



Division of Societal Impact,
Equity and Engagement

UNSW: Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive 2026-2028



Acknowledgement of Country

UNSW respectfully acknowledges the Bidjigal, Biripai, Dharug, Gadigal, Gumbaynggirr, Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri peoples, on whose unceded lands we are privileged to learn, teach and work. We honour the Elders of these Nations, as well as broader Nations that we walk together with, past and present, and acknowledge their ongoing connection to culture, community and Country.

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Introduction

While some higher education institutions are stepping back from equity, diversity, and inclusion, UNSW is committed to making a positive impact on our world, and understands that inclusion is an essential part of that work.

UNSW was the first university in Australia to create a Division of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and we have made strong progress since, culminating in a new Division leading Societal Impact, Equity and Engagement.

Equity, diversity and inclusion is grounded in UNSW's values, our purpose, and our responsibility as a public institution. We believe that a truly world-class university must reflect the society it serves – in our community, our culture, and our impact. In a world facing rising polarisation, inequality, and social fragmentation, fostering inclusion is not a “nice to have”, it is essential to building resilient communities, advancing knowledge, and solving the complex challenges of our time.

Inclusion, alongside integrity and social justice, is one of the cross-cutting themes of our Societal Impact Framework, which also centres Indigenous peoples' ways of knowing, being and doing in our activities to improve society.

This strategy is aligned with Progress for All, ensuring that equity, diversity and inclusion are not standalone initiatives but integral to UNSW's vision for societal impact and institutional excellence. Equity, diversity and inclusion are also key principles of our Code of Conduct and Values in Action – because at UNSW, inclusion is everyone's responsibility.

This is reflected in the fact that much of the work we need to do to build inclusion at UNSW is not the responsibility of just one team. Many of the ambitions in this strategy sit within an ecosystem of work happening across the university to drive inclusion.

For example, the Strategy complements the work of the UNSW Widening Participation Strategy, the Student Belonging Framework and Arc's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Roadmap. This ensures we are addressing systemic barriers and expanding opportunities for students and colleagues from historically underrepresented and/or marginalised backgrounds to succeed through a whole of university approach.

Some of the actions will also be implemented through the Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2028, Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2029, the Disability Royal Commission Translational Framework, and via recommendations of the UNSW Anti-Racism Taskforce.

This strategy also embeds specific actions to support UNSW's Whole-of-Organisation Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan and Outcomes Framework (WOOP) because equity, diversity and inclusion has a critical role to play in preventing gender-based violence.

Importantly, UNSW's commitment to self-governance, education, and community-led outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people means that we support Indigenous students and colleagues to lead their own work in this area, shaping approaches that reflect their priorities and perspectives.





Vision

UNSW is, and is known for being, an equitable, diverse and inclusive place to study and work.

Our aspiration for equity, diversity and inclusion at UNSW is simple: we want to reflect the diversity of Australia in our community and ensure that inclusion is part of everything we do, not just an add-on. Inclusion needs to be practiced by all students and colleagues, and it should shape how people see UNSW.

We recognise that diversity is key to our excellence and being an innovative university. By creating inclusive and accessible environments, this excellence and innovation can thrive.

By being an equitable University we can strengthen our retention and attraction of staff and students. We aim to lead the sector in equity, diversity and inclusion and make it a defining part of our reputation.

Our Approach

This strategy is built around four main goals which together contribute to our vision for equity, diversity and inclusion.

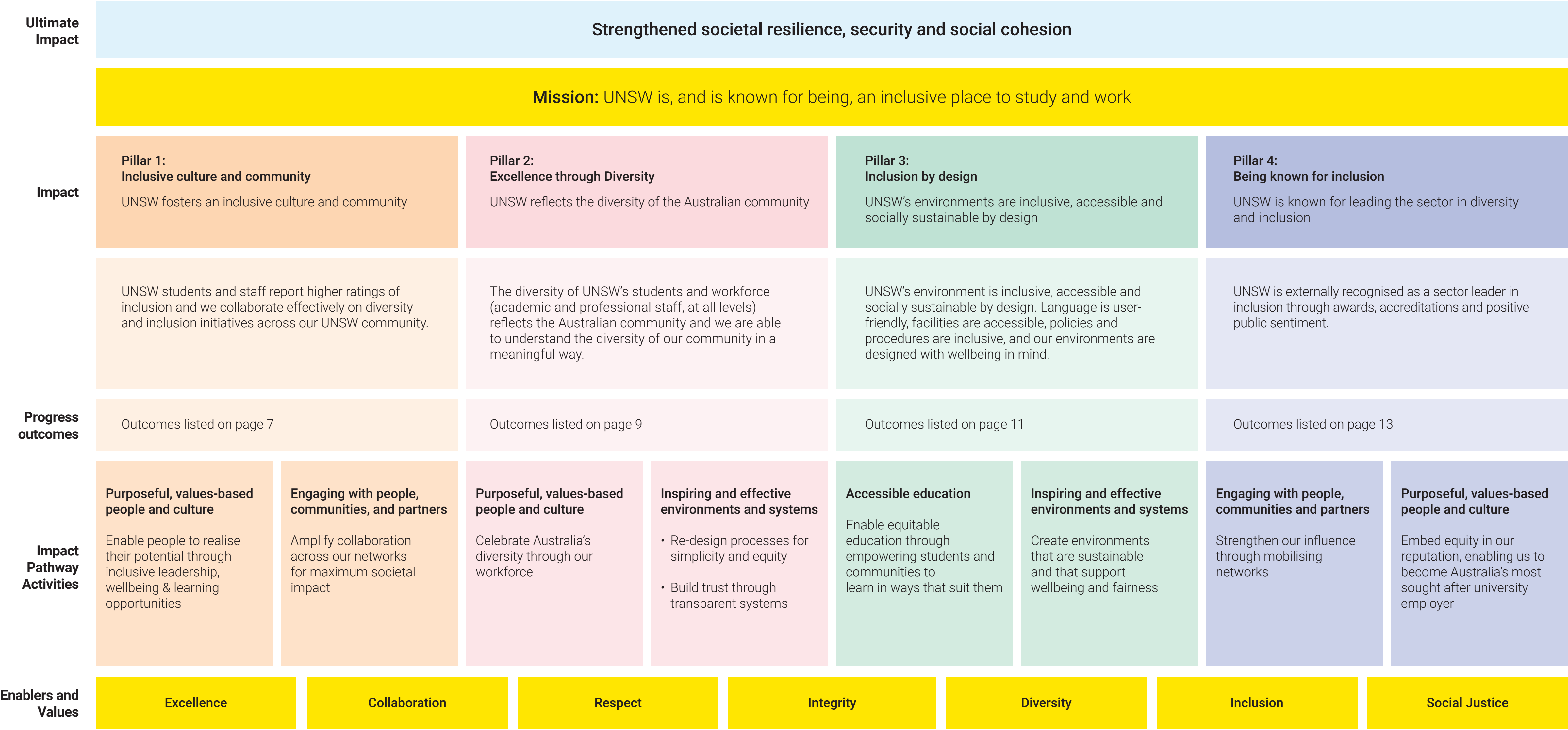
Each goal includes a set of aspirations and practical areas for action. For every area, we have defined the outcomes we want to achieve and the measures we will use to track progress.

Data is central to our inclusion efforts to ensure we understand our people and their experiences. We will use improved data collection methods, inclusive surveys, and transparent reporting to monitor progress towards our goals.

These measures help us check if we are on the right path and show when we are making real progress (our Progress Indicators).

We have designed this Strategy to follow the logic of UNSW's Societal Impact Framework, to help us align with our institutional approach to understanding and amplifying our contribution to society and demonstrate progress towards our vision of a more equitable and inclusive Australia.

How this strategy enables progress for all



Pillar 1: Inclusive culture and community

Impact goal: UNSW has an inclusive culture and community

An inclusive culture is one where our community feels connected, respected, and able to contribute their best.

UNSW has already made progress towards an inclusive culture and community, and this forms a solid foundation for the continued work that needs to be done to reach our goal. But we recognise that success requires not just capability uplift, but system redesign.

Through this strategy, we will take a whole-of-university approach to cultural change.

UNSW will achieve this by ensuring our leaders have the capability and confidence to create inclusive and accessible work environments, supporting our community to lead on inclusion initiatives across the University, and building our community's capacity in inclusive practice.

We will redesign policies, systems and practices so that inclusion and psychological safety are built into everything we do.

Our aspiration for an inclusive culture and community is one where:

- › Students and colleagues tell us they feel connected, respected and included at UNSW.
- › Students and colleagues understand equity, diversity and inclusion and why it's important for UNSW, and are empowered and supported to contribute and shape inclusivity at UNSW.
- › Our leaders role model inclusive leadership and foster a culture of psychological safety within all aspects of their leadership responsibilities.
- › The lived experiences of diverse communities shape our inclusion efforts.
- › Students and colleagues feel they can speak up, take risks, and learn from mistakes, and can take accountability for the impact of their behaviour.
- › Our equity, diversity and inclusion programs reflect the diversity and intersectionality of our community.
- › Positive behavioural and cultural shifts contribute to a reduction in reported incidents of harassment and discrimination among students and colleagues.

Impacts

UNSW students and colleagues report higher ratings of inclusion and we collaborate effectively on equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives across our UNSW community (Pillar 3, Pillar 4).





Action Area	Actions	Progress Outcomes
Build capability for inclusive leadership	Integrate inclusive leadership practices and psychological safety skills into leadership development, performance and onboarding. Review and update Core Expectations for UNSW people leaders. Run communication campaigns that highlight leaders successfully leading in inclusive ways. Embed leadership accountability for identifying, monitoring and managing organisational and environmental risks related to gender-based violence across UNSW.	Leaders and managers have the skills and confidence to create inclusive and accessible work environments, are equipped with tools and skills to build psychologically safe teams, and all people leaders meet core expectations for inclusive practices and outcomes.
Support community-led inclusion initiatives	Provide support and capacity-building to student and staff networks to lead meaningful inclusion initiatives. Strengthen partnerships with UNSW institutes and inclusion-focused groups to amplify their impact across the university and in the broader community. Foster cross-faculty and cross-division collaboration by creating shared goals, platforms, and opportunities for joint equity, diversity and inclusion projects.	Student and staff networks, institutes, faculties, and divisions are supported and connected to lead inclusion efforts and build a strong, collaborative community that amplifies equity, diversity and inclusion across UNSW.
Co-design diversity & inclusion training to build capability for inclusive practice	Co-design and deliver diversity and inclusion training and initiatives with input from students, colleagues, and people with lived experience, ensuring they reflect diverse and intersectional identities. Embed UNSW Values in Action and Leadership Signatures into UNSW training. Ensure that an understanding of the importance of gender equity is embedded into diversity and inclusion training. This includes understanding how gender inequities can drive gender-based violence. Run campaigns on everyday inclusive behaviours to reinforce learning.	Students and colleagues build capability for inclusive practice through diversity and inclusion training that is co-designed and reflects lived experiences. Equity, diversity and inclusion principles are integrated into UNSW training programs. Colleagues who actively engage in diversity and inclusion training and contribute to creating inclusive environments are recognised and rewarded for this.
Improve how we collect and use inclusion data	Review and enhance inclusion data collection by assessing existing surveys and exploring the introduction of a dedicated diversity and inclusion survey to generate actionable insights. Monitor and report on psychological safety and inclusion outcomes using both quantitative and qualitative data to inform targeted interventions and track progress.	UNSW has an improved and cohesive set of longitudinal measures for understanding experiences of respect and inclusion at UNSW.
Redesign policies, systems, and practices for inclusion	Use intersectional impact assessments to review and improve policies, systems, and practices. Review and redesign workplace culture, ways of working, talent acquisition, promotion, and governance processes to address barriers. Embed student-focused gender equity objectives into strategy planning, policy development and program design. Utilise insights from the UNSW Anti-Racism Taskforce to contribute to addressing structural barriers for culturally and racially marginalised students and colleagues.	Policies, systems, and practices consistently reinforce psychological safety and inclusion.

Pillar 2: Excellence through diversity

Impact goal: UNSW reflects the diversity of the Australian community

At UNSW, we know that people are our greatest asset. By fostering a diverse and inclusive community, UNSW creates an environment where excellence and innovation thrive.

We are committed to increasing diverse representation across our students and workforce. We aim to improve our data collection systems and messaging so we can better understand the diversity of our community.

We want to improve the diversity and inclusion data we collect not just for reporting, but as a tool for predictive insight and early intervention. This will help us to shift from seeing gaps, to being able to address barriers, which we hope will build trust around data collection, particularly for communities with valid reasons to be cautious.

To make our workforce more representative of the Australian community we need to embed diversity in our talent pipelines and increase opportunities for people from underrepresented groups at UNSW.

To ensure our students reflect the broader community we are actively working to ensure more students from historically underrepresented groups can enter and succeed at UNSW, through our Widening Participation Strategy.

And as a global university, we want students from all over the world to choose UNSW, because they know that our diversity is a strength.

Our aspiration for a diverse university includes:

- › Increased representation of underrepresented groups across all levels.
- › More students and colleagues feeling confident to share identity information.
- › Recruitment and retention practices that actively support diversity.
- › Having a better understanding of our community so that we can measure and track diversity and use the information to design programs and initiatives that address systemic barriers.
- › Prospective students know that our community is diverse

Impacts

The diversity of UNSW's students and workforce (academic and professional staff, at all levels) reflects the Australian community and we are able to understand the diversity of our community in a meaningful way (Pillar 4, Pillar 5).



Action Area	Actions	Progress Outcomes
Increase representation of underrepresented groups	Set and transparently report targets for underrepresented groups in leadership.	Leadership and talent pipelines reflect the diversity of the Australian community.
	Monitor attraction, retention, progression, and exit data by demographic group to identify disparities and address systemic barriers.	Increased representation of underrepresented groups across all levels.
	Reserve places for candidates from underrepresented or marginalised backgrounds in high-demand leadership and talent programs.	
	Ensure equity, diversity and inclusion principles are embedded in the UNSW Talent and Succession Framework.	
Improve diversity data	Develop programs and initiatives that support gender equity across the university, with a specific focus on students and the broader community.	
	Improve diversity data systems to better capture intersectional identities and enhance understanding of student and colleagues' experiences.	Improved data collection systems to enable an intersectional understanding of our UNSW community.
Redesign recruitment and retention practices	Improve the equity, diversity and inclusion Data Dashboard with additional information.	Students and colleagues feel safe and supported to share identity information.
	Attract and recruit diverse employees by reviewing and improving inclusive hiring, onboarding, and recruitment practices.	Workforce recruitment and retention practices actively support equity, diversity and inclusion.
	Support career development and retention for underrepresented groups through mentoring, leadership programs, and accountability for inclusive outcomes.	



Pillar 3: Inclusion by design

Impact goal: UNSW's environments are inclusive, accessible and socially sustainable by design

UNSW is committed to removing barriers for people with disability by creating accessible, inclusive environments and socially sustainable precincts that support wellbeing, fairness, and inclusion – now and into the future.

We want to ensure that we design for access and inclusion from the outset and embed inclusive practices and clear language in our policies and procedures.

Much of this work will be delivered through the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026 - 2029, the Translational Framework of the Disability Royal Commission, and the Widening Participation Strategy.

This will be done in partnership with our UNSW community and will involve conducting regular reviews and improvements of adjustments and support, to ensure we meet our aspirations.

Our aspiration is for a university where:

- › UNSW's precincts, facilities, and digital platforms are designed to be accessible and inclusive from the outset.
- › UNSW actively welcomes students and colleagues with disability and provides the tools and support they need to succeed.
- › All policies and procedures embed inclusive practices and use clear, user-friendly language.
- › Students and colleagues feel confident and supported when requesting and receiving workplace or learning adjustments.
- › Inclusive practices are integrated into teaching, learning, and leadership systems as standard practice—not treated as special accommodations.

Impacts

UNSW's environment is inclusive, accessible and socially sustainable by design. Language is user-friendly, facilities are accessible, policies and procedures are inclusive, and our environments are designed with wellbeing in mind (Pillar 1, Pillar 5).





Action Area	Actions	Progress Outcomes
Design for inclusion <i>Delivered through Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2029 and Disability Royal Commission Translational Framework</i>	Implement accessibility improvements through the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026 - 2029. Embed social sustainability principles into future precinct and facility design.	UNSW's precincts, facilities, events, and digital platforms are accessible and inclusive by design. UNSW is an inclusive community that actively welcomes students and colleagues with disability and provides tools for their success.
Embed inclusion in policies and processes <i>Delivered through Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026 - 2029 & Gender Equity Strategy 2024-2028</i>	Apply inclusive language consistently across policies, communications, and signage. Embed accessibility and inclusion principles in all new policy development.	Policies and processes embed inclusive practices and reflect user-friendly language.
Use impact assessments to improve inclusive practice	Scope intersectional impact assessments to understand the impact of new policies and programs on diverse groups, as well as implementing projects to support inclusive design and decision making across the university.	UNSW can apply an inclusion lens to the design and evaluation of policies and programs to support inclusive decision-making.
Improve workplace adjustments <i>Delivered through Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026 - 2029</i>	Create a streamlined process for requesting workplace adjustments. Provide training for managers to understand and support adjustments effectively.	Students and colleagues feel confident requesting and receiving workplace and learning adjustments.
Inclusive Education <i>Delivered through Equitable Learning Services and Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026 - 2029</i>	Apply Universal Design for Learning and inclusive teaching principles to course design and delivery, ensuring learning environments proactively remove barriers and academic staff are supported with resources and training to embed inclusive practices.	Inclusive practices are built into our learning, teaching, systems, and processes, rather than as an accommodation or adjustment.

Pillar 4: Being known for inclusion

Impact goal: UNSW is known for leading the sector in equity, diversity and inclusion

To create a more inclusive university and help build a more equitable society, we need to be visible in what we do and share what we learn.

We will keep working towards external equity, diversity and inclusion accreditations not just to be recognised, but to use these to make real improvements for our students and colleagues. We also want our graduates to leave UNSW with the skills and confidence to work in diverse and inclusive ways.

We will grow UNSW's reputation as a thought leader in equity, diversity and inclusion by sharing our insights and successes at conferences, through research, and in public forums. We will support our equity, diversity and inclusion leaders to contribute to national and global conversations, and work with our networks, institutes and alumni to amplify our impact. Days of significance as well as events such as Diversity Festival will be used not only to celebrate, but to spark meaningful conversations and drive change, within our university and across the broader community.

Our aspiration is that:

- › UNSW is known for our thought-leading research and events in diversity and inclusion, and as a place that can have important conversations about social justice, in a safe, inclusive and respectful way.
- › UNSW receives external recognition for inclusion.
- › UNSW is known to be an inclusive place to work and study, and inclusion is linked to our reputation.
- › Our graduates have diversity and inclusion skills which make them more employable.
- › We attract and retain students due to our reputation in being sector leaders of diversity and inclusion.

Impacts

UNSW is externally recognised as a sector leader in inclusion through awards, accreditations and positive public sentiment (Pillar 3, Pillar 4, Pillar 9).



Action Area	Actions	Progress Outcomes
Use strategic events to create inclusion outcomes	Amplify UNSW's equity, diversity and inclusion achievements through strategic communications and thought leadership.	UNSW is known for thought-leading research and events in equity, diversity and inclusion.
	Use events such as Diversity Festival and days of significance to spark meaningful conversations about equity, diversity and inclusion beyond celebrations.	UNSW's equity, diversity and inclusion research and events influence attitudes and drive positive behaviour change across the university and the broader community.
	Support UNSW events for students and the broader community that promote gender equality.	
Participate in accreditations to drive change	Pursue and maintain recognised equity, diversity and inclusion accreditations and leverage participation to drive meaningful change for the UNSW community.	UNSW is externally recognised for sector leadership in inclusion. UNSW's participation in external benchmarking and accreditation improves inclusion outcomes for the UNSW community.
Embedding inclusion in learning	Integrate inclusion into student success statements and graduate attributes, through alignment with the Societal Impact Framework, and demonstrate why this is important.	UNSW graduates are known for having skills to navigate the modern workplace, including in inclusive practice.
	Explore co-curricular recognition of equity, diversity and inclusion content.	



Governance and implementation

This strategy will be implemented through a whole-of-university approach, with shared responsibility across the university, with each area supported to embed equity, diversity and inclusion into their local contexts, guided by the overarching framework.

The strategy is designed to be implemented over three years, from 2026-2028, and will be operationalised into a 3-year plan alongside the first Progress for All Triennium roadmap.

To ensure accountability and transparency, we will publish an annual Diversity & Inclusion Impact Report. This report will track progress against our progress indicators and highlight initiatives, challenges, and outcomes across the university.

Governance will be provided by a cross-university committee comprising faculty and divisional equity, diversity and inclusion representatives. This group will review the annual report, provide strategic advice, and help drive alignment, collaboration, and continuous improvement across the institution.



Thanks to our community

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of everyone in the UNSW community who provided input, guidance and support into developing the strategy. We would especially like to thank the invaluable contributions of those with lived experience who have played a vital role in shaping this strategy. Their contributions have been instrumental in highlighting persistent barriers and have guided our continued commitment to providing an inclusive university for our UNSW community.

A strategy is only as strong as the community who delivers it. Everyone has a role to play in ensuring UNSW is a welcoming and inclusive environment for all and we would like to thank you for your role in ensuring progress for all.



