* are:

- All learners feel a sense of belonging, identity and connection as UNE students.
- Through transition pedagogy, all students are supported to progress through the student life-cycle, successfully navigating from application through alumni engagement.
- Students have a fulfilling and engaging student experience.
- Students are highly-satisfied with their student journey.
- Students complete their studies, graduate, and achieve their success goals.
- All alumni have distinctive graduate attributes which stand-out to employers.

RASCI

Overall Responsibility: Executive Principal Student Experience

Accountability: Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Support: Creation and benchmarking of the foundational *UNE SSP* was supported in-part through DVE Solutions consultation

(Internal) Consultation: The *UNE SSP* progressed through numerous iterative versions, informed through University-wide consultation and the ideas, insights, drafting and feedback of many individuals. The authors of the *UNE SSP* considered all feedback and incorporated to the extent possible during this initial phase of student support realignment with legislative and organisational needs. People from the teams listed below consulted on this plan. The authors convey their immense gratitude to the many consultants.

Information: Reports of status and achievement against the *UNE SSP* will be regularly reported to Academic Portfolio Executive Committee (APEC) and to Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) of Academic Board (AB). The Student Support Plan was first tabled and discussed at APEC on 13 September 2023.

Consulting stakeholders were from the following UNE teams and committees:

- All learners feel a sense of belonging, identity and connection as UNE students.
- Through transition pedagogy, all students are supported to progress through the student life-cycle, successfully navigating from application through alumni engagement.
- Students have a fulfilling and engaging student experience.
- Students are highly-satisfied with their student journey.
- Students complete their studies, graduate, and achieve their success goals.
- All alumni have distinctive graduate attributes which stand-out to employers.

Notes

1. The *UNE SSP* is intended to address the following key student success risks as identified in the research literature (Aina et al., 2022; Bridgstock, 2009; Dawson, Charman, & Kilpatrick 2013; McKay & Devlin, 2016; O'Shea, 2016; Stone, 2019):
 - a. Citizens, communities and society overall failing to attain educational completion and thereby failing to reap expected rewards and impact of that attainment;
 - b. Not achieving overall student success metrics, with risk exacerbated by cohort characteristics and contextual factors; and
 - c. Universities failing to sustain threshold numbers of enrolled students in order to be operationally and financially viable.
2. Overall, Student Success means that "students have an excellent experience and that by virtue of completing their education, graduates will have the foundations they require to achieve their career goals" (Kinash, 2021, p.2). Success as defined by students means: (a) validation within and beyond the university; (b) defying the odds and thereby exceeding one's personal expectations; and (c) feeling successful, experiencing emotions such as happiness, passion and pride (O' Shea, & Delahunty, 2018). Similarly, national Australian research by Cook et. al. (2021) revealed the importance of eudemonia, meaning joy through intellectual challenge and growth.
3. UNE's predominant student characteristics match those identified in the literature as heightening risk to student success rates (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), 2020). Through the *UNE SSP*, the University fully commits to overcoming barriers and providing student supports to create conditions which empower students to overcome risks and obstacles, completing their degrees, successfully achieving their goals and transforming themselves and their communities through education.
4. The *UNE SSP* outlines the embedded curricular and co-curricular programs and initiatives that support students from diverse backgrounds, with an equity focus, to enable students to remain studying successfully until they graduate, successfully transition into and/or within the workforce and to continue to benefit from lifelong learning opportunities.



Executive Summary

The *UNE SSP* is a living document continuously evolving, accommodating and improving to meet the current and changing support needs of students in line with UNE's mission and responsibilities as a quality higher education provider.

UNE is committed to providing the type of supports required by diverse students, at the appropriate times in the student journey, to support success in studies and beyond. UNE recognises that not only do the supports need to be available, but also that the supports need to be readily findable by students.

Evidence-based practice indicates that three types of supports make the biggest difference to UNE student success. The *UNE SSP* has been designed to articulate and continuously improve UNE's delivery of the following:

- 1. Course Advising:** Access to friendly, informed staff to recommend courses aligned to career goals and units progressing to course completion, alongside delivery of tools such as visual course planners.
- 2. Academic Skills Development:** Services and supports designed for students to learn how to learn and/or updating one's digital and academic skills to be successful in studies and careers.
- 3. Embedded Career Supports:** Supports to convert degrees into careers, whether newly entering the workforce, returning after a gap, or upgrading credentials to secure promotions, certification, or industry changes. (Integrated in the *UNE SSP* through New England Awards, Work Integrated Learning and Learning Integrated Work)

Student Support Principles

- UNE puts students first; supporting students is a key feature of our distinctive approach to education.
- UNE makes a particular commitment to supporting the success of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities.
- UNE delivers multiple means and modes of support to students.
- Supports enabling educational attainment, completion and success are the highest priority; UNE also delivers or facilitates access to supports such as wellbeing, career, financial and co- and extra-curricular.
- UNE takes a transition pedagogy approach to supporting students throughout the learning journey.
- Supports are available to every UNE student to enable belongingness, connection and success.
- UNE applies knowledge and expertise about support types which are most effective for particular cohorts of students and UNE delivers supports accordingly.
- UNE values social justice, diversity and equity, and UNE thereby designs and offers supports to heighten opportunities and success for all citizens and communities through education.
- Support includes self-serve information, resources and tools, as well as friendly, responsive support from staff.
- Support is designed to be findable and accessible to all students in all modes of study.
- Support is evaluated and UNE closes-the-loop on feedback for continuous improvement.

Student Success Formula

In alignment with the [HESF](#) and sector research, UNE is dedicated to ensuring that students admitted for enrolment have the capacity to succeed in higher education and are given the best chance to complete their studies through ongoing monitoring and the appropriate provision of support services. The *UNE SSP* highlights the notable initiatives underway to bolster UNE student supports, thereby yielding stronger outcomes in student success. UNE delivers 14 types of Student Support, framed by four elements comprising the formula for student success (course choice, identification of vulnerable students, intervention and external support), and aligned along 5 key stages in

the student journey (orientation / transition-in, support, progression, graduation and alumni supports / lifelong learning). Applied to UNE, and particularly the context and predominant characteristics of student cohorts (recognising diversity), the UNE Student Support Model is as follows. Unless otherwise noted (delivered through an integrated service model) the lead delivery of student supports is through the Student Experience Portfolio.

UNE commences support to future learners upon first UNE contact. UNE personalises communication, discussing the modes of education, options and opportunities in a context of success enablement for individuals.

The formula for student success = ACC + Eld + (E+I+C) Int + ExS - Figure 1 (Simpson, 2005).

ACC - Appropriate Course Choice.

Eld - Early Identification and support of vulnerable students.

EIC - Early, Intensive and Continuous Intervention.

ExS – Internal & External Support from specialist areas, students, parents, employers.

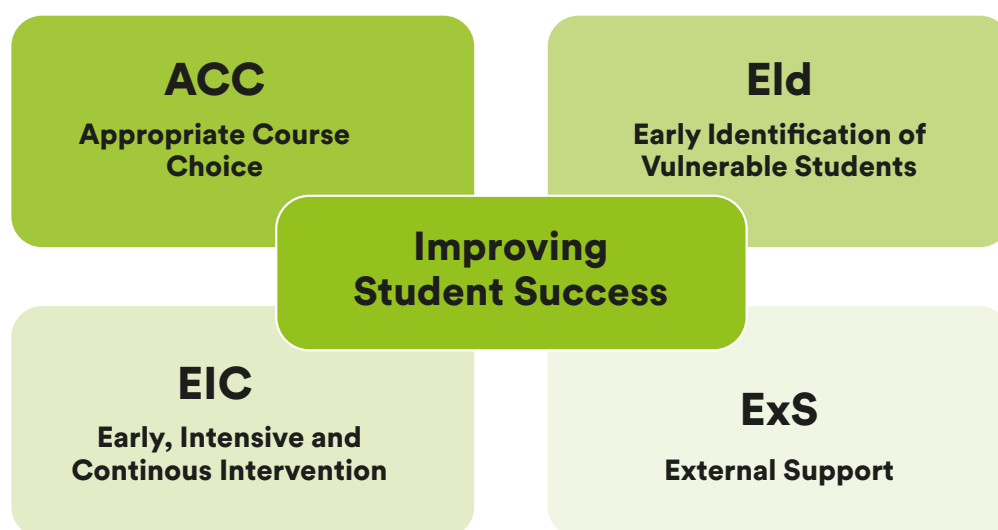


Figure 1. Modifiable factors impacting student success (Simpson, 2005).

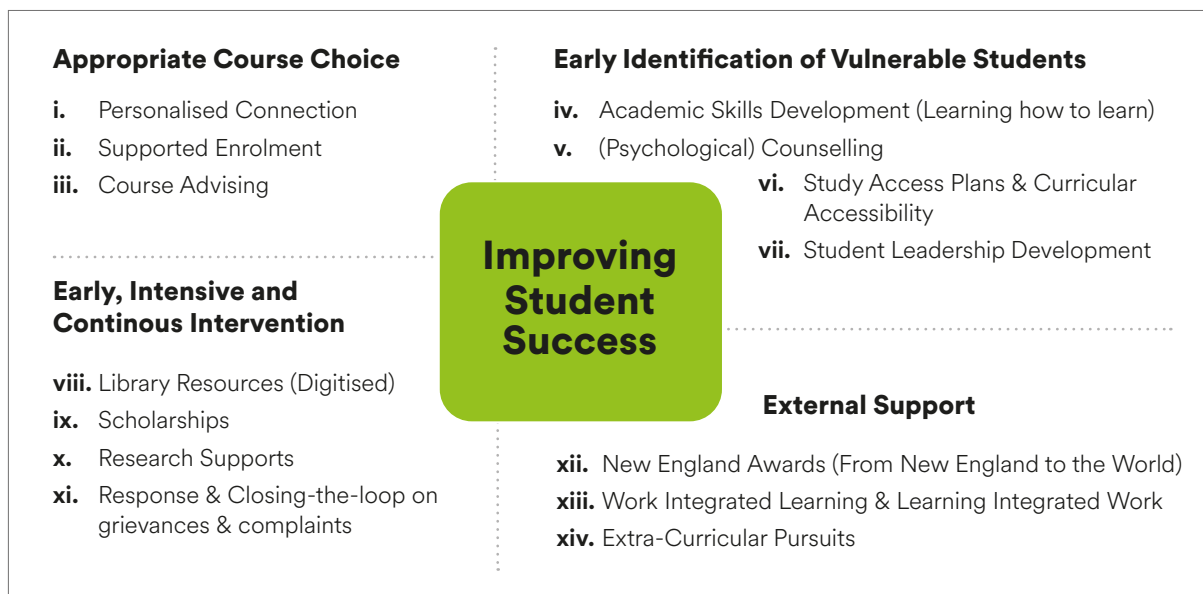


Figure 1. UNE Student Support Framework

UNE commences support to future learners upon first UNE contact. UNE personalises communication, discussing the modes of education, options and opportunities in a context of success enablement for individuals.

1. Appropriate Course Choice (ACC)

Once the future student confirms an interest in pursuing education through UNE, the next step is supported selection of the appropriate course. Which course will enable the future student's achievement of success?

Decisions include course level, mode of study, discipline, majors and minors. Guided decision-making includes alignment with career goals.

Notably, a high proportion of UNE students have already entered the workforce and have commenced careers; Appropriate course choice therefore includes guidance as to which course of study will enable students to achieve their success goals, including career promotion.

UNE delivers three types of Student Support alongside this element of student success.

i. Personalised Connection

Dedicated Student Experience staff are available for human connection including in-person, written and/or telephone discussion, matching students' goals with course-choice information.

ii. Supported Enrolment

Student Experience staff support students to successfully enrol, including providing administrative / systems support and course and unit navigation.

iii. Course Advising

UNE students have access to knowledge resources such as course plans and to human advice regarding how many units to take when, through which study modes and in which sequence. Careers advice is integrated with course advising (which units and courses align to which careers).

2. Early Identification and Support of Vulnerable Students (Eld)

UNE recognises and applies the research indicating that the characteristics of some cohorts of students necessitate more intensive supports to enable student success. UNE's mission and its distinctive educational offering attracts a high proportion of students who require these supports. Another distinctive value proposition is the high-value placed on student success, equity and social justice, translated into the provision of supports for success.

UNE acknowledges that factors and circumstances in the categories of studies, family, work and finances mean that *any* student may become vulnerable and thereby require additional supports from time-to-time.

UNE applies data analytics to monitor student success and identify those students who become vulnerable and require additional support. Supports are highly visible (findable) by UNE students so that they can self-identify as requiring additional supports, if and when needed.

Supports to vulnerable students are aligned along five key stages in the student journey (orientation / transition-in, support, progression, graduation and alumni supports / lifelong learning). For example, during orientation / transition-in, clear information is provided to students regarding *how to recognise when you are at-risk and how to self-refer for support*.

Recognising that belongingness and social connection are notable success factors for all students, design of orientation includes social mechanisms to interact with other students and thereby foster friendship.

UNE delivers four types of Student Support alongside this element of student success.

iv. Academic Skills Development (Learning how to learn)

Through the Education Futures Portfolio, UNE provides Academic Skills Development, through Studiosity (institution subscription) and one-to-one and group-based sessions. Approaches are grounded in transition pedagogy, defined as the intentional teaching (and aligned) strategies staff use to ensure that students successfully shift into university and experience a sense of belonging as students (Kift, Nelson, & Clarke, 2010). Academic skills development is an integral component of this transition.

v. (Psychological) Counselling

UNE offers one-to-one and group-based counselling sessions (e.g. Study Gym) with professional psychologists. Students have the option to attend face-to-face in Armidale and/or online.

vi. Study Access Plans & Curricular Accessibility

UNE ensures that curriculum and other learning resources are provided in formats which are accessible to students, including those who have sensory impairments. Furthermore, students who require accommodations or adaptations (due to disabling conditions or other factors) are supported by the creation and implementation of a personalised study access plan.

vii. Student Leadership Development

UNE is a university-of-choice for students with a goal of becoming leaders in their industries, workplaces, sectors and other communities upon graduation. UNE therefore provides personalised opportunities to support leadership development, such as serving on the UNE Student Council.



3. Early, Intensive and Continuous Intervention (EIC)

The success formula element described above focusses on students identified as temporarily or continuously vulnerable throughout their student journey with UNE. This element focusses on UNE supports for all students. These supports are also aligned along five key stages in the student journey (orientation / transition-in, support, progression, graduation and alumni supports / lifelong learning).

UNE delivers 4 types of Student Support alongside this element of student success.

viii. Library Resources (Digitised)

Through Library Services, all UNE students are supported to access curricular resources in the required formats, including searchable online, digitised and an increasing collection of open educational resources.

ix. Scholarships

UNE recognises that scholarships enable students with financial hardship to continue their studies, and also rewards education excellence through scholarships for high-achieving students.

Staff provide personalised advice to students regarding for-which scholarships students meet the criteria and how to write successful applications.

x. Research Supports

UNE enables the nexus between curriculum and research within all disciplines and for all students, and also supports students at all levels to conduct and apply scholarship or research in their studies and graduate careers.

xi. Response & Closing-the-loop on grievances & complaints

UNE applies a solution resolution approach to supporting students with challenges so that challenges do not escalate to become formal grievances and complaints. When grievances/complaints are unavoidable, students are provided with clear mechanisms to lodge them, and effective resolution on a timely basis. Furthermore, overall student support is through closing-the-loop on prevalent grievances/complaints on a preventative basis for future students.

4. Internal & External Support from Specialist Areas, Students, Families & Industry (ExS)

The final element in UNE's distinctive success formula is enabling internal supports from specialist areas and external supports from interacting stakeholders and communities. UNE brings-together and joins-up these supports in a partnership model.

UNE delivers three types of Student Support alongside this element of student success.

xii. New England Awards (From New England to the World)

Whether or not students are studying on the Armidale campus (in the New England region), they are supported to develop distinctive graduate attributes which characterise the New England brand. Students earn points for service contributions which develop their capabilities and support their success. New England Awards are designed to foster and recognise transferable skills for successful careers.

xiii. Work Integrated Learning & Learning Integrated Work (Education Futures)

UNE students are supported to develop their industry-based skills through partnering with industry in work-based experiences, joined-up with their discipline-based studies. For example, students in many courses will experience supported placements in-industry. UNE also supports a flipped-approach moving from Work Integrated Learning (WIL) to Learning Integrated Work (LIW). Whereas in WIL, the student's primary environment is the University and they temporarily engage in work-based experiences, in LIW, the student's primary environment is the workplace and learning opportunities are brought-into industry, often to group cohorts of staff pursuing advancement from one occupational level to another.

xiv. Extra-Curricular Pursuits

UNE recognises that student success is comprised of both the journey and the destination. Students are supported, including through the activation of UNE Life, to participate in pursuits beyond their studies for a vibrant, balanced educational experience.



Action Plan – Summary of Actions

UNE is committed to commencing new activities and continuing with those that have shown success and helped to support students to remain and succeed in their studies. In summary, they are as follows:

1. Appropriate Course Choice
2. Early Identification and Support of Vulnerable Students
3. Early, Intensive and Continuous Intervention
4. Internal and External Support from Specialist Areas, Students, Parents, and Employers

Objective	Overall Responsibility	Action	Measurable Output
1. Personalised Connection Ensure that students are connected to support that aligns with their discipline, student journey phase, circumstances and needs, and that non-engagement with support triggers escalations before the census date (where possible).	Student Experience Portfolio	Review (and update where required) the mapped support process annually, and analyse process and outcome data (making improvements where applicable) twice per year.	100% of students who are referred to support and who do not engage are followed-up prior to census. 100% of students who do not engage with support receive escalated communication to connect to support.
2. Supported Enrolment Provide unit enrolment that is efficient, easy and effective for all students.	Student Experience Portfolio	Continuously track and evaluate enrolment processes and experiences, expanding self-service capabilities and providing individualised supports where required.	100% of enrolment queries serviced and resolved prior to census.
3. Course Advising Ensure that students are fully informed regarding how many units to take when, through which study modes and in which sequence.	Student Experience Portfolio	Coordinate regular meetings of Faculty / central working group to continuously improve accessible knowledge resources such as course plans and provide updated training to course advisors.	100% of students able to identify when they need course advising and how to access the support.
4. Academic Skills Development (Learning how to learn) Applying a transition pedagogy approach, foster student academic success for all students (at varying entry-levels of grades in schooling and other prior education), so that students demonstrate learning processes, practices, and foundational skills required for their attainment and overall success.	Education Futures Portfolio	Provide, evaluate and continuously improve student-facing academic skills development, through a supported institution subscription to Studiosity and through one-to-one/group-based sessions with staff or students through Peer-Assisted Study Skills.	100% of students able to identify how to access academic skills development. Minimum 20% attainment gains in students who are academically struggling and are referred-to and then participate in academic skills development.

5. (Psychological) Counselling Provide education in an overall context of student wellbeing and safety.	Student Experience Portfolio	Provide one-to-one and group-based counselling sessions (e.g. Study Gym) with professional psychologists, in student mode choices of face-to-face in Armidale and/or online.	Maintain maximum 2-week wait period for student counselling appointments and provide same and/or next day urgent appointments (as required including for crisis situations).
6. Study Access Plans & Curricular Accessibility Provide curriculum and other learning resources in formats which are accessible to all students, including those who have sensory impairments, and supported accommodations to students (as needed) to foster equitable student success. Furthermore, support students who require accommodations or adaptations through the creation and implementation of a personalised study access plan.	Student Experience Portfolio	Encourage students who require educational accessibility provision and/or accommodations to register, and then deliver personalised supports and solutions, including through study access plans.	A minimum of 75% of registered disabled students have personalised Study Access Plans.
7. Student Leadership Development Increase UNE's status as a university-of-choice for students with a goal of becoming leaders in their industries, workplaces, sectors and other communities upon graduation.	Student Experience Portfolio (in partnership with UNE Student Council)	Provide personalised opportunities to support leadership development, such as serving on the UNE Student Council and as voting members of governance committees.	All appropriate committees have a minimum of two student participants and students attend and meet reporting expectations of 75% (calculated across student members, committees and meetings).
8. Library Resources (Digitised) Adopt and apply advances in technical/digital educational and business systems/ approaches so that students experience sophisticated processes throughout their studies, and also have a model for industry beyond their education.	Student Experience Portfolio	Through Library Services, support all students to access curricular resources in the required formats, including searchable online, digitised and through open educational resources.	Annual evaluation surveys indicate that a minimum of 80% of students are satisfied or very satisfied with the speed of delivery of high-quality digitised learning resources.
9. Scholarships Enable students with financial hardship to continue their studies (through scholarships) and also reward education excellence through scholarships for high-achieving students.	Student Experience Portfolio	Provide personalised advice to students regarding for-which scholarships students meet the criteria and how to write successful applications.	Minimum of 80% of available scholarships awarded.

10. Research Supports <p>Enable the nexus between curriculum and research within all disciplines and for all students, and also support students at all levels to conduct and apply scholarship or research in their studies and graduate careers.</p>	<p>Student Experience Portfolio with Graduate Research School and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research Portfolio and Education Futures (Curriculum)</p>	<p>Through professional development to staff, and to applicable students, delivered through Library services, increase the articulation and visibility of the research nexus in student curriculum, and visible supports to higher degree research students.</p>	<p>Minimum of 80% of staff participants completing professional development in research supports, through Library Services, indicate skill-gains in achieving an effective curriculum and research nexus.</p>
11. Response & Closing-the-loop on grievances & complaints <p>Create an educational environment whereby student grievances and complaints are uncommon, but when necessary, such grievances and complaints are resolved quickly and appropriately.</p>	<p>Student Experience Portfolio</p>	<p>Communicate clear mechanisms for students to lodge grievances and complaints and take a case management approach to resolve matters. Fully analyse student grievances and complaint data (as a key mechanism of evaluation) and close-the-loop on repeated matters as a preventative approach for future students.</p>	<p>Business recommendations articulated and improvements made in alignment with all of the most prevalent student grievance and complaint matters.</p>
12. New England Awards (From New England to the World) <p>In the context of career-based transferable skills, support students to develop distinctive graduate attributes which characterise the New England brand (whether students are living and studying in the New England region or elsewhere).</p>	<p>Student Experience Portfolio</p>	<p>Award students points (building to an overall award) for service contributions which develop their capabilities and support their success, using a fair and transparent framework.</p>	<p>Increase the number of students graduating with achieved New England Awards by 10% year-on-year.</p>
13. Work Integrated Learning WIL & Learning Integrated Work LIW (Education Futures) <p>Support UNE students to develop their industry-based skills (for career success) through partnering with industry in work-based experiences, joined-up with their discipline-based studies.</p>	<p>Education Futures Portfolio in partnership with Schools and Faculties</p>	<p>Review (and update where required) the mapped WIL and LIW student communication and support processes annually.</p>	<p>All students experience a WIL and/or LIW opportunity as part of their course.</p>
14. Extra-Curricular Pursuits <p>Support students, including through the activation of UNE Life, to participate in pursuits beyond their studies for a vibrant, balanced educational experience.</p>	<p>UNE Life in partnership with Student Experience Portfolio</p>	<p>Support students to design and run clubs and societies and to recruit and support new participants.</p>	<p>All students who want an extra-curricular experience have a fulfilling opportunity to participate.</p>

Appendix One: References

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Appendix Two: UNE Student Cohort Characteristics

Predominant student cohort characteristics at UNE heighten the threat to successful completion. At the time in which the *UNE SSP* plan was initiated, the predominant student cohort characteristics were as follows. The *UNE SSP* was nuanced in accordance with these characteristics. The *UNE SSP* processes and activities will be adjusted if and as these cohort characteristics change. The UNE student cohort is dominated by students studying off-campus (84%), with on-campus students (16%) in the minority. All students engage in learning through digital-edge approaches.

Some of the common traits of UNE students include:

- First in family (percentage to be determined)
- Studying predominantly Online (84%)
- Studying Part-time (60%)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (4%)
- Low socio-economic status (19%)
- Regional (inner and outer combined) (37%)
- Disability status (17%)
- Women (68%)
- Mature age with dependents (77% over 24 years, percentage with dependents to be determined)

UNE students have a high probability of never visiting the Armidale campus or attending face-to-face classes, other than in an intensive capacity. UNE tends to attract a predominance of female students, students studying primarily off-campus, undertaking an undergraduate degree, who are studying part-time and living in a major city.

Given that only 16% of the approximately 19,000 UNE learners (at the time the new *UNE SSP* commenced) come to UNE campuses on a regular basis, it is imperative that the University's digital systems and support foster a professional, progressive, coherent and engaging model of education. The majority of students studying on-campus are full-time students with only 176 part-time students studying on campus in 2023.

Students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities comprise almost 4% (739) of students at UNE, enabling a distinctive opportunity to lead Indigenous ways of knowing and learning in community partnership.

Prevalence of women (68%), part-time students (60%) and mature-aged learners (77% over 24 years) means that most students are likely to have already entered the workforce prior to commencing study. They may be motivated by career alignment and outcomes, including industry collaboration and graduate promotions. If they have not entered the workforce previously, or held mainly casual positions, they may be seeking more substantive employment opportunities.

Students from inner and outer regional communities comprise 37% of UNE learners (and this figure is closer to 60% of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities), situating UNE as a distinctive partner and hub of building the capacity, opportunities, and advantages of regional life. UNE also has 304 students (1.6%) studying from remote or very remote areas of Australia. These students will likely appreciate, need and benefit from connectivity and engagement with the University and their student colleagues.

Threats to success for individuals have previously been studied through examining student characteristics. Lower rates of success overall have been associated with the following characteristics in the Australian Higher Education sector (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), 2020). Notably, these are prevalent UNE student cohort characteristics.

- First in Family
- Part-time
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Low socio-economic status (Low SES)
- Mature age with dependents
- Regional areas with less industry opportunity

The UNE Student Statistics June 2023

Prepared by UNE Callista team, June 2023

Applied filters: Census Year is 2023

#Students 19,351

Commencing in Year 2023	#Students
Not Commencing	13,003
Commencing	6,467

Low SES Desc	#Students
Not Low SES	15,676
Low SES	3,675

Student Regional Remote Status	#Students
Major Cities of Australia	9,790
Inner Regional Australia	4,907
Outer Regional Australia	2,278
	2,072
Remote Australia	225
Very Remote Australia	79

Registered Disability	#Students
Registered	3348

Attendance Mode	Attendance	#Students
Online	PT	11,507
Online	FT	4,799
On Campus	FT	2,943
On Campus	PT	176

Attendance Type	#Students
PT	11,679
FT	7,732

ATSI Status Desc	#Students
Not ATSI	18,612
ATSI	739

Graduate Level	Course Broad Level	#Students
Postgraduate	Coursework Postgraduate	4,129
Postgraduate	Higher degree by research	559
Undergraduate, enabling and non-award	Other Non-award & Enabling	494
Undergraduate, enabling and non-award	Undergraduate	14,201
Undergraduate, enabling and non-award	Unknown	19

Student Gender	Trimester Age Band	#Students
Female	18-24	3,092
Female	25-29	2,334
Female	30-34	1,942
Female	35-39	1,684
Female	40-44	1,399
Male	18-24	1,337
Male	25-29	1,082
Female	45-49	1,049
Male	30-34	978
Female	> 54	894
Male	35-39	832
Female	50-54	746
Male	40-44	559
Male	> 54	514
Male	45-49	446
Male	50-54	354
Female	< 18	30
Male	< 18	30
Indeterminate/Unspecified/Intersex	18-24	15
Indeterminate/Unspecified/Intersex	25-29	11
Indeterminate/Unspecified/Intersex	30-34	7
Indeterminate/Unspecified/Intersex	35-39	5
Indeterminate/Unspecified/Intersex	40-44	5
Indeterminate/Unspecified/Intersex	> 54	2
Indeterminate/Unspecified/Intersex	50-54	2
Indeterminate/Unspecified/Intersex	< 18	1
Unknown	18-24	1



Appendix Three: HESF Alignment

3.1 Student Participation and Attainment (HESF Domain 1)

3.1.1 What is Student Support at UNE?

Student Support consists of the structures, activities and guidance that are put in place University-wide, including but not limited to services and support extended through the Student Experience Portfolio, to support students in the components of study, family, work and finances and thereby in their continuation to complete their chosen award at UNE.

3.1.2 Student cohort characteristics

Predominant student cohort characteristics at UNE heighten the threat to successful completion. At the time in which the *UNE SSP* plan was initiated, the predominant student cohort characteristics were as follows. The *UNE SSP* was nuanced in accordance with these characteristics. The *UNE SSP* processes and activities will be adjusted if and as these cohort characteristics change. The UNE student cohort is dominated by students studying off-campus (84%), with on-campus students (16%) in the minority. All students engage in learning through digital-edge approaches. Some of the common traits of UNE students include:

- Aged in their mid-30's
- Female
- Studying off-campus
- Studying part-time
- Working full-time
- Have two school-aged children
- Live in the suburbs of Brisbane or Sydney

UNE students therefore have a high probability of never visiting the Armidale campus or attending face-to-face classes, other than in an intensive capacity. UNE tends to attract a predominance of female students, students studying primarily off-campus, undertaking an undergraduate degree, who are studying part-time and living in a major city.

3.1.3 The interrelationships between factors

Factors identified in the research literature ([Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency \(TEQSA\), 2017](#); [Universities, the Citizen Scholar and the Future of Higher Education, 2016](#)):

- There are strong positive correlations between poor student success and a lack of connection with university services and support. Students are more likely to commit to their degrees if they feel a sense of involvement, belongingness and relationship within and beyond their studies.
- Students who are supported, including through transition-in, and feel the support is timely, appropriate, and personal, are less likely to leave a

university before completing their degrees (Kahu & Nelson, 2018).

- The successful completion of units is a prerequisite to overall success in completing an award, however, it is not the only factor. Successful students also leave a university before completing an award (change of institution). First year success rates are considered a reliable indicator of adequate student support (Kift, Nelson & Clarke, 2010).

3.1.4 Completed, and thereby successful students

Successful graduates yield psychosocial and financial benefits for individuals, families, communities, and industries. Furthermore, student success has significant financial and other resource/business implications for universities. While student attraction, application and enrolment are required to bring students – and thereby fees – into a university, students must remain engaged and be successful for the university to be sustainable and successful.

3.1.5 Progress on the Job Ready Graduate (JRG) project

At the time at which the new *UNE SSP* plan commenced, a set of legislation in the context of higher education was referred to as Job Ready Graduates (JRG). The university support work on the JRG includes further refinement of process and systems solutions regarding the management of students with a Low Completion Rate (LCR), work on policy updates, and reprioritisation of the remaining recommendations. Important attention is placed against ensuring students are transferred to new courses efficiently and effectively.

New amendments to the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) via the [Higher Education Support Amendment \(Response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report\) Bill 2023](#) passed by both houses 19 October 2023, will remove the requirement for students to achieve a 50% pass of their course units to continue accessing Commonwealth support, and the onus is expected to be on universities to account for satisfactory completion rates, appropriate enrolment practices and early intervention, with high quality support for struggling students ([Australian Government, Department of Education](#)). Therefore, UNE will continue to identify and provide outreach support to students who trigger risk factors for a Low Completion Rate. The abolition of the 50% pass rule will not lower educational standards or quality. Instead, the effect will be to increase UNE's accountability to identify students at risk and assist all students to succeed. Appropriate support intervention strategies will continue to be individually offered according to the barriers to

success identified (programs presented within this plan). New strategies will be developed, including flexible academic assessment for instances when standard assessment formats do not adequately evaluate learning and real-world application of knowledge. The new requirements will enforce the need to assess academic and non-academic suitability, both in the lead up to enrolment and on an ongoing basis (see summary within this document in the section on [Monitoring and meeting legislation](#), and for details of proposed legislative changes see the [Support for students policy consultation paper](#)).

3.1.6 Additional work on implementing (Low Completion Rate) LCR requirements

Monitoring of at-risk students, investigation of Student Learning Entitlement (SLE) requirements, improving support services to students and communication activities is continuing at UNE (Job Ready Graduates Report (2023)), noting that the Australian Universities Accord is likely to introduce additional changes around how aspects of the JRG have been legislated, interpreted and implemented. It is critical that UNE continue to action the support requirements around the JRG implementation as a matter of priority.

3.1.7 The UNE approach to facilitating an 'activated' phase

(Notably, the demographic cohort characteristics presented in this section were correct upon the commencement of the new UNE SSP and will require review and updated application on a regular basis.)

As opposed to 'suspended' student-hood, the 'active' experiential journey leading to exceptional graduate outcomes is grounded-on customised application for the University's distinctive student cohorts. Applying the propositions of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), UNE recognises that if education meets the needs of cohorts with particular challenges, most diverse students and graduates will benefit.

Given that only 16% of the approximately 19,000 UNE learners (at the time the new *UNE SSP* commenced) come to UNE campuses on a regular basis, it is imperative that the University's digital systems and support foster a professional, progressive, coherent and engaging model of education. The majority of students studying on-campus are full-time students with only 176 part-time students studying on campus in 2023.

Students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities comprise almost 4% (739) of students at UNE, enabling a distinctive opportunity to lead Indigenous ways of knowing and learning in community partnership.

Prevalence of women (68%), part-time students (60%) and mature-aged learners (77% over 24 years) means that most students are likely to have already entered the workforce prior to commencing study. They may be motivated by career alignment and outcomes, including industry collaboration and graduate promotions. If they

have not entered the workforce previously, or held mainly casual positions, they may be seeking more substantive employment opportunities.

Students from inner and outer regional communities comprise 37% of UNE learners (and this figure is closer to 60% of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities), situating UNE as a distinctive partner and hub of building the capacity, opportunities, and advantages of regional life. UNE also has 304 students (1.6%) studying from remote or very remote areas of Australia. These students will likely appreciate, need and benefit-from connectivity and engagement with the University and their student colleagues.

3.1.8 Well-designed and executed strategy

Student services and supports can have a substantial impact on student success. The *UNE SSP* aims to achieve a positive outcome for all students, including those in predominant student cohorts, such that students are supported to transition in, through and from successful UNE education.

3.1.9 Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP)

UNE Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) projects are strongly aligned, and integral parts of, the overall *UNE SSP*.

The Learning Success Outreach for Students (Learning SOS) is a HEPPP project initiated in 2023 – in partnership with the primary Indigenous support service, Oorala - that addresses the participation and attainment stages of the student lifecycle. The primary target groups are Low SES and Indigenous students, with regional/remote students as secondary. The overall project goals are to increase the learning engagement and academic success of students-at-risk through outreach. Outreach is conducted through SMS, email, telephone, and hard copy mailouts, with the mode carefully matched to the target students and phase of the personalised learning journey, assuring that students receive outreach how and when it will be most effective.

HEPPP-eligible students have a higher risk of course non-completion, exacerbated by other co-occurring risk factors, including studying online, part-time and/or being mature-aged. This project delivers targeted and learning-based outreach to HEPPP students, to improve the successful completion of units and courses. Outreach to offer support will be directed at all HEPPP-eligible students at key times, for example, to encourage participation in orientation.

Targeted outreach is streamed to HEPPP-eligible students who:

- have disengaged at various points from their studies, to discuss learning/career goals, re-engagement or alternate exits;
- have incomplete enrolment steps, to ensure that they have their intended study load in place;

- are returning from intermission, to reorient to study and ensure that the reason for intermission is resolved, and;
- are at risk of not meeting 50% completion rate requirements to discuss options and remedies before reaching the point of punitive outcomes.

3.1.10 Financial Support

Across the sector, many students have to either reduce working hours or make a choice between work and study. It is essential that UNE is aware of and understands the financial strain on its students. The University thereby creates opportunities to support students financially, based on set criteria, including the provision of bursaries, scholarships and/or cost deferment strategies that will support the student through part or all of their studies. Where appropriate, the university looks to support students in emergency situations through financial support and strategies such as emergency grants, loans, and/or accommodation options where practical.

3.1.11 Early, Intensive and Continuous Intervention

The adoption of a University-wide pro-active approach to student support, through integrated service models is a key factor in student success. All actions need to be based on including every student in an opt-out model (you cannot force students to accept support) rather than an opt-in model. Experience across many institutions shows that those students most at risk are also less likely to opt-in to support. Note: this will not work for all support services but that should be an exception (e.g. student counselling).

Whereas *'you cannot force students to accept support'* the University has an obligation to make every effort to ensure:

- Students are guided to self-assess and seek advice as to whether they require supports and/or whether supports might help them succeed;
- Students have full information as to which supports are available and how to access them; and
- Students have reason to trust the efficiency, suitability, confidentiality, personalisation and efficacy of these supports.

One of the key strategies is to provide information on what supports might help, and when and how to access the aligned supports where the information will be readily seen by students. The key mechanism is through banners and links on the unit and course-based Learning Management System (LMS). For Residential College students, support posters need to be located in high-visibility locations such as in popular common-rooms and on the back of room doors.

3.1.12 Orientation

Pro-active reach-out starts at Orientation. Orientation is designed and delivered through the transition pedagogy model (Kift, Nelson & Clarke, 2010). Orientation is

delivered on-campus in Armidale, and where possible and as appropriate to commencing student cohort sizes in additional place-based locations. Orientation will always be provided through digital edge mechanisms, so that students can readily access information, resources and interactive activities from any location, on or off-campus. Orientation is for every in-take period for new students, not just those who happen to start for the beginning of year O'Week. While Orientation is primarily designed for newly commencing students, UNE recognises that a smaller proportion of continuing students will participate in Orientation sessions and activities as a refresher and/or as opportunities to network and increase connections with students and staff. At UNE, all students, commencing and continuing, are invited to and welcome at Orientation sessions and activities.

UNE has created and consistently applies the following principles to Orientation:

- a. Orientation is for all UNE students through digital-first implementation, meaning that all key information and full participation is available through digital formats, and that on-campus participation is optional;
- b. The core orientation offering is consistent for all students, with nuanced components tailored to student cohort characteristics and support needs;
- c. Communication and advertising for all aspects of orientation (digital and on-campus) is designed to maximise participation and student engagement;
- d. The focus of orientation is the student learning experience and academic success, with aligned information regarding extra- and co-curricular activities, including but not limited to student wellness;
- e. Interactivity, connection, belongingness and engagement are robustly designed-into the orientation experience, in both digital and on-campus components;
- f. Orientation is not suspended after Week One; Initial student orientation is embedded within and followed-by a full and longitudinal transition support plan, particularly for students identified as at-risk;
- g. On-campus delivery will be in multiple locations where reasonable to do so.

3.1.13 One-Stop Support Access

There are multiple areas of the University that provide support to students in varying specialised areas. These are generally structured around internal management and reporting functions, most of which may not be known or easily decipherable by many students. Most students who are new to study do not assume that they will be requiring multiple support services at some point. UNE does not expect students to remember every support service, where it is located and how to interact with it. As such, UNE 101 will be further developed to serve as a single student (communication) hub whereby students can see all available supports and associated

services, with links to access. Through an integrated service model approach, the one-stop support access (through UNE 101) will work alongside the UNE Atrium Project, which is designed to support academic staff in the provision of at-risk student data to enable actions to be taken within the learning and teaching environment. Educators will be able to point students to the aligned supports through the UNE 101 one-stop support information.

3.1.14 Co-curricular and External Support

Supports from Specialist Areas, Students, Parents, and Employers, Place-based @ UNE - UNE's campuses and centres in Sydney, Tamworth and Taree will continue to strengthen collaborative work through an integrated team model to provide one-stop student support. With staff from various divisions of the University taking a team-based approach to student support, continuation of the integrated team model will further enable the support and engagement to be personalised to the student and/or the cohort. Working across divisions and faculties, teams will apply the local knowledge of the place-based staff and providing an appropriate degree of aligned autonomy for staff to develop and design invention and success support initiatives that meet the needs and requirements of the cohorts they support.

Integrated teams are adaptable, collaborative, and agile to respond to the needs of their cohorts and are able to quickly come-together to identify optimised actions bringing about efficacious outcomes for their students – working closely as a local team and reaching out across the University to bring in further specialist support. Growth planning for both Metro Sydney and Tamworth Central place-based education models focus on strengthening student support to improve study success and engagement for both on-campus students and those studying through digital-plus modes, with an emphasis on initial, relevant on-site support resources that provide students linkages to the wider University support structures and systems.

3.1.15 Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)

PASS aims to support learning through student facilitated study sessions and contributing to a sense of belonging to the UNE community. PASS involves regularly scheduled, out-of-class, peer facilitated study sessions which are open to all students and are attended on a voluntary basis. These sessions are run weekly for specific units usually as a 1-hour shared study session; they are held online via Zoom so that a combination of on-campus and online students can attend. The PASS@UNE leaders who facilitate these sessions are UNE students who performed well in the subject in the previous year. The PASS@UNE leaders help students explore study strategies as they review content material. By attending PASS, students have an opportunity to engage with the unit material, helping them feel connected through their studies and drive away some of the isolation of studying alone.

3.1.16 Counselling, Equity, Diversity, Access, and Wellbeing

Counselling and Psychology Services (CAPS) will continue to operate as per their ongoing practice. Zoom and online appointments and face-to-face will be available as needed. With an increase in student need, and the proportion of students with identified mental health support needs commencing study at UNE, service consumption and resource allocation will continue to require careful monitoring. Implementation of the *UNE SSP* will ensure that UNE resources appropriately to sustain high level of service. Equity and Accessibility Support services will continue to be offered through the Student Experience Portfolio to students who self-identify as having the need for some form of support. Services and supports are designed for students with educational needs due to disability, mental health condition or learning difficulty, as well as students who are carers, elite athletes, incarcerated, have job-related restrictions or live in rural or remote locations. Specialist support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students will continue to be administered by Oorala, with 20% of Indigenous students currently accessing support. Study Access Plan (SAPs) will be created for students when deemed to be an instrumental and efficacious strategy.

3.1.17 Student Experience Staff Supports

Staff in the Student Experience Portfolio are also able to support students with academic progress such as Show Cause and Academic Program Advice, referring students to additional professional services as appropriate. Staff can also assist in supporting students with grievances and complaints. Online resources are available for information and self-help.

3.1.18 The UNE Oorala Centre

A key UNE distinctive value proposition is the attraction and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students to successfully complete education credentials. UNE values and promotes Indigenous ways of knowing and learning, and thereby the co-design and co-delivery of education with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities. UNE seeks to significantly contribute to the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island University graduates for high-impact contribution and leadership of domestic and global communities, cultures and societies. Oorala offers a wide range of support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at UNE. This includes tutoring, advice, and financial services. Supports align-with the research-based finding that student success strategies must attend to student needs in the domains of study, work, family, and finance.

3.2 Learning Environment (HESF Domain 2)

3.2.1 Learning environment, diversity of participation and the wellbeing of students

Supports have been increased to students with disabilities (including but not limited to Study Access Plans) through renewing the design and accompanying position statement of the Student Accessibility & Wellbeing Manager. The team created a new operational plan with scaled-up student support and success metrics. Staffing was increased to this team to include a newly established job-shared position of Student Access and Counselling Triage Officer to enhance personalisation of human-resourced wellbeing supports to UNE students. The Student Experience Portfolio has also renewed the position statement of the Manager Student Counselling & Psychological Supports and increased the number of student counsellors to meet student needs.

3.2.2 Student grievances and complaints

The Student Experience Portfolio created and applied a new set of grievance and complaint principles in the context of continuous improvement:

- a. **Speed to Resolution** - We commit to resolving student matters as quickly as possible to support their wellbeing and success;
- b. **Solution-focused Approach** - Putting solutions into place is our explicit priority, and administrative processes and record-keeping are there to support the solution resolution rather than ends in themselves;
- c. **Resolved within Context** - Interactions, supports and resolution are situated as close as possible within local contexts and in the environments and spheres where the challenges occur, such that the roles of people working in the Solution Resolution Unit are as catalysts, investigators, case managers and connectors;
- d. **Policy Compliant** - All processes, recommendations and outcomes are consistent with UNE policies and other policy documents as appropriate, and practice informs review and continuous improvement to such policy documents and their implementation;
- e. **Action Oriented** - We take an agentic, action-oriented approach to supporting students, staff and other communities, as appropriate, to achieving satisfactory solutions;
- f. **Evidence-Based** - Decisions are made on the basis of evidence, and evidence is used to inform University-wide actions which close-the-loop on continuous improvement, or in other words, UNE uses the gold-mine information of student grievances and complaints to determine and resolve priorities for continuous improvement;

- g. **Communication** - All stakeholders are kept up-to-date and fully informed throughout aligned processes, and teams check-in with one another on a regular basis;
- h. **Proactive and Preventative** - Where possible, we create and sustain an environment in which student grievances and complaints are less likely to occur.

In alignment with these principles, UNE redeveloped the design and accompanying position statement transitioning from Manager, Student Grievance Unit to Student Solutions Manager. In addition, UNE improved data recording, analysis and reporting.

3.2.3 Learning supports through Academic Skills Supports

Through the Education Futures portfolio, the academic skills of students are supported both through a small specialised Academic Skills team and through a University Studiosity site-license.

3.2.4 Reinvigorating Social Clubs, Discipline Clubs and Sports

UNE will continue to provide current students with the opportunity to join and/or create clubs that bring together students with a common interest. These will continue to be a mixture of online, hybrid and in-person activities to enable students studying place-based and off-campus. Student engagement and peer connection will continue to be fostered and supported through these activities, whether students are together on-campus, together online through the digital-edge, or come-together in global locations as UNE students.

Student-run clubs will continue to be supported by the University with an appropriate structure, including online platforms and finances to facilitate their establishment and ongoing operations. Being able to join groups, clubs and other activities will continue to support a sense of belonging for students and support them to create connections and networks and make friends with other students.

Social clubs and sporting clubs will continue to be cross-disciplinary, bringing together students with a common interest or hobby. Discovery will occur to establish self-organising sporting clubs aligned to student population centres (off-campus), and sporting clubs on campus will remain available to current students.

Discipline-based clubs are also beneficial, and will continue to be supported through Residential Colleges and Schools, bringing together students studying in a common discipline. These clubs will be active online (with some in person activities possible as optional). A variety of social media sites will continue to be used by students (independent of UNE) to support heightened online interaction between students.

Wherever possible, the University will continue to create and organise opportunities for students to meet together socially in locations that may not be a UNE campus or controlled space i.e. in towns, cities, and areas where a group of students are co-located. UNE alumni and UNE

staff will continue to be invited to join these discipline-based activities to connect with current students, establishing sponsorship within their organisations and creating support networks for UNE students, including within graduate careers.

3.3 Teaching (HESF Domain 3)

3.3.1 Learning resources

Well-developed learning resources, accessible through the UNE Library Services, and in collaboration with the Faculties and Graduate Research School, UNE will continue to ensure that students in all disciplines have access to the materials and modes of learning resources they require to succeed in their studies and / or their research. Achievement of this goal will be measured through analysis of student usage data and through consultation and direction of a new Library Committee.

3.3.2 Accessible learning modes

UNE will continue to ensure that students have access to learning resources in appropriate and accessible modes and versions. Analysis will be conducted, and continuously evaluated, to ensure that students with sensory challenges and other needs are able to access required curricular resources.

3.3.3 Experienced and accessible academic staff

UNE provides experienced and committed academic staff, with this valuable resource evident as having an impact on student success. This includes activation of the research and teaching nexus to support student learning and mentoring.

3.4 Research and Research Training (HESF Domain 4)

3.4.1 Higher Degree Research (HDR) Orientation and Support

UNE's [Graduate Research School](#) (GRS) is a vibrant, interactive community of research scholars and administrative experts, who provide extensive support all the way through the HDR journey, from Getting Started, Supervision, and Roles and Responsibilities, through to Thesis Submission and Examination. All commencing HDR students are required to complete the [HDR RAP Integrity and Induction Course](#) that provides orientation and familiarisation with the research code of conduct, resources and advice, staff contacts and enrolment options.

3.4.2 Library client service and Engagement

UNE Library provides multiple service points to connect library patrons with information resources to support study and research needs. Operational staff provide in-person service via the library front desk, respond to online queries via chat and AskUNE services, and offer customised consultations, information literacy training, and research support. Open daily, including extended hours outside of standard work hours, and on weekends, UNE Library provides integral support in assisting students and academics to navigate academic information. Committed to providing access to information, UNE Library is a member of ULANZ (University Libraries of Australia and New Zealand), a reciprocal borrowing scheme enabling UNE staff and

students to borrow from other participating universities.

3.4.3 Collections and Archives

UNE's Library Services maintain The UNE Heritage Centre and Collections, which hold the University's historic archives. This rich repository provides opportunities for students in the form of 'hands-on' experience accessing and working with historic documents across multiple relevant fields, onsite and/or online. The Collections are readily embedded into teaching and research, accessing it as a digital or face-to-face 'humanities lab'. UNE's vision for the collection is to purpose it as a living archive that is open to the community, the state, and the world, benefiting academics and their students in the local and global teaching and research community. The value of this resource for students and the community is seen in the significant interest from the local and regional community of users, students and staff from UNE, local parliamentary members, and the media. UNE's Library Service enacts a commitment to working with interested community members and expert users to realise the rich academic and cultural benefits that this facility brings to our region, and beyond.

3.4.4 Information resources management

The UNE Library delivers collections, services and student supports aligned with the requirements for

teaching, learning and research across the University, and contributes to supporting the Library Services to the overall strategies and operations. This involves working with key internal and external stakeholders to achieve strategic and operational outcomes including library collection development, fiscal management for the library collection budget, reading list and resources sharing management for the University as a whole.

3.4.5 Significant digital library resources

Resources accessed online by UNE students regardless of location is important to UNE's standing as a primarily Digital University, with a student cohort dominated by students studying off campus (84%), with on-campus students (16%) the minority. In addition, a versatile Document Delivery service supports the provision of additional resources. The library supports the reading list and ensures the learning resources required for the various readings required for the units are provided within the copyright guidelines. Supporting all students in their engagement with learning resources contributes to success in their learning right-up-to graduation.

3.4.6 Accessibility access support

The UNE Library provides services and support to ensure students with disabilities have equitable access to textual material and other curricular materials. Through an integrated service model, and within the Student Experience Portfolio, UNE Library Services and the Student Accessibility and Wellbeing team work together to ensure multiple modes and optimised accessibility of curricular resources, and sourcing alternative format texts (as required) for students with a Study Access Plan. Further, the Library administers delivery of accessible copies of copyright material for students with disabilities, in accordance with the disability access provisions contained in the Copyright Act 1968.

3.4.7 Improved access to text resources

The UNE Library participates in the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) Open Educational Resources (OER) Collective which provides an opportunity for UNE academics to publish textbooks as Open Educational Resources (OERs) on the Pressbooks platform. Since 2022, UNE has approved eight open textbooks across education, social work, peace studies, rural crime, mathematics, chemistry, criminology and ancient Greek. Approved OER textbooks at UNE have been selected strategically to maximise coverage and impact for as many students as possible. Some OER textbooks will be used across multiple units, some address inclusivity and diversity in the content through collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students, and all are associated with high enrolment units.

Once completed and published, the selected OER textbooks replace commercial textbooks, meaning students will not be required to purchase textbooks in the associated units.

3.4.8 Support for Open Access initiatives and Student Research

As students progress through the student lifecycle, the opportunity for producing and publishing original research is an important consideration at higher Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels. The UNE Library supports Open Access initiatives and supports students seeking to publish Open Access through Read & Publish agreements with a variety of publishers covering almost 6000 journals across all discipline areas, as well as maintaining the institutional repository, Research UNE (RUNE) for making student theses and related datasets available.

3.5 Institutional Quality Assurance (HESF Domain 5)

3.5.1 Monitoring and analysis of student performance data

Monitoring and analysis of student performance data are key component of providers self-assurance processes. The resulting data enables universities to target supports, measure the effectiveness of delivered supports and make continuous improvements. TEQSA requires universities to report-on cohort monitoring and closing-the-loop. The UNE Annual Student Progress and Completions Report provides data and analysis covering international student Equivalent Full-time Student Load (EFTSL) and Grade Point Average (GPA), admission pathways, enrolments and load, average GPA, and rates of student progress, commitment, non-completions, and completions. It also presents data across a range of metrics for each course, along with a range of metrics presented by Schools.

3.5.2 UNE Annual Student Progress and Completions Report

This report comprises three sections and covers courses delivered at UNE annually. Its findings are considered alongside the *UNE SSP* to ensure all relevant recommendations are implemented, with particular emphasis on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island student cohort which is assessed at high-risk and high-priority across several measures (UNE Annual Student Completions and Progressions Report (2022)).

3.5.3 Robust and comprehensive strategies

Approaches underway to enact specific initiatives that reflect the complexities of student circumstances significantly help improve student success. This is aligned with the direction of the Higher Education Standards (HES) Panel, as articulated in the Final Report – Improving Retention, Completion and Success in

Higher Education: “The Panel stands by its view that higher education institutions should ensure that the students they admit have the capacity to succeed in higher education and are given the best chance to complete their studies through the appropriate provision of academic and other support services. It is for this reason that those services are required by the Higher Education Standards Framework.” ([Australian Government: Department of Education, 2017](#))^{p13}.

3.5.4 National Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Delivery of a comprehensive, efficacious plan of student supports has positive effects on national targets for student completions, student retention, graduate outcomes and human capital (including the percentage of students with tertiary education credentials).

3.5.5 Support of proposed key performance indicators

Support for the KPIs relies on appropriate investment of resources at key points in the student lifecycle and scaling of interventions that deliver necessary outcomes, while reducing those that do not.

3.5.6 Regular and ongoing improvement in student success

A target based on sector data indicates a reduction of 1.5% to 2% per annum of instances of unplanned study cessation for the next 5 years. The medium-term success goal is to reduce UNE’s unplanned study cessation to below the national average, and below the comparable regional universities average. Alongside student supports, these targets require accompanying evaluation and continuous improvement of curriculum design, course transition and other academic matters which also impact on students’ success.

3.5.7 Data collection for common issue identification

UNE student support services are provided, on an ongoing basis, with data capture tools and technology with integrated reporting established in Microsoft Power BI for self-serve reporting visible to the University Executive, in particular, the Executive Principal Student Experience. Collation of de-identified data allows the identification of common student issues across the University that can then be addressed, potentially eliminating or reducing the need for support to be provided. This is occurring and continuously improving, with further consolidated reporting dependent upon continuous system configuration and updating.

3.5.8 Data-based early identification of vulnerable students

Critical to success in preventing unplanned study cessation is to have a proactive view to identifying students most likely to be at risk and to be able to reach-out to those students in a timely manner. To do this, an analysis of demographic data and student behavioural data is required.

Demographic Data relates to the background, entry method, location, and type of students – divided into cohorts, and measured at time of entry or where logically updated. This demographic data (reported upon the commencement of the *UNE SSP* and to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis) includes:

- First in family (percentage to be determined)
- Studying predominantly Online (84%)
- Studying Part-time (60%)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (4%)
- Low socio-economic status (19%)
- Disability status (17%)
- Mature age with dependents (Mature age known, but unclear if they have dependents)

Each demographic element may not be enough to trigger an alert that the student is at-risk, but identifying a number of elements, and triggering behavioural data elements (see below) and enrolment elements, will most likely identify the students as being at most risk, and thereby trigger appropriate student supports.

Enrolment Data analyses student variables against historical UNE data for courses and units, identifying high drop-out and fail rates, including:

- Enrolled in a **course** with historically high unplanned cessation.
- Enrolled in **units** with historically high unplanned cessation.
- Enrolled in **units** with historically low pass rates.
- Enrolled in **units** with historically high engagement with the Student Grievance Unit.

UNE collects this data and will continue to apply the data to further develop the support actions described in this plan. In particular, UNE applies the actions for improving students’ success noted in the *UNE Annual Student Completions and Progress Reports*.

Behavioural Data reflects the action of students, whether deliberate on their part or required by the University. Again, having one element may not be an indicator in itself, but having several, or a combination with demographic and enrolment data will most likely identify a student at-risk. Behavioural data includes:

- Late start to classes (starting after orientation and first two weeks of any course).
- Has not interacted with the Learning Management System (LMS) by end of Week 1 of their first units.
- No interaction in online classes in week 1 or non-attendance at physical classes in Week 1.
- Late in submitting their first assignment.
- Multiple extension requests during a trimester of study
- Failing their first assignment.
- Persistent Pass-only marks
- Failing course rule compliance
- Nomination by lecturer/tutor, based on observation/conversation.

Across all data domains, a student who triggers a flag in at least seven (7) elements will continue to be considered at very high risk for requiring support to success, and students who trigger five (5) to six (6) will be considered at some risk. Supports are high priority for students identified through these factors. A key element in the success of the *UNE SSP* is the rapid compilation and reporting of data, typically from

several systems and across multiple areas of the University, and the production of lists of students at-risk identified by Course and Faculty. These students will be contacted to offer assistance and support in a proactive and helpful way, and in accordance with the *UNE SSP*. Data identification and supports are enabled through use of the Atrium system.

3.6 Governance and Accountability (HESF Domain 6)

3.6.1 Business modelling

UNE is a value-based educational institution dedicated to contributing to individuals, communities and societies through education. UNE strives to make degree outcomes and graduate success possible for all citizens. Well-planned, strategic supports enable these opportunities. Researchers have also confirmed that the business model of universities is only possible if enrolled students are supported to stay-in and complete their degrees ([Simpson, 2005](#)) ([Foo et al., 2018](#)).

3.6.2 Monitoring and meeting legislation

Pivotal to student support are the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) and the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011](#), and its legislated Framework, the Threshold Standards ([HESF](#)) which have been updated several times (see the [overview of changes](#)). Proposed amendments to the HES Act at time of writing must also be considered going forward as likely to be imminently applicable to UNE. UNE is engaged with the expected changes to the HES Act ([Higher Education Support Amendment \(Response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report\) Bill 2023](#)) that will drive increased accountability for ensuring the appropriate admission and subsequent support of students to succeed, including in the context of the abolition of the '50% pass rule' (Priority Action two in the [Australian Universities Accord Interim Report](#)), the required development of a Student Support Policy, and civil penalties for non-compliance with the new student support legislation of penalty points per student or instance of failure to support. These changes are the immediate focus of the new *UNE SSP*.

Other Priority Actions UNE will continue to act upon, in the context of Student Support, include:

- **Priority Action 1**, "Extend visible, local access to tertiary education by creating further Regional University Centres (RUCs) and establish a similar concept for suburban/metropolitan locations."
- **Priority Action 3**, "Ensure that all First Nations students are eligible for a funded place at university, by extending demand driven funding to metropolitan First Nations students."

- **Priority action 4**, "Extend the Higher Education Continuity Guarantee for another two years to provide funding certainty to universities as the Accord process continues during 2023 and any new funding arrangements are subsequently implemented. Eligible institutions will be required to use any surplus funding from this measure on additional support for equity students."
- **Priority Action 5**, "Through National Cabinet, immediately engage with state and territory governments and universities to improve university governance, particularly focusing on: universities being good employers, student and staff safety, membership of governing bodies, including ensuring additional involvement of people with expertise in the business of universities."

The *UNE SSP* will be continuously reviewed and updated alongside developments in Priority Actions in relation to these changes at the [Australian Universities Accord](#) (Department of Education, Australian Government).

Notably, universities must also comply with the [National Code of Practice for Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#). UNE's [International student services team](#) provide support for students coming to Australia to study from abroad, with high-quality language support through the [UNE English Language Centre](#). There are also options for students to study online from wherever they are in the world. [Student Exchange](#) and the [Study Abroad Program](#) offer international students flexibility in how they engage in study at UNE. As a university that specialises in multiple modes of education including place-based and through the digital-edge, UNE provides strong student supports in the form of optimised communication between educators and students flexibly available via email, online discussions and chat, telephone, and on-campus intensive schools. UNE provides web-based facilities which allow students to send questions, submit assignments, order library books, check grades and access other resources, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

3.6.3 Student Engagement

A key means of improving student success is through student leadership / governance. Not only does

an activated student body enable and enhance engagement for the participating student members, but the processes and outcomes they enact escalate

engagement for the majority of students University-wide. The UNE Student Experience portfolio actively supports the UNE Student Council.

3.7 Representation, Information, and Information Management (HESF Domain 7)

3.7.1 Appropriate course choice

The key component in helping students make the right course choice is to ensure that recruitment information (web, open days, school tours, brochures, etc.) give as much information as possible to help students in making the appropriate decision. However, there will always be students who make choices, or are influenced (by parents, friends, etc.) to make choices, in which they may not succeed or enjoy. Transition-in and transition-between supports are fundamental, and personalised to meet students where they are at in their student journey and therefore decision-making.

3.7.2 Early choice intervention

Joined-up and articulated through the *UNE SSP*, intervention from course advisers will focus on offering pro-active and direct support to students in their first teaching period and again at the end of their first year. Continuous support will be offered through “drop in, don’t drop out” style support, delivered in place-based and online modes, where the ability to transfer to an alternate course will be seen as supported and a success for the student. This extends to ensuring flexible course plans and an appropriate cadence of course offerings to prevent delays in completion and lengthy intermissions, that normally increase the risk a student will cease their studies. UNE is also currently reviewing and continuously improving student-focussed course advising processes.

3.7.3 Graduate Attributes, Employability and Careers

Some students, particularly in their first year, may struggle to connect the work they are undertaking in their classes with the career goals they hold. This is inevitable in many disciplines where a basic knowledge needs to be built-up before being able to understand the higher-level concepts in later years of study. Student supports are necessary to ensure that this early study challenge does not lead to study cessation for those students who do not fully understand this study/career connection and who may therefore become frustrated. UNE provides clear identification of where support and assistance can be sourced.

A high proportion of UNE students have already entered the workforce prior to, or alongside, undertaking higher education. Part of the nuanced value-proposition of UNE is to track, monitor and analyse the quantitative and narrative data in the context of these students’ career promotions, career changes and/or industry changes

resulting from their educational advancement and experiences including increased networks. Alongside this data and evaluation, supports to students who are advancing rather than commencing in the workforce can be continuously improved.

3.7.4 Careers Service

A key support service is the provision of information about opportunities for first-year students (both those who have and have-not already entered the workforce) to engage with appropriate employers and opportunities online and/or place-based, in the curriculum through assessment design (i.e., problem-based learning), in the workplace to help drive the connection between study and eventual career options and on-campus. This can lead to Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and/or placement opportunities. One of UNE’s distinctive value propositions is flipping Work Integrated Learning (WIL) to Learning Integrated Work (LIW), bringing education (and student supports) into the workplace for students who have already entered the workforce and want to continue working while pursuing flexible studies.

3.7.5 Administrative outreach and response

Providing students with the ability to manage their study load to meet personal circumstances is a critical component of ongoing study success. A problematic and common scenario is the student who simply stops attending, with no clear indication of their reason or intent. To make it easy for students to interact with the University a simple process around taking time off, or leave of studies, will continue to be improved. Critical to this modification is providing information in language that students both understand and are likely to use in everyday life. For example, using the term *dropping out* as a search term rather than leave of absence.

Key parts of this program will be the ability to seek advice and understand the options, with staff applying a triage process to identify students who may not need to leave or discontinue as planned. In addition, simple online forms and processes are continuously improved to facilitate a change, and voluntary exit interviews to be implemented for discontinuing students to enable the university to learn from the situation and make proactive changes where required. Making it easy for students to return to study, whether from a short or long break, is also critical in encouraging students to return when they are ready. This information and support advice will be continuously improved.



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