



ACU Education and Student Success Plan 2033

Cura personalis

Introduction

Every student brings hopes, ambitions, and experiences to their journey in higher education. Some are thinking about coming to university for the first time, while others are returning after time away.

Each student carries with them the anticipation that university will offer knowledge, friendship, opportunity, growth, and purpose. Supporting that learning experience and sense of agency is a great responsibility, and one that ACU takes seriously.

The Education and Student Success Plan (ESSP) affirms ACU's responsibility as a Catholic university to support the growth of our students as a whole person, preparing them for success in their studies, their careers, and their contribution to the flourishing of humans and communities and giving them the opportunity to engage with the Catholic intellectual tradition.

The students of 2033 will bring new ambitions and face new challenges. While the future is unpredictable, we do know that a responsive

education will be flexible, enabled by AI, globally connected, and deeply personalised. Students will anticipate a learning environment that combines knowledge with professional practice, wellbeing, and purpose.

Our responsibility is to prepare them for futures that are rapidly changing and cannot be fully known – equipping them with the skills, resilience, and confidence to lead and navigate with integrity.

The ESSP meets these challenges through six transformation domains that shape how we work together to support learner success by reimagining curricula, strengthening industry connections, expanding student leadership, advancing digital learning, and enhancing equity, cultural inclusion, and participation. We will do this in partnership with students, respecting their voice, insight and leadership as essential to shaping the future of learning.

This plan is more than a set of projects. It is a commitment to Catholic social teaching and student-centred transformation. It recognises and celebrates our students as lifelong learners, leaders, and partners in making a difference. By working together, evaluating our progress, and continually innovating, we will achieve the goals of Vision 2033 and build a lasting culture of excellence, care and whole-person education.



Professor Tania Broadley
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Education

Our journey to develop the plan

The plan started with students – future, current and alumni – and looked ahead to the learners of tomorrow.

Their voices set the direction. The conversation then broadened to include insights from thought leaders, industry, ACU executive members and teams, committees, forums and staff across the university.

The result is a plan anchored in what matters most to the students and the people that teach and support them – a shared commitment shaped by the whole ACU community.





13 student focus group sessions with our future, current and alumni cohorts



10 thematic internal and external leaders' interviews



19 videos of key trends and the future of learning, with **751** views



4 faculty academic staff information sessions



160 comments/ideas on the discussion board



13 university governance and management committees/forums



ACU Education and Student Success Plan

 3,000+ items of student feedback via recent surveys also informed the thinking behind this plan.



Our students in 2033

To ensure this multi-year plan is fit-for-purpose and future-focused, it is important to have both current and future students at the core of the Education and Student Success Plan.

2025 STUDENTS	2033 STUDENTS	KEY SHIFT
Digital adopters	AI-native learners	Raised with fully integrated AI tutors, XR/AR, adaptive platforms from school. The use of AI moves from a novelty and support to the norm and a part of the designed infrastructure.
Degree-seeking	Skills-first, modular learning	Expect modular, personalised, stackable microcredentials; mix-and-match pathways. A shift from fixed pathways to student-curated learning journeys.
Balancing uni with life	Designing life with integrated learning	Work-study is fully normalised; students optimise education around jobs or caregiving. Work-integrated learning is a baseline, not a bonus.



2025 STUDENTS	2033 STUDENTS	KEY SHIFT
Expecting support	Expecting personalisation	Mental health and wellbeing are non-negotiable core services. Expect designed-in community, peer-to-peer networks, and human mentoring. From reactive support to proactive, embedded wellbeing.
Increasing diversity	Diversity is the default	From accommodating diversity to designing for diversity and equity.
Seeing university as authority and degree still has status value	Seeing university as partner and service provider	Expects clear return on investment (ROI). Universities must prove their relevance, not simply assume it.
Belonging is a challenge	Belonging is an expectation	From struggling to feel connected to expecting connection to be built into the experience. Intentional digital and human spaces are the norm.

Our ambition

By 2033, ACU will be truly ‘student-centred’.

In alignment with Vision 2033, ACU’s Catholic mission is to empower students and staff to grow intellectually, socially and spiritually in a learning environment that respects the dignity of every person, welcomes diversity, champions equity, and promotes dialogue between Christian faith and the achievements of human reason.

The Education and Student Success Plan is our multi-year roadmap to ensure the university is truly ‘student-centred’ by 2033. It presents a bold, future-focused approach to transform learning, teaching, and student experience – anticipating the evolving needs, expectations and realities of its learners.

This plan focuses on building inclusive, culturally responsive, flexible and technology-enabled education that empowers all students – across all backgrounds and study modes – to thrive ethically and with purpose in a rapidly changing world.

Through its delivery, it will position ACU as a university of choice to learners of today and tomorrow, and those seeking the flourishing of the people and communities in which they live and serve.



Transformation domains

The Education and Student Success Plan will drive learning, teaching and student experience transformation across six key domains.

It will create an active learning ecosystem that empowers students to co-create their learning journey through meaningful engagement, collaboration, reflection and real-world application; supported by educators, systems, and structures that value the growth of the whole person.

Mission

Guided by ACU's mission, vision and values



Students
(experience and success)



People
(culture and leadership)



Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)



Learning experience
(contemporary curriculum)



Infrastructure
(physical and digital)



Data and insights

Transformation roadmap

DOMAIN	CURRENT REALITY 2025	STUDENT-READY 2033
Students (experience and success)	Fragmented services with variability across campuses; limited sense of belonging and uneven support.	A unified, values-driven and AI personalised student experience that supports formation, wellbeing and lifelong success. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and knowledges are defined in service provision, embedded and celebrated.
People (culture and leadership)	Inconsistent staff development and workload; pastoral effort undervalued; uneven digital fluency. Formation can feel abstract and hard to connect with across diverse student and staff cohorts.	Mission-led, AI-capable educators and leaders with access to tools and development opportunities. A vibrant, values-led culture of belonging and purpose where Catholic identity is lived, not lectured – relevant, relational, and embodied across all campuses and roles.
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)	Work underway to extend the notion of scholarship beyond traditional teaching to include co-curricular and extra-curricular learning.	A unified education-research culture informed by the Catholic intellectual tradition. Scholarship is active, current, collaborative and clearly connected to teaching, learning and professional practice. It is embedded at all levels of the university – from academic leadership to classroom practice, and visibly contributes to advancing knowledge, innovative pedagogy and student outcomes.



Transformation roadmap

DOMAIN	CURRENT REALITY 2025	STUDENT-READY 2033
Learning experience (contemporary curriculum)	Silos exist by campus or school; static content; limited flexibility. Inconsistent quality and availability; expensive and inequity in access across sites. Fragmented employer and community engagement; uneven access to WIL opportunities across disciplines and regions.	Modular, values-led, future-focused and AI-enhanced curriculum pathways with strong industry-relevance and an entrepreneurial mindset at its core. Digital-first, inclusive, and AI-integrated learning resources accessible to all learners. Industry partnerships, entrepreneurial ecosystems and community networks easily navigated to elevate student learning opportunities (eg, WIL, community placement, pathway transitions) across all ACU campuses.
Infrastructure (physical and digital)	Physical spaces often prioritise lectures and traditional tutorials over collaboration; digital spaces are underdeveloped, inconsistent, and inequitable across campuses. Disjointed platforms, inconsistent functionality and access across locations.	Immersive, culturally sensitive, hybrid-first infrastructure that centres student experience, community, and access – both online and on campus – across all locations. Seamless, AI-powered, student-centred digital ecosystem available nationally.
Data and insights	Fragmented data systems; outdated data model; low trust; unclear governance.	Reliable, accessible, ethically governed data ecosystem that empowers students, staff, and strategic decision-making across all campuses.



What success looks like

Together, our six domains create a student-centred culture where:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and knowledges are embedded and celebrated
- belonging and equity are built into every stage of the student journey
- staff feel supported and have opportunities to grow and develop in their roles
- staff and students work in authentic partnership
- teaching and curriculum are inspired by Catholic intellectual tradition, grounded in scholarship and real-world relevance
- infrastructure enables inclusion, collaboration and access
- data is used ethically to provide personalised support and to drive improvements that students can see and trust



Performance indicators

DOMAIN	EARLY SUCCESSES (PROGRESS)	OUTCOMES (RESULTS)
Students (experience and success)	Increase the proportion of commencing students who report belonging and confidence in support during their first semester. Ensure students across campuses and cohorts experience equitable access to services, support, and opportunities.	Close gaps in retention, progression and completion between underrepresented cohorts and the overall student body and place us in the top quartile of benchmark universities. Demonstrate that students see their voices have shaped meaningful improvements in their education and experience.
People (culture and leadership)	Expand professional development opportunities for staff focusing on improving student outcomes in line with mission. Increase staff reporting confidence in using digital/AI tools to enhance teaching and support.	Staff feel supported, valued and able to thrive. Staff see clear opportunities for progression and recognition and report that development improves their ability to support student learning.
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)	Embed SoTL practices into curriculum review and design. Support staff engagement in SoTL projects that incorporate student feedback or partnership.	Deliver teaching that students affirm is engaging, evidence-informed, and inclusive. Demonstrate that SoTL projects involving students contribute to improved learning outcomes.



Performance indicators

DOMAIN	EARLY SUCCESSES (PROGRESS)	OUTCOMES (RESULTS)
Learning experience (contemporary curriculum)	Integrate applied and real-world learning so students experience authentic links between study and practice and develop essential future skills (eg, leadership). Streamline WIL processes so students, staff, and industry partners experience clear, well-supported, and effective placements/projects. Offer flexible and interdisciplinary pathways that expand student choice and relevance.	Students report confidence in their abilities to lead and navigate the future with entrepreneurial mindset. Equip graduates to transition successfully into purposeful employment, entrepreneurial ventures, or further study. Evidence of students affirming that curriculum connects to their career goals, values, and purpose. Demonstrate that graduates are prepared for lifelong learning, adaptable to change and remain connected as alumni.
Infrastructure (physical and digital)	Achieve and maintain consistent baseline standards for digital access and learning resources across all campuses. Improve inclusivity and cultural safety of learning environments (physical and digital).	Create learning environments where students feel included, connected, and able to collaborate meaningfully. Demonstrate that infrastructure is sustainable, future-focused, and supportive of long-term success.
Data and insights	Use data to deliver timely feedback and insights to inform decision making. Act visibly on student insights so improvements to services are seen in the same academic year.	Demonstrate that decisions informed by student insights consistently lead to better learning, wellbeing, and employability outcomes.



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