

Strategic Plan  
2015-2020



Strength  
to  
Strength



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY







# Message from the Vice-Chancellor and President

**It is with great pleasure that I introduce the ACU Strategic Plan 2015-2020: Strength to Strength.**

Australian Catholic University (ACU) has developed and grown substantially over the last five years and its strategic positioning has now entered a new phase. ACU has transitioned from a university striving towards ambitious targets to one that is comprehensively embedding excellence.

The University is ambitious in achieving its goals and vision whilst at the same time is clear about its Catholic Identity and Mission. The University

continues a legacy that spans over 2,000 years of the Catholic intellectual tradition's engagement in faith and reason. The ACU Strategic Plan 2015-2020 will ensure we continue to work together towards these shared goals.

I look forward to working with the ACU community and our stakeholders to achieve these goals through the next phase of the University's development.

**Professor Greg Craven AO, GCSG**  
Vice-Chancellor and President  
Australian Catholic University

## ACU 2020 targets

By 2020, our aim is for ACU to be recognised as:

One of the most significant Catholic universities in the world

A vital feature of the Australian university landscape

A world-leading university in its areas of research specialisation

Having a culture of research excellence aligned to its Identity and Mission

An established university with over 30,000 students

Delivering quality programs with an innovative and distinctive learning and teaching experience within the Catholic intellectual tradition

Achieving excellent student satisfaction and graduate outcomes

Being at the forefront in improving the access and outcomes of equity groups

A university of service and a leading institution in the area of community engagement

Having a culture of performance and service excellence

# Our mission

Within the Catholic intellectual tradition and acting in Truth and Love, Australian Catholic University is committed to the pursuit of knowledge, the dignity of the human person and the common good.

# Our vision

ACU is one of the leading Catholic universities in the world and is one of the principal intellectual assets of the Church in Australia. The University exercises nationwide leadership in the key focus areas of Health; Education; Theology and Philosophy; and Social Justice. Guided by the principles of Catholic social teaching, our students, staff and graduates will be influential in bringing about changes in the communities we live in.



# Core values

ACU is founded on a long history of commitment to truth, academic excellence and service, all within the Catholic intellectual tradition. These values are the principles behind all our actions and guide us in living out our Mission and realising our Vision.

## TRUTH

ACU is committed to the lifelong pursuit of knowledge, freely seeking truth through research, critical inquiry and active discovery. The University shares this pursuit through teaching, scholarship and engagement, contributing to the growth and betterment of society.

## ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

ACU, through its pursuit of excellence in teaching and research, strives to produce the highest quality intellectual, educational and learning experiences through innovation and creativity.

## SERVICE

ACU is a university of service. It seeks to serve the wider community through research, education and engagement, especially by providing opportunities for those in need and by educating its students to be socially and morally responsible persons.

ACU pursues all its core values within the Catholic intellectual tradition. The University is committed to serving the common good and upholding the sacredness in life. We respect and welcome all faith traditions and uphold the dignity of all human persons.



# Our stakeholders



## OUR CHURCH

Our Church is central to the ACU Mission in both tradition and spirit. The University is anchored in the Catholic intellectual tradition where faith and reason are compatible with human enquiry. Grounded in faith, ACU nurtures the development of its staff and students to be knowledgeable of self, educated in mind, compassionate in heart and responsive to our community and an ever-changing world.



## OUR STAFF

Our staff are key to the success of the University through their capacity to teach our students, conduct our research and deliver high standards of service. ACU values the contribution of its staff and strives to provide a rewarding working environment that cultivates the knowledge, capabilities and skills of every staff member throughout their entire career at ACU.



## OUR ALUMNI

Our alumni are an essential component of the University and our relationship with them continues far beyond graduation. ACU's alumni within Australia and around the world play an important role in furthering the Mission of the University. In recognition of their importance, we strive to keep our alumni informed about, and engaged with, the University's developments and achievements.



## OUR COMMUNITIES

Our communities are made up of different groups of people, each with their unique needs and characteristics. At ACU, community engagement is recognised as a core function and integral to the University. ACU acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tradition and seeks to work collaboratively with the University's local, national and international partners.



## OUR STUDENTS

Our students are core to ACU's decision-making, and the University's activities are aligned with their aspirations and expectations. Our student body consists of undergraduate and postgraduate students from all over Australia and the world. The University is committed to providing its students with an engaging and responsive learning environment that is also distinctively Catholic. The University equips its students with the practical skills and knowledge required for them to be work-ready professionals, and inspires them to stand up for people in need and causes that matter.



## OUR EMPLOYERS

Our employers are key partners of the University and include Catholic, commercial, educational, government and not-for-profit organisations. The University collaborates closely with partners in all aspects to bring mutual benefits to students, organisations and communities more broadly.

# The planning framework

## OUR MISSION

Within the Catholic intellectual tradition and acting in Truth and Love, Australian Catholic University is committed to the pursuit of knowledge, the dignity of the human person and the common good.

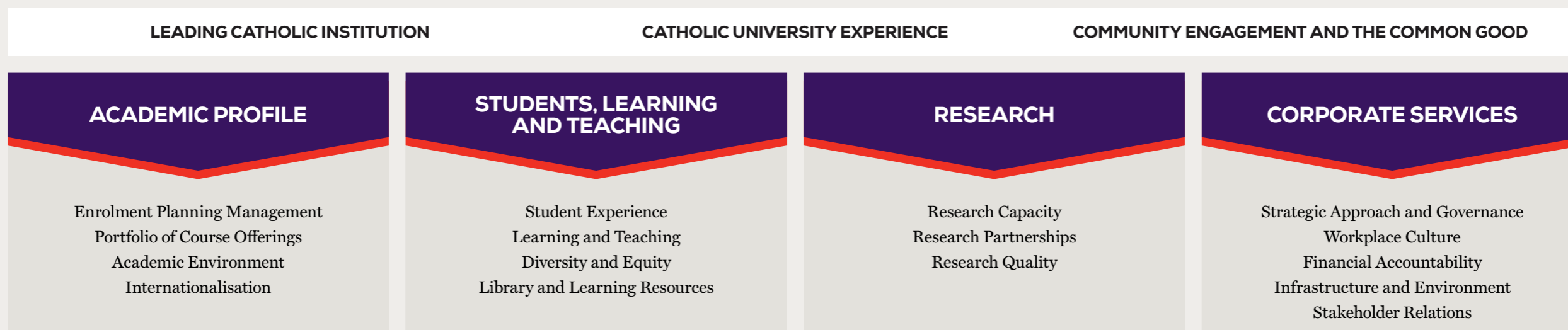


## OUR VISION

Australian Catholic University is one of the leading Catholic universities in the world and is one of the principal intellectual assets of the Church in Australia. The University exercises nationwide leadership in the key focus areas of Health; Education; Theology and Philosophy; and Social Justice. Guided by the principles of Catholic social teaching, our students, staff and graduates will be influential in bringing about changes in the communities we live in.



## ACU'S CATHOLIC IDENTITY



## UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE TARGETS





# Strategic goals

## ACU's Catholic Identity

Goal: ACU sustains a strong and visible commitment to the mission of the Catholic Church in Australia by engaging in the Catholic intellectual tradition, and is guided by the values of truth, excellence and service.

KEY RESULT AREAS AND UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS		
<p><b>LEADING CATHOLIC INSTITUTION</b></p> <p>The University is recognised by the Catholic Church and community as a leading Australian Catholic institution with the hallmarks of the Catholic intellectual tradition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic partnerships</li> <li>• Engagement with Mission and Values</li> <li>• Authentic Catholic university</li> </ul>	<p><b>CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p>The University provides students, staff and community with a university experience that is genuinely Catholic in terms of Identity, Mission, curriculum, culture and intellect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic policy capacity</li> <li>• Integration of Catholic social principles</li> <li>• Staff formation in the ACU Mission</li> </ul>	<p><b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND THE COMMON GOOD</b></p> <p>The University is a leading institution in the area of community engagement, consistent with the Catholic social principles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality and impact of community engagement programs</li> <li>• Mission-focused research</li> </ul>

## Academic Profile

Goal: ACU, through its pursuit of academic excellence, is recognised as a provider of innovative and quality higher education courses, delivered by leading academics, to meet the needs of a diverse student body in conjunction with our partners and the community.

KEY RESULT AREAS AND UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS			
<p><b>ENROLMENT PLANNING MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>The University manages its enrolment profile to ensure sustained viability across disciplines, funding categories and campuses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student and enrolment profile</li> <li>• Market share</li> <li>• Articulation rates</li> </ul>	<p><b>PORTFOLIO OF COURSE OFFERINGS</b></p> <p>The University delivers quality pathway programs, undergraduate, postgraduate and executive education courses, in conjunction with partners that are aligned with the University's Mission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course profile</li> <li>• Student satisfaction</li> <li>• Core Curriculum</li> <li>• Pathway programs</li> <li>• External partnerships</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>The University has robust academic governance that supports a high quality academic environment that is informed by scholarship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic quality assurance</li> <li>• Academic staff profile</li> <li>• Staff satisfaction</li> <li>• External accreditation</li> </ul>	<p><b>INTERNATIONALISATION</b></p> <p>The University is a globally engaged institution and a pre-eminent Catholic university in the Asia Pacific region that leverages its Mission and strengths to support high quality international teaching, learning, research and community engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global profile</li> <li>• International classroom</li> <li>• Mission-focused collaboration</li> </ul>

## Students, Learning and Teaching

Goal: ACU pursues excellence in all areas of teaching and provides its students with a distinctive, responsive and relevant learning experience.

KEY RESULT AREAS AND UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS			
<p><b>STUDENT EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p>The University develops its students to become educated, skilled and ethical graduates through a distinctive learning experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student experience and satisfaction</li> <li>• Student support services</li> <li>• Student engagement in university life</li> <li>• Student living and learning communities</li> </ul>	<p><b>LEARNING AND TEACHING</b></p> <p>The University enriches and enhances the quality of learning and teaching experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality learning and teaching experiences</li> <li>• Learning technology</li> <li>• Student retention and success</li> <li>• Graduate attributes and employability</li> </ul>	<p><b>DIVERSITY AND EQUITY</b></p> <p>The University improves the participation, progress and outcomes for people from identified equity groups and promotes equal opportunities for academic success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equity group enrolment</li> <li>• Equity group retention and success</li> <li>• Equity group attainment</li> </ul>	<p><b>LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES</b></p> <p>The University provides its students and staff with access to quality information resources, excellent learning spaces and services, in support of the University's teaching and research activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality library experience</li> <li>• Resource provision and access</li> <li>• Physical and technological infrastructure</li> <li>• Research skills support</li> <li>• Copyright services</li> </ul>





## Research

Goal: ACU is a world-leading research university in its areas of specialisation and has a culture of research excellence that is aligned to its Identity and Mission.

KEY RESULT AREAS AND UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS		
<p><b>RESEARCH CAPACITY</b></p> <p>The University enhances its capacity to support its research strengths by ensuring an outstanding research environment for its areas of strategic priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research infrastructure and resources</li> <li>• Research grants</li> <li>• Competitive funding</li> </ul>	<p><b>RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS</b></p> <p>The University strengthens its research reputation, drawing in particular on partnerships with national and international centres of research excellence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research partnerships</li> </ul>	<p><b>RESEARCH QUALITY</b></p> <p>The University produces high quality research outcomes that are above or well-above world standard in targeted research areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellence in Research for Australia</li> </ul>



## Corporate Services

Goal: ACU has a culture of performance and service excellence.

KEY RESULT AREAS AND UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS				
<p><b>STRATEGIC APPROACH AND GOVERNANCE</b></p> <p>The University is strategic in its approach to achieve its Mission and Vision. The University is committed to continual improvement and implements effective governance and management practices to deliver high quality outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with the Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Risk and assurance</li> <li>• Legal and governance compliance</li> <li>• Service quality</li> </ul>	<p><b>WORKPLACE CULTURE, STAFF PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>The University has a sustainable staffing profile that meets the changing needs of the University's operations. The University continues to cultivate the knowledge, capabilities and skills of its staff to align with the strategic directions and priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace culture</li> <li>• Workforce profile</li> <li>• Workforce performance</li> </ul>	<p><b>FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY</b></p> <p>The University has a sustainable business model to assure long-term financial viability and overall financial strength. The business model sustains the quality of academic and professional activities of the University.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial performance</li> <li>• Budget planning</li> </ul>	<p><b>INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>The University's physical and technological infrastructure provides a high quality academic and professional environment. The University's practices are sustainable and aligned with its strategic directions and priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical infrastructure</li> <li>• Information technology infrastructure</li> <li>• Social infrastructure</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> </ul>	<p><b>STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS</b></p> <p>The University has mutually beneficial relationships with its stakeholders including Church, government, industry, staff, students, alumni, donors, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University reputation</li> <li>• Student satisfaction</li> <li>• Staff engagement</li> </ul>

# Planning at ACU

## ACU STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

The ACU Strategic Plan 2015-2020 is the highest level plan of the University and is guided by our Mission, Vision and Values. The Strategic Plan has been developed through a series of focused consultations with a range of stakeholders and was endorsed by the ACU Senate on 18 September 2014.

The ACU Strategic Plan 2015-2020 has five high-level Strategic Goals. The Strategic Plan places ACU's Catholic Identity as the overarching goal which extends across four Strategic Goal pillars of Academic Profile; Students, Learning and Teaching; Research; and Corporate Services.

Each Strategic Goal contains a number of Key Result Areas and associated University Performance Indicators and Targets.

## UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

The University Performance Indicators are included in the ACU Strategic Plan 2015-2020 publication and are used to guide and measure performance.

The University Performance Targets are specific statements about the level of performance or a milestone that is to be achieved. The University Performance Targets are included within a supplementary document and are reviewed annually to reflect the changing internal and external environment.

The high-level University Performance Indicators and Targets do not measure all of the University's activities. Further breakdowns and/or additional measures are identified within the Portfolio Programs, Organisational Unit Plans and Individual Performance Plans.

The University's progress against the Strategic Goals and Key Result Areas is monitored through the annual Traffic Light Report. The report provides an update on key project milestones and an analysis of the high-level University Performance Indicators and Targets.

## PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Planning Framework demonstrates how the ACU Mission guides the different elements within each of the Strategic, Portfolio, Organisational Unit and Individual Performance Plans. Each level adds more detail and is further integrated with the Enabling Frameworks which provide the direction to inform the management of University-wide initiatives.

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES

The Annual Priorities are the key projects identified by the Vice-Chancellor and President as the strategic focus for the year. The Annual Priorities are included in the relevant Portfolio Programs and Principal Senior Officers collaborate to ensure the successful delivery and completion of these projects.

## ENABLING FRAMEWORKS

The Enabling Frameworks provide the additional information necessary for the University to deliver the Strategic Goals and Key Result Areas of the ACU Strategic Plan 2015-2020. The Enabling Frameworks are University-wide and are incorporated within the relevant Portfolio Programs and Organisational Unit Plans.

## PORTFOLIO PROGRAMS

The Portfolio Programs position and communicate the principal strategies and priorities that each Portfolio area will undertake between 2015-2020. The Portfolio Programs respond to all elements of the Strategic Plan and provide an important link to the Organisational Unit Plans. The Portfolio Programs are reviewed annually to ensure currency and alignment with the strategic direction of the University.

## ORGANISATIONAL UNIT PLANS

The Organisational Unit Plans are annual plans that detail the projects and activities to be undertaken by each Organisational Unit. The Organisational Unit Plans vary in content with individual strategies and targets/milestones responding directly to the Portfolio Programs.

## INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE PLANS

Individual Performance Plans are developed each year as part of the University's annual performance review and planning process for staff. The objectives within each Individual Performance Plan respond directly to the Organisational Unit Plan.

# ACU's strategic approach:

## Planning, Quality and Risk Framework

ACU's strategic approach is guided by its Mission and Vision with a strong commitment to quality and excellence. This approach integrates the planning, quality and risk activities and has been embedded within all areas of the University's operations. The Plan, Implement, Review and Improve (PIRI) cycle is fundamental to this approach and further strengthens the University's focus on continual improvement and innovation.



### PLAN

Mission-focused  
Goals and targets  
Environmental analysis  
Stakeholder engagement  
Opportunities and risks

### IMPLEMENT

Infrastructure and resources  
Systems and processes  
Stakeholder focus  
Service excellence  
Risk treatment

### REVIEW

Analysis and reporting  
Environmental monitoring  
Benchmarking  
Audit and compliance  
Risk evaluation

### IMPROVE

Best practice  
Improvement and innovation  
Learning and development  
Evidence-based decision-making  
Risk optimisation

If you would like further information regarding the University's Planning, Quality and Risk Framework, please contact the Office of Planning and Strategic Management ([opsm@acu.edu.au](mailto:opsm@acu.edu.au)).



OFFICE OF PLANNING AND  
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

[acu.edu.au/strategicplan](http://acu.edu.au/strategicplan)

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