UNSW SYDNEY

2025 Impact Statement

Student Outreach and Access

Student Equity
Division of Societal Impact, Equity & Engagement

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Acknowledgement of Country

UNSW is located on the unceded territory of the Bedegal (Kensington campus), Gadigal (City and Paddington Campuses) and Ngunnawal peoples (UNSW Canberra) who are the Traditional Owners of the lands where each campus of UNSW is situated.

Who we work with

To fulfil our objectives, we work with the following groups.

Education providers

400+ NSW secondary schools (also known as Gateway partner schools)*

Universities

NSW Department of Education

Students

Students from low-socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and students from Gateway partner schools.

Educational organisations

Alchemy Tuition

InspirationED

National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA)

Non-government organisations

Country Education Foundation

Harding Miller Education Foundation

Public Education Foundation

The Smith Family

Confit Pathways

Kind Enterprises

* Gateway partner schools are identified based on the three-year average of the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) or the proportion of students in the bottom socio-educational quartile.

Rifah Tamanna

Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)

My journey to university began long before I arrived in Australia. In 2022, as Bangladesh faced growing uncertainty, my father received an opportunity to move our family to Australia. I arrived in Australia near the end of Year 11, stepping into a completely new education system with a different language, culture and future. It was quite challenging.

When I first moved here some schools didn't want to take me because I'd had a Bengali education, which is very different. I sat an English test and gained entry to Kingswood High School.

My Maths teacher is one of the reasons I made it this far. I love maths and physics and my Maths teacher fought for me to take Maths Extension 2. I was the only one in the area to take it in several years. It definitely helped me get a better ATAR.

My parents went to university in Bangladesh and I had always wanted to go. I did some online research and found that UNSW was the best engineering degree in the country. The Civil Engineering degree with a minor in Humanitarian Engineering really appealed to me. I investigated early entry programs online and found out I was at a Gateway partner school.

Coming from Bangladesh, where school records are not nationally digitised, I had no straightforward way to prove my academic ability and I did not have Australian Year 11 results recorded through UAC. I felt close to giving up, but my Maths teacher encouraged me to apply for Gateway anyway. In the end, that changed everything. I compiled my early Year 12 results and documented my academic rankings. I also gathered recommendation letters from every single one of my teachers. I showed not only my performance, but my growth and why I wanted to study engineering.

Receiving a conditional offer from UNSW became my turning point. It gave me direction. I needed to get an 85 ATAR to get in, rather than 92. I knew it was achievable and I asked my teachers what I needed to do to get it. It was also good to know that Australia understood I needed a little bit of support. It was my chance to prove to myself that I belonged here.

Still, finishing high school was not easy. I worked to support my family while managing my studies, and private tutoring was not financially possible. Instead, I found my own strategies: joining two libraries so I could borrow more HSC past paper books, and I studied independently after long days at school. It was stressful, but it taught me resilience and self-belief.

I also attended UNSW for a Girls in Mathematics program in Year 12.

The support I received when I started at UNSW also shaped my experience. The scholarships I received were life changing. I received the $10,000 UNSW Advantage Award and the $1,000 Gateway Award, which took so much pressure off me. But the biggest impact was that these scholarships paid my first year's tuition. As an Australian Permanent Resident, I am not eligible for HECS or Youth Allowance, meaning I have to pay the domestic fee, and fund my own uni education.

The scholarships allowed me to reduce my work hours and truly experience university life. For the first time, I had the time and space to engage with the community, like joining societies and volunteering.

I became a Start@UNSW Mentor in my second year and a Gateway Ambassador in my third year. My experience is niche, moving from a non-English speaking country to Australia aged 17, but it matters and I am so grateful to be able to share it.

I have one more year of my degree to go. Through a career mentoring program I discovered maintenance engineering, and it really interests me. I can't wait to use the skills from this course to make impactful changes.

"The support I received when I started at UNSW also shaped my experience."

Our commitment to equity in higher education

UNSW is committed to shaping and progressing a just society by embedding equity, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of university life. A central focus of this commitment is ensuring that students from underrepresented backgrounds have equitable access to higher education and the support they need to succeed at university and beyond. Student Equity plays a pivotal role in realising this commitment.

In 2020, we established UNSW Gateway, an educational outreach program and linked admission pathway.

The success of UNSW Gateway prompted the introduction of a University target in 2022 – the Widening Participation Target – a strategic commitment that by 2027, 25% of commencing domestic undergraduates are from a low-SES background, will be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or have attended a Gateway partner school.

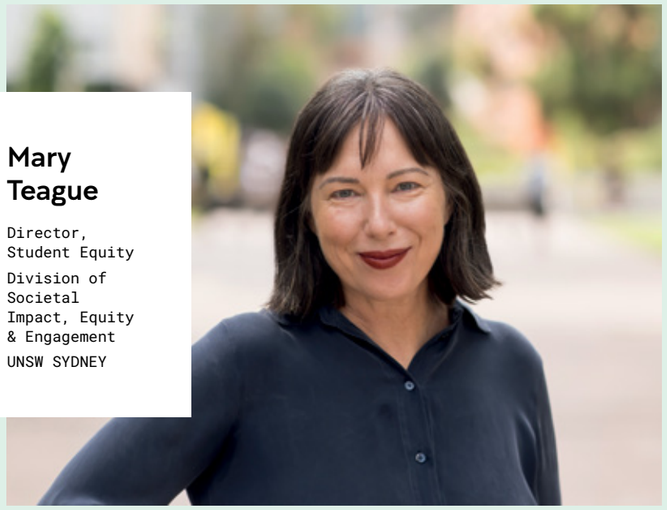
Recent national policies have prioritised funding for universities to create focused initiatives that enhance their ability to provide inclusive teaching and learning environments for equity cohorts, along with targeted initiatives and direct financial support.

The Department of Education's Australian Universities Accord put student equity and socioeconomic mobility at the centre of its new vision for higher education, building on the 2008 Bradley Review's recommendations for underrepresented cohorts. The Accord also recognises people with disabilities as a fourth equity cohort, recommending long-term targets to achieve enrolments in line with population by 2050.

Widening participation is a key priority in UNSW's strategy, Progress for All, and in 2025, we launched the Widening Participation Strategy to 2035, a whole-of-university strategy to expand access and support for underrepresented students across the full educational journey for the next decade.

2025 in review

In 2025, Student Equity significantly expanded access to higher education and supported students from underrepresented backgrounds. The year was marked by deepening impact, broadening reach and growing the evidence base underpinning our work.



Mary Teague

Director, Student Equity
Division of Societal Impact, Equity & Engagement
UNSW SYDNEY

Delivered UNSW's Widening Participation Strategy

We launched the UNSW Widening Participation Strategy to 2035: a whole-of-university framework for widening access, improving retention and supporting student success across the full educational journey.

In response to the Australian Universities Accord, a key focus for Student Equity is to extend and promote access pathways to a broader range of underrepresented and non-traditional cohorts.

Met the Widening Participation Target early

The Gateway Admission Pathway has significantly lifted the proportion of students who contribute to the University's 25% Widening Participation Target. UNSW had already met this target by 2026 – a year ahead of schedule.

Advocated for the increase in Equity Scholarships

Central to the new Widening Participation Strategy is the broadening of equity groups and improved access to higher education through our Gateway Admission Pathway. To ensure students are set up to succeed at university, we expanded our funding to provide an additional 32 Equity Scholarships.

Gateway Admission Pathway and Program broadened its reach

A significant milestone was the expansion of eligibility for the Gateway Admission Pathway to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This resulted in a 55% increase in Indigenous student enrolments through the pathway compared to the previous year.

Overall, applications to UNSW through the Gateway Admission Pathway grew by 13%. Through in-school outreach, we engaged over 7,600 students across 71 schools, driving strong participation in our online learning offerings and on-campus experience days for Years 10 to 12.

Expanded access through the TAFE/VET Pathway

Through the TAFE/VET Pathway, we extended and promoted access to higher education for non-traditional cohorts, including mature-age students, career changers and those who have taken a non-linear path through education. By embedding the TAFE/VET Pathway within our Widening Participation Strategy, we are better positioned to connect students with the opportunities and support they need to succeed at UNSW.

Three successful grant applications

We secured three Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success (ACSES) grants to extend and scale our equity initiatives. The first will be used to develop additional resources for the Inclusive Teaching Toolkit, equipping educators with tools to build their skills in supporting first-year students. The second will go towards creating a guide for the Centring Lived Experience project, enabling other tertiary institutions to run similar programs.

The third grant will fund a trial of automatic assessment deadline extensions informed by Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. This draws on research into how educators can implement context-sensitive inclusive teaching strategies using the Inclusive Teaching Toolkit.

Presented at conferences across Australia and abroad

We were invited to present at the World Access to Higher Education Day Conference in South Africa, sharing our work on improving equitable access to higher education through an innovative outreach model. We also presented at the Students, Transitions, Achievement, Retention and Success (STARS) conference, showcasing the Inclusive Teaching Guide and its role in supporting first-year educators to adopt inclusive teaching practices.

Six years of progress

Since the beginning of UNSW Gateway.

34,500
students have engaged in our programs

472
Gateway partner schools have worked with us to deliver educational outreach

6813
students have enrolled at UNSW through the Gateway Admission Pathway

746
schools represented by student enrolments

56%
of commencing undergraduates have come from public schools

Our strategy

Acknowledge educational disparity in the Australian schooling system

We partner with schools identified as having lower levels of educational advantage to reach students underrepresented in higher education. This extends to students from low-SES backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, students from regional and remote areas and culturally and linguistically diverse migrants and refugees (CALDMR).

Enhance educational outcomes and reduce barriers to entry

We shift away from aspiration-raising and enhance student educational outcomes through curriculum-linked academic enrichment programs. We also provide targeted admission pathways for equitable access and expanded program choice.

Co-design educational enrichment programs

We enlist the expertise of internal and external education providers to develop programs that take a strengths-based approach. This allows students to build on their existing skills and passions and increase their preparedness for success at university.

Role model success through students as partners

We employ UNSW Student Ambassadors from underrepresented backgrounds and Gateway partner schools to co-design and deliver our programs, and serve as role models. This encourages an enhanced sense of belonging in higher education and extends effective support in the pre-access and access phase of the student lifecycle.

Form collaborative partnerships

We collaborate with schools, universities, government, NGOs and industry partners to ensure innovative, sustainable, evidence-informed programs.

Grow careers-based knowledge and industry networks

We embed value-affirmation initiatives linked to future degrees and careers, and collaborate with UNSW faculties to create interactive experiences that showcase various disciplines and career options. We also draw on our links with workplace and industry partners to provide access to real work experience and early-career networks.

Build a philanthropic base

We form purposeful philanthropic partnerships to generate equity and accommodation scholarships.

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

We play a leading role in advocating for structural change and the removal of access barriers to UNSW. This includes:

- advising on and contributing to the development of resources to support students' early transition and first-year experiences
- creating training modules to inform staff on best-practice approaches for engaging and supporting equity cohorts, and
- coordinating the review of current student support services while providing recommendations for new and improved ones.

Lead a strategic University-wide approach to addressing student equity

We undertake strategic advocacy by:

- contributing to relevant UNSW and G08 submissions
- advising on government funding for aligned programs of work
- providing institutional responses to national policies and reforms that impact students from equity backgrounds, and
- acting as a central point of contact on student equity for the University.

Will Drengenberg

Bachelor of Economics / Arts

I always knew I wanted to go to university, but I wasn't sure if it would be possible. My ATAR felt like the biggest obstacle standing between me and that goal.

Growing up in the regional area of Lithgow, I attended La Salle Academy which had limited resources. I often travelled to another town just to get support to study Extension Maths. While I focused on achieving strong grades and taking on leadership roles, I didn't have a clear understanding of what my pathway to university looked like.

This changed when my sister told me about UNSW Gateway. In 2023, I participated in the Gateway Program and Gateway Admission Pathway which provided clear, structured steps and showed me that university entry isn't defined by grades alone. It made the goal feel realistic and achievable.

Many of my friends didn't consider university because they believed it simply wasn't an option for them. Through my experience with Gateway, I realised that university is accessible if you're willing to pursue it. It's about furthering your knowledge and developing yourself. It gave me the confidence to back myself. The adjusted ATAR allowed me to receive an offer to my current degree. It is what made it attainable for me.

I am currently studying a Bachelor of Economics and Arts. I chose to study this as I am passionate about understanding the world around us. I'm particularly fascinated by how government policy decisions are made and the many factors that must be considered before change can occur.

Once I was at UNSW, I quickly discovered that I was not navigating it alone. Through peer mentoring, I met some great people who told me about the support services I could access, such as applying for extensions when needed. This helped me navigate university life with greater confidence.

My transition to University was made significantly easier through the scholarships I received by applying through the Gateway Admission Pathway. In total, I received $36,000 in scholarships which has been integral to my journey. I genuinely would not be here without that support. The Accommodation Scholarship allows me to live on campus, eliminating a six-hour daily commute and giving me the chance to build a real sense of community.

Now, as a first-year University Ambassador, I'm excited to help empower other students by showing them what's possible. I want to share my experience with UNSW Gateway and help students understand that their ATAR doesn't define their future. For those who think university isn't for them because of their grades, I hope to help shift that perspective and show them that there are pathways available.

"I want to share my experience with UNSW Gateway and help students understand that their ATAR doesn't define their future."

Theory of Change

Enablers

The educational outreach program is facilitated by current UNSW students from underrepresented backgrounds who act as a trusted source of information and create connection for participants

The educational outreach program delivers learning experiences that harness participants' strengths

The Gateway Admission Pathway adjusts ATAR requirements for students from underrepresented backgrounds to acknowledge the impact of socio-educational disadvantage

Delivery of the educational outreach program

Engagement

Students engage with the educational outreach program

Capacity

Participants develop their understanding of future possibilities

Participants develop their learner identity and confidence to navigate their educational journey

Participants develop skills and confidence for HSC success

Strategy

Participants make informed decisions about their educational futures

Participants apply to UNSW through the pathway

Participants apply their increased capacity and confidence at school and in the HSC

Impact

Students from underrepresented backgrounds have equitable access to university, and UNSW, and feel confident they can succeed

Engagement assumptions

Participants see value in engaging and have sufficient time

Participants can access and navigate the resources provided

Capacity assumptions

Participants haven't already developed these capacities

Educational content is effectively designed and engaging

Strategy assumptions

Participants engage in multiple program opportunities throughout high school

Participants are on an ATAR pathway and university, or UNSW, is the right path for them

External influences

Parents/family/carers

Friends

Other universities

School/teachers

Government policy

The UNSW Gateway Theory of Change outlines how we aim to achieve this impact.

The Gateway Program is underpinned by three evidence-based mechanisms — the map, compass and key — which build students' capacities and strategies. These are facilitated by two key enablers: the guide and strength-based pedagogy. Each mechanism has its own nested theory of change describing specific intended student outcomes.

A fourth mechanism — the Gateway Admission Pathway — focuses on institutional change: a pathway to UNSW with reduced ATAR requirements to directly lower the single largest barrier students face to accessing university.

Mechanisms

The Map

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

The Key

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

The Compass

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

The Path

Providing a pathway to UNSW with reduced ATAR requirements

Enablers

The Guide

Providing educational outreach to students, facilitated by current UNSW students from underrepresented backgrounds who act as a trusted source of information and connection

Strength Based Pedagogy

Delivering learning experiences that identify and harness students' strengths

Our program

Year 9

Imagined Futures

This research-informed, curriculum-linked equity and literacy outreach program was designed in partnership with teachers to support students to analyse, evaluate and create persuasive texts across a range of forms. It also builds students' self-awareness as learners through targeted reflection and metacognitive strategies. The unit begins with an on-campus day at UNSW, followed by in-school delivery by English teachers and UNSW University Ambassadors – with the latter group acting as both facilitators and relatable models of future possibilities.

Year 10

Gateway Program

An on-campus experience designed for students to explore how their personal values connect to university study and future careers. Students participate in a bespoke workshop facilitated by the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), practising dramatic techniques for communicating with influence. They then put these skills into practice at a networking event with UNSW Alumni. In 2025, we extended the program's reach by delivering a 60-minute in-school workshop to select Gateway partner schools.

Year 11

Gateway Leaders Program

An on-campus experience for Year 11 students who demonstrate leadership capacity, including networking opportunities and specialised workshops. Led by a renowned communication expert and Student Ambassadors, students are encouraged to identify and harness their leadership strengths to develop goals and strategies that make an impact in their schools and communities.

Year 11 & 12

Gateway Program

A one-week online program for students, aimed at providing a head start on the HSC through subject-specific masterclasses, practice tests and academic skill-enhancing workshops. Students can access exclusive follow-up academic support and tutoring in the lead-up to exams, as well as guidance in preparing an application to secure a place at UNSW via the Gateway Admission Pathway. Students also visit our Kensington campus for interactive faculty experiences and to ask our Ambassadors questions about University.

Access to University

Gateway Admission Pathway

A pathway to UNSW which considers more than just the ATAR. Successful students receive either early entry to UNSW or a lowered ATAR entry requirement for their chosen degree.

Support at University

Scholarships and Awards, Start@UNSW Program, Peer and Academic Support

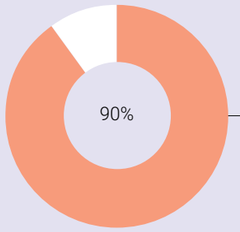
To support their transition to University, students who come to UNSW through the Gateway Admission Pathway are prioritised for UNSW Equity and Accommodation scholarships and access to the Start@UNSW program. They also have access to free bridging courses, peer mentoring and additional academic support for some subjects.

Student outcomes

The Map: Possibilities

"Talking to alumni helped me understand more about the degrees and what to do in high school in order to accomplish my goals."

Year 10 Student

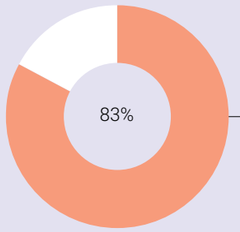


90% agreed that the programs improved their understanding of what degrees are available at UNSW

The Compass: Navigational capacity

"My favourite part was the Business faculty experience. You actually got to network and work with professors who were from specific majors. They collaborated with you to do a group project, and you could specifically talk to them about the degree and what it's like. That really helped to clarify the major I'm going to do."

Year 12 Student

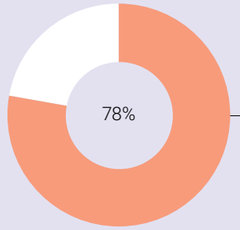


83% agreed that the programs gave them a better understanding of what degrees might suit them

The Key: Academic attainment

"The session which really stood out to me that I attended was the Study Skills one. It talked about strategies that you can implement in order to achieve your study goals, and I thought it was really educational."

Year 11 Student

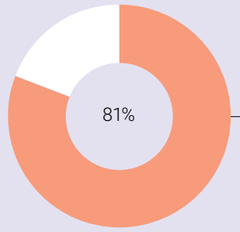


78% agreed that the programs gave them strategies they can use to achieve in the HSC

The Guide: University Ambassadors

"I liked seeing the University Ambassadors on the websites and the live online sessions. I also liked seeing them in person at the open day and experience days. I think they made a greater sense of community."

Year 11 Student



81% agreed that it was useful to hear from current students

Isabella Brglevski

Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)

I had the privilege of participating in the Gateway Program in Years 11 and 12 and the experience really inspired me to pursue tertiary education. I had always wanted to go to university, but what I wanted to study changed a few times: from teaching to law, then psychology.

Attending Emmaus Catholic College, a Gateway partner school in Western Sydney, meant accessibility felt like a bit of an obstacle because all the top universities for psychology were a long way from home. But UNSW Student Ambassadors visited my school and had similar backgrounds to me, which made UNSW feel possible – and worth the commute!

I was nervous to branch out from Western Sydney but their guidance and advice reassured me through my Gateway Admission Pathway application.

Receiving an early offer for a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) was incredibly helpful, providing both reassurance and a strong sense of direction moving forward. To get into my dream university before the HSC relieved a lot of the stress and allowed me to enjoy my final moments in high school.

The Gateway Program also helped me academically. I completed the Year 12 English Masterclass while completing accelerated English in Year 11. This enhanced my confidence for exams and also gave me exposure to UNSW.

I attended two on-campus days in Year 12, where I heard from lecturers and current students. One of these was a psychology talk and a tour of campus. This experience opened my eyes to the breadth of the discipline, from clinical pathways to the study of perception and affirmed my goal of studying psychology at UNSW.

It was helpful to receive mentoring via Start@UNSW when I started in Term 1. My peer leader was a current student in my degree who later became a familiar face and friend. Having this point of contact eased my transition and allowed me to ask questions, both about the university lifestyle and class content.

I was also fortunate to receive two scholarships that eased my start: the Gateway Admission Pathway Scholarship and the Academic Achievement Award for attaining the highest ATAR at my school. These scholarships provided financial support but also affirmed my commitment. I put them towards a new laptop, textbooks and other resources.

Gateway was a helpful way to get into UNSW and the support it extends to students goes well beyond the early offer. And because I had a great experience with the Student Ambassadors when I was at high school, I wanted to offer that support to someone else. I became an Ambassador this year and I felt I'd come full circle, being able to help students like myself.

> "Gateway was a helpful way to get into UNSW and the support it extends to students goes well beyond the early offer."

Our reach

Record student engagement in 2025

We engaged over 10,000 students in our programs.

In-school workshops:
We delivered workshops to over 7,600 students in 71 schools across Sydney and regional NSW – the highest number of students to have ever attended.

Online and on-campus experiences:
Over 4,000 students from 237 schools across NSW engaged in our online and on-campus experiences, sustaining our growth from the previous year.

Note: Data in this report reflects a point-in-time extract and is benchmarked against data captured at the equivalent time in years prior. Figures may be subject to change as records are updated.

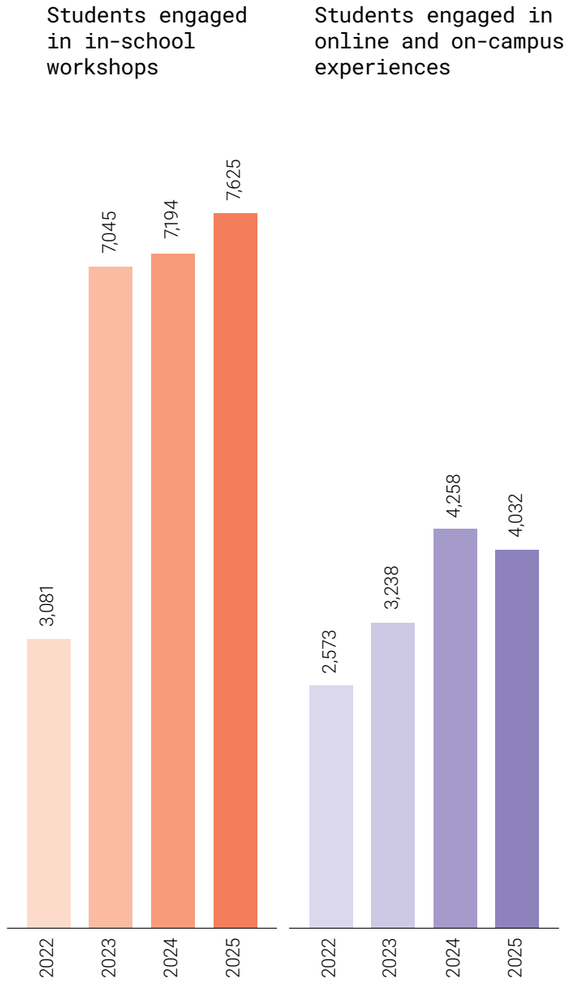


Figure 1. Program growth year on year

We work with a range of students from diverse backgrounds

In 2025, we engaged:

23	191	2751	9982
Indigenous students	Students from regional or remote areas	Students from low-SES backgrounds	Students from Gateway partner schools

Extensive program reach across NSW

Our programs reached students from across Sydney and regional NSW.

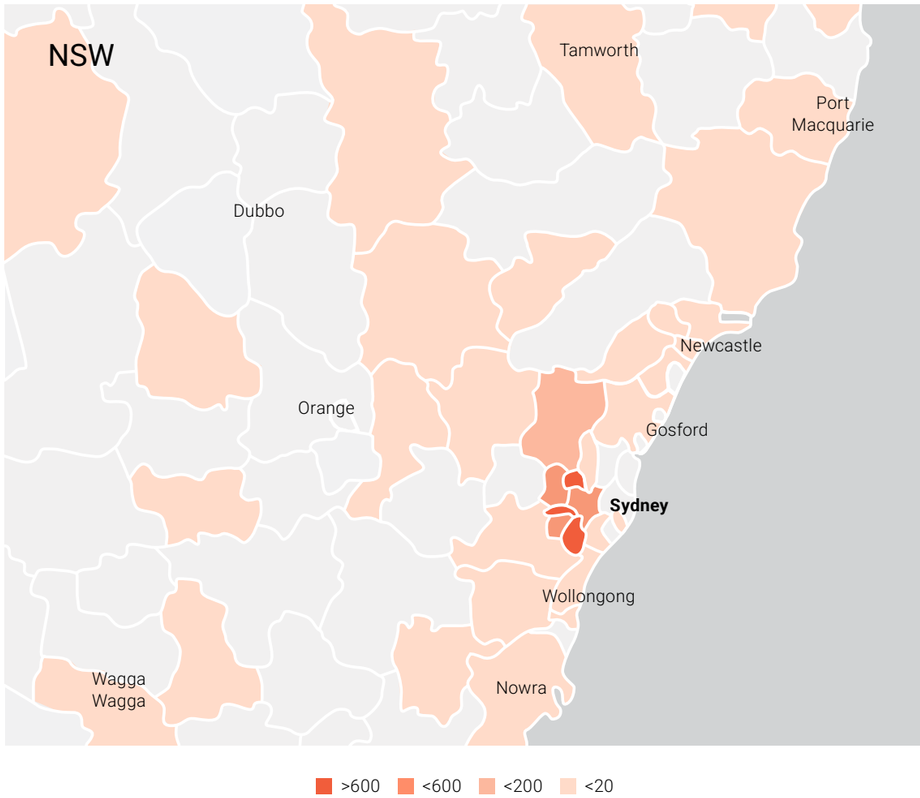


Figure 2. Student engagements in our programs across NSW

Strong growth in applications to UNSW through the Gateway Admission Pathway

In 2025, the Gateway Admission Pathway received over 5,800 applications – the most since its inception. Offers and enrolments remained strong, reflecting the program's continued appeal and impact in widening access to UNSW.

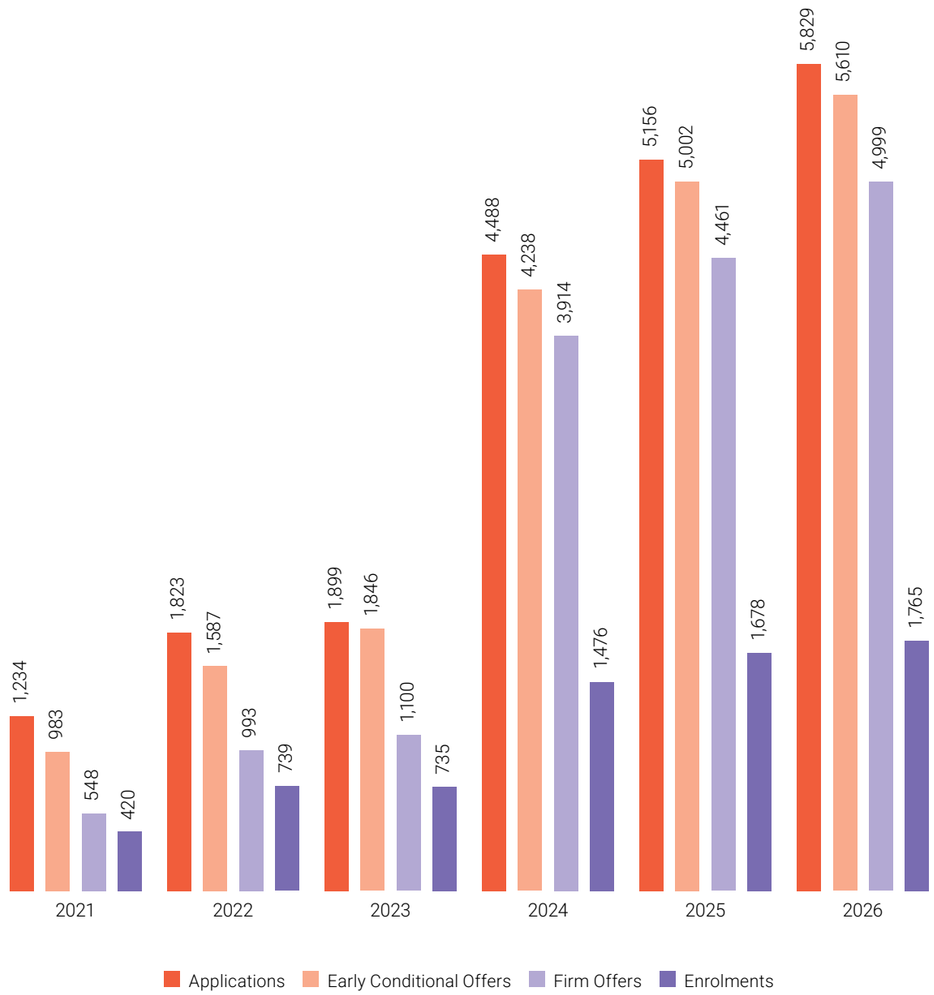


Figure 3. Applications, offers and enrolments through the Gateway Admission Pathway 2021 – 2026

Our impact

Widening Participation Target

UNSW's progress in widening participation has prompted the original 2027 target to be brought forward to 2026.

The target aims for 25% of commencing undergraduate students to come from low-SES backgrounds, be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or have attended a Gateway partner school. As of Term 1 2026, access stands at 24.6%. Notably, over 85% of these enrolments entered through the Gateway Admission Pathway.

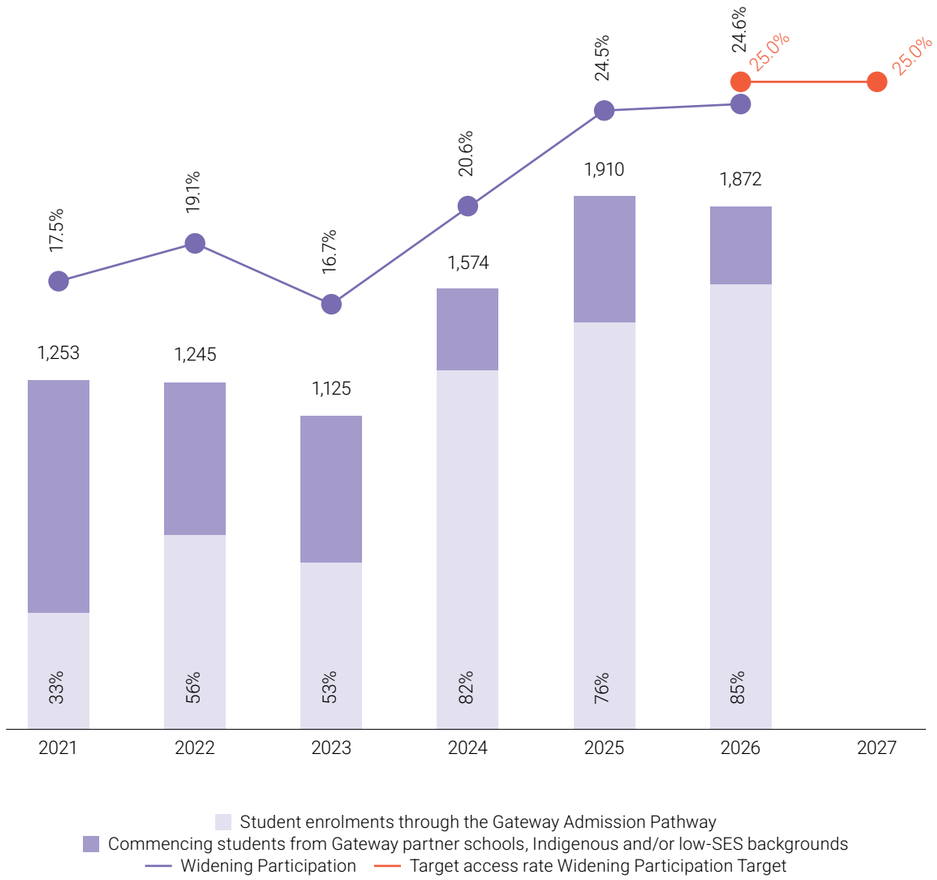


Figure 6. Progress towards the Widening Participation Target and contribution of enrolments through the Gateway Admission Pathway

Preferred university among students from low-SES backgrounds

Applications through the Universities Admissions Centre show UNSW is maintaining its place as the preferred university among students from low-SES backgrounds.

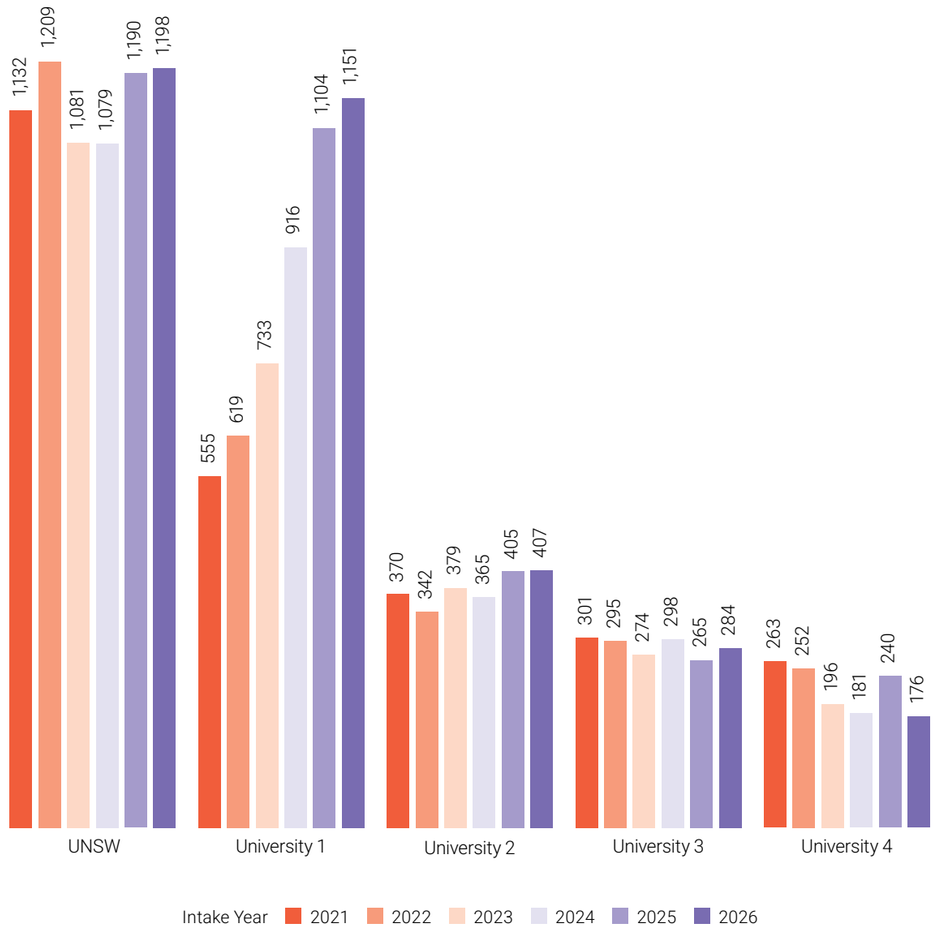


Figure 4. Preferred university by students from low-SES backgrounds in Universities Admissions Centre applications

Sustained engagement supports progression to enrolment

Of the Year 12 students who engaged in the Gateway Program in 2025 (3,575), more than half applied to UNSW through the Gateway Admission Pathway and over 18% (663) enrolled in 2026.

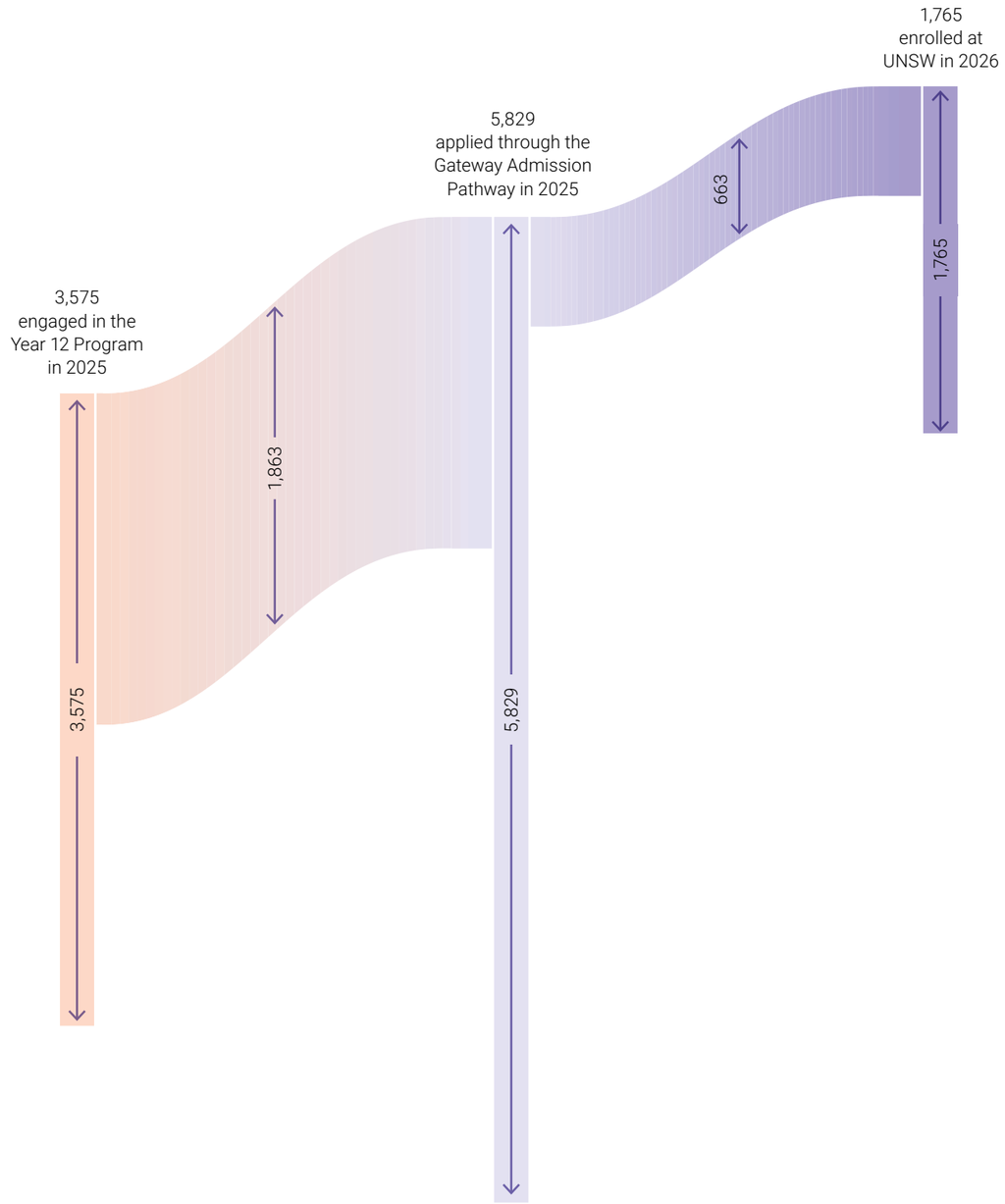


Figure 5. Progression of students engaged in the Year 12 Gateway Program to application through the Gateway Admission Pathway and enrolment at UNSW

Students admitted through the Gateway Admission Pathway are represented across more UNSW undergraduate programs year-on-year

In Term 1 2026, students admitted through the Gateway Admission Pathway were enrolled in 60% of UNSW's undergraduate programs.

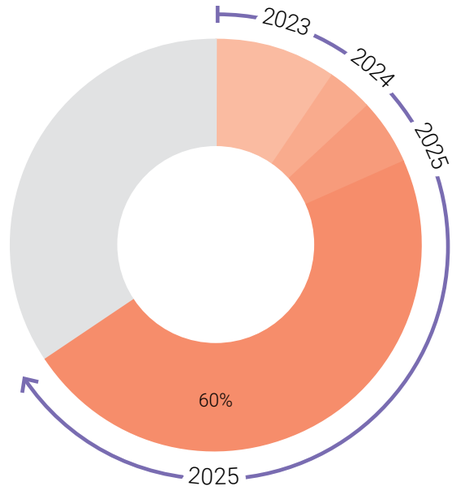


Figure 7. Percentage of UNSW undergraduate programs with students enrolled through the Gateway Admission Pathway

Transforming UNSW's undergraduate community

The Gateway Admission Pathway has had a positive impact on the diversity of UNSW's undergraduate population. Student intake from Gateway partner schools, low-SES backgrounds and Indigenous peoples has increased significantly.

	Gateway Schools	Low-SES	Regional and remote	Indigenous
2023	562	475	53	8
2024	1,030	991	129	10
2025	1,277	944	139	20
2026	1,362	981	133	31

Figure 8. Demographics of students enrolled at UNSW through the Gateway Admission Pathway from 2023 – 2026

Dedicated awards for equity students

$10M
in Advantage Awards

$1.8M
in Equity Scholarships

$1.2M
in Gateway Awards

$850,000
in Accommodation Scholarships

Jonathan Ou

Bachelor of Arts/Education (Secondary)

I attended Prairiewood High School, a Gateway partner school in South West Sydney. My family came to Australia as refugees and believed education was the key to unlocking as many opportunities as possible. My parents strongly encouraged me to be the first in my family to attend university.

I had a passion for English and History, but the realisation that I could become a teacher only became clear to me when I was in Year 11. I knew I had to go to university, but the difficulty was navigating uni applications by myself. My parents, school and community were supportive and helpful, but I didn't have anyone that close to me to ask about their uni experience. I was unsure about what I should expect and the application process seemed overwhelming.

I became involved in the Gateway Program during Year 12 and found it very beneficial for both my HSC and journey to uni. I was impressed that UNSW made the effort to send Student Ambassadors out to my school and it left a big impression on me because it helped me understand what my pathway to university looked like.

I was open to all universities but UNSW's Gateway Program and Pathway provided clarity and empowered my decision making. UNSW clearly told me what I'd receive, how they would support me and what uni would look like. It was the confidence the Gateway Program gave me that drew me to choose UNSW. I really felt supported as an individual, not just another student.

Through Gateway I attended the academic skills sessions for specific subjects like Advanced English and Mathematics. It was really motivating to see how many other students were keen to learn and improve too. I also received free tutoring in English, and discovering different points of view really helped build HSC readiness.

I attended both the UNSW Year 12 on-campus day and UNSW Open Day in 2023. I saw a world beyond the bubble of my home and local high school. It was inspiring but also daunting to know there was so much out there.

Through the Gateway Admission Pathway I received an early conditional offer for a Bachelor of Arts/Education, with a reduced ATAR requirement. It was reassuring. My mum always says that the more choice you have the greater power you hold over your future. Receiving that early conditional offer gave me something in my back pocket.

I received both the $10,000 UNSW Advantage Award and $1,000 Gateway Award when I started first year. I decided to use the money to pay my fees up front, eliminating any HECS debt, which means I can leap into future opportunities with greater freedom and flexibility. Uni is a big commitment and taking away that financial burden took a weight off my shoulders. It was really helpful to know that I was supported and the institution believed in me.

When you start uni you're stepping into a brand new phase of your life where you get to embrace interest areas and who you are as an individual. Gateway is excellent in offering support in that discovery journey. I've been on the receiving end of that as a student, and for the last two years I've been making a contribution as a Student Ambassador.

As a teacher, working with students is already something I'm passionate about, but the work we do as Ambassadors is particularly important and rewarding. Seeing is believing and when students see someone from their area or a similar position, it can have a big impact on them. I hope our presence makes them feel a little less alone.

I'm now in the final year of my degree. As well as supporting me to get to uni, Gateway also opened my eyes to student equity and that has also inspired some ideas of how I see my future as a teacher.

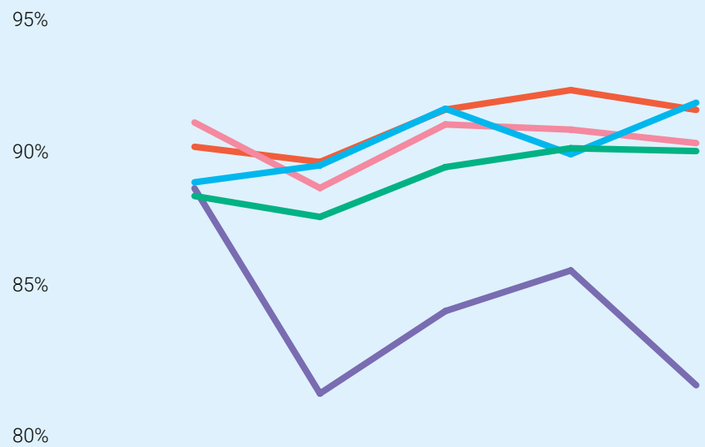
"It was the confidence the Gateway Program gave me that drew me to choose UNSW."

Retention and success

Retention rates

Retention rates refer to the percentage of students who continue their studies by re-enrolling the following year. In 2024 and 2025, students from Gateway partner schools, low-SES backgrounds and regional and remote areas were retained at the University at rates similar to the overall undergraduate population.

This is a strong result considering the Gateway Admission Pathway offers entry to students with ATAR entry requirements up to 15 points below the Lowest Selection Rank. It proves that, once at UNSW, students from equity backgrounds perform on par with their undergraduate peers.



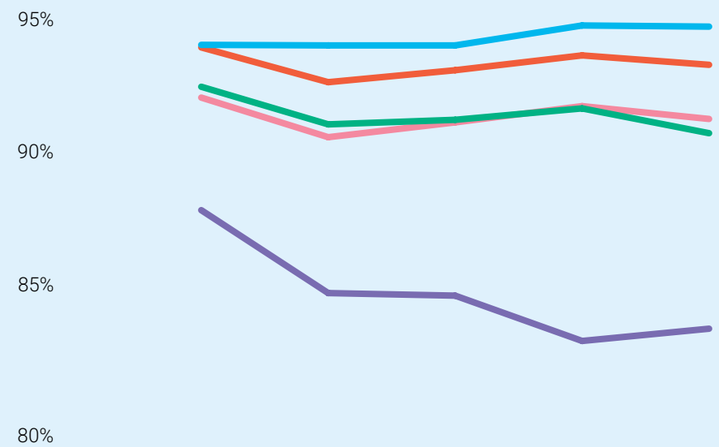
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Low-SES	88.9%	88.0%	90.0%	90.4%	90.3%
Regional / remote	89.3%	89.9%	91.9%	90.2%	92.0%
Gateway school	91.3%	89.1%	91.3%	91.1%	90.6%
Indigenous	89.0%	81.9%	84.8%	86.2%	82.2%
Domestic undergraduate	90.5%	90.0%	91.8%	92.5%	91.8%

Figure 9. Retention rates of equity cohorts compared against overall domestic undergraduates (uses ABS SEIFA 2021 data).

Success rates

Success rates refer to the percentage of units of credit successfully completed by students, relative to the total they attempt. Students from regional and remote areas consistently achieve success rates that are comparable to—or higher than—the UNSW domestic undergraduate average.

Similarly, students from low-SES backgrounds and Gateway partner schools perform strongly, with success rates within 2.5 percentage points of the overall cohort.



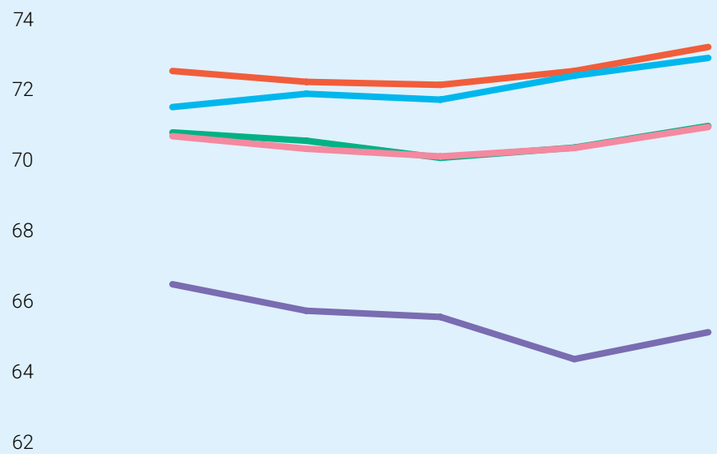
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Low-SES	92.7%	91.3%	91.5%	91.9%	91.0%
Regional / remote	94.1%	94.1%	94.1%	94.8%	94.8%
Gateway school	92.3%	90.9%	91.4%	92.0%	91.5%
Indigenous	88.3%	85.4%	85.3%	83.7%	84.2%
Domestic undergraduate	94.0%	92.8%	93.2%	93.8%	93.4%

Figure 10. Success rates of equity cohorts compared against overall domestic undergraduates (uses ABS SEIFA 2021 data).

Weighted average marks

Weighted average mark (WAM) is the cumulative average of the actual marks a student receives across all completed courses in their program, expressed as a score out of 100.

Students from regional and remote areas achieve WAMs closely aligned with the UNSW domestic undergraduate average. Students from low-SES backgrounds and Gateway partner schools also perform strongly, with WAMs typically within three points of the domestic undergraduate average.



	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Low-SES	70.7	70.5	70.0	70.3	70.4
Regional / remote	71.4	71.8	71.6	72.3	72.8
Gateway school	70.6	70.2	70.0	70.3	70.8
Indigenous	66.4	65.6	65.5	64.3	65.0
Domestic undergraduate	72.4	72.2	72.1	72.4	73.1

Figure 11. Weighted Average Marks of equity cohorts compared against overall domestic undergraduates (uses ABS SEIFA 2016 data).

Acknowledgements

Gateway Admission Pathway and Program Working Group

Student Equity, would like to acknowledge the work of the Gateway Admission Pathway and Program Working Group in contributing to the program and pathway's success.

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	Louise Tabrum	Head of Student Life
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Division of Societal Impact, Equity and Engagement	Ban Pradhan	Data & Strategic Insight Manager, Student Equity
	Josephine Perry	Learning Experiences Manager, Student Equity
	Katie Osborne-Crowley	Head of Strategic Programs & Impact Evaluation, Student Equity
	Paul Savage	Portfolio Director
Faculty of Arts, Design & Architecture	Jennifer Perkins	Manager, Education Innovation
	Josh Wiesberger	Executive Officer
	Maree Higgins	Senior Lecturer
	Thuy Giang	Senior Project Officer, EDI & Student Experience
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	Tracy Huang	Lecturer
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	Karin Watson	Director, Education Excellence
	Michelle Morris	Head of Co-op Program
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	Sabine King	Director, Career Accelerator and Student Engagement
UNSW Canberra	Marty Jones	Head of Student Life & Experience

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The Australian Government

Through the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), the Australian Government provides funding to universities to implement strategies that improve access to undergraduate courses for people from regional and remote Australia, low-SES backgrounds, and Indigenous persons. HEPPP also helps to improve the retention and completion rates of those students.

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