



UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Education and Employment Legislation Committee

Higher Education Support Amendment (Response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report) Bill 2023 [Provisions]

Topic	Question	Answer
Uncapping Indigenous CSP	Your submission to the Accord Panel recommended providing uncapping Commonwealth Supported Places for all students with Indigenous status. Upon what evidence did you base this recommendation?	Please see the Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2022-2025: https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/UA-Indigenous-Strategy-2022-25.pdf

Uncapping Indigenous CSP	<p>a) In your submission you noted the growth rate for Indigenous students at your universities was 3 per cent prior to the demand driven system being introduced, yet it grew rapidly upon introducing increasing to 8.2% each year. Can you please provide the data that you used to calculate this?</p> <p>b) Can you also provide the data for Bachelor degree completions for the same student cohort?</p>	<p>A. According to the Department of Education, the number of commencing Indigenous students in 2010 was 4,017. In 2017, it was 8,734, which translates to an annual growth rate of 8.2 per cent between 2010 and 2017. Source: https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/2021-section-11-equity-groups</p> <p>B. Based on cohort analysis done by the Department of Education (https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiNTA4MTZjZmMtZjRjNS00NzcxLWEzZTktODZmNDZkNGEwM2Y4IiwidCI6ImRkMGNmZDE1LTQ1NTgtNGIxMi04YmFkLWVhMjY5ODRmYzQxNyJ9), the six-year completion rates for Indigenous students commencing Bachelor level studies at Table A and Table B institutions in the years between 2010 and 2016.</p> <p>Commencing year: Completion rate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2010: 40.5% • 2011: 40.0% • 2012: 41.3% • 2013: 41.1% • 2014: 41.1% • 2015: 41.5% • 2016: 41.3%
Uncapping Indigenous CSP	<p>What commitments will the 39 UA member universities provide to ensure there isn't a focus wholly on enrolments of Indigenous students, but on attainment success?</p>	<p>UA's Indigenous Strategy 2022-2025 outlines the work that universities are undertaking to ensure that Indigenous students achieve success:</p> <p>Student support services are key to supporting student success. For Indigenous students, these have largely been delivered by on-campus Indigenous centres. Whilst these centres are integral to student support, the student support load needs to be shared more equitably across campus, for example, student support provided by faculties. Indigenous higher education attainment is growing, in line with increases in participation. Indigenous Bachelor award course completions grew by 106.4 per cent between 2008 and 2019. Postgraduate research course completions rose 121.2 per cent and postgraduate coursework completions rose 146.7 per cent.</p>

		<p>Completion rates have improved somewhat in recent years, but the gap is far larger than it is for enrolments. In 2019, nine-year completion rates for Indigenous students were 47 per cent, significantly below 74 per cent for non-Indigenous students. As a result, historic increases in access aren't translating into equivalent growth in attainment. Under this Strategy, universities will work to translate historic growth in Indigenous access more consistently into success and degree attainment.</p> <p>Pathway programs for Indigenous students support a level playing field for Indigenous students applying to university. Similarly, institutions should develop and/or refine initiatives to improve pathways for their Indigenous students into postgraduate study, academic employment and other work.</p>
Uncapping Indigenous CSP	The Productivity Commission Report in 2019 titled "The Demand Driven University System: A Mixed Report Card" clearly noted that whilst the demand driven system was effective for increasing university enrolments, it was not effective for completions, in fact it had a detrimental effect with the rate of non-completions increasing, particularly for equity cohort students. How will time, experience and lessons learnt by the sector ensure that student completions	As above.

	improve along with enrolment levels?	
Uncapping Indigenous CSP	ATN has warned that supports for increasing attainment is expensive. They reference a recent study in their submission to the Interim Report noting the average annual cost for a full-time undergraduate student from an equity group comes at a cost of \$109,430 annually compared to \$17,360 for other students. That's an increased delivery cost of 53% between equity cohorts. Do you support these findings?	<p>We are aware of the research undertaken by Edith Cowan University on this issue and support the findings of the report.</p> <p>We note the report finds that while the average cost of supporting low-SES students was higher than other students, universities which enrol greater numbers of these students benefit from the presence of significant economies of scale.</p> <p>See: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07294360.2022.2057450?journalCode=cher20</p>
Uncapping Indigenous CSP	If we are to shift the focus from purely enrolment levels to	Uncapping Indigenous CSPs is not intended to shift the focus from enrolments to student attainment. These two components are inseparable. Ensuring all capable students have the opportunity to attend university and succeed in a course of their choice is the intent of uncapping Indigenous CSPs.

	student attainment levels, what additional supports need to be provided to achieve this, and at what additional cost?	Achieving the targets outlined in the Accord interim report would require significant investment from a range of stakeholders, primarily the Australian Government. Lifting resourcing and funding to meet increased demand from both school leaver and non-school leaver cohorts (mature age and upskilling/reskilling students) is essential to ensure students can access education when they need to but to receive individualised and effective supports throughout their education.
Uncapping Indigenous CSP	<p>a) In relation to the implementation of the uncapping of CSP's for Indigenous students, was the funding model, including any changes to the existing arrangements for universities, discussed with you prior to it being introduced to the Parliament?</p> <p>b) What advice you did you receive regarding this change? Please table any communications received by the Minister, his Office or the Department of Education in relation to any funding changes to the existing allocations to universities.</p>	<p>A) Universities Australia has long called for the extension of the demand-driven system to all Indigenous Australians, regardless of where they live. UA has been engaging with the Universities Accord panel on this issue since the panel first called for submissions in December 2022.</p> <p>B) UA understood from discussions with the Department that the funding model would mirror previous changes to extend the demand-driven system to some Indigenous populations.</p>

Uncapping Indigenous CSP	<p>Based on advice provided by the Department, there is to be a 'one-off' adjustment to universities Maximum Basic Grant Funding for 2024 when this commences and then future funding would flow from the demand driven 'bucket'. Does this correlate with your understanding of how this will be delivered?</p>	<p>This aligns with our early understanding.</p>
Uncapping Indigenous CSP	<p>Are you concerned that this reduction in the existing maximum basic grant funding will reduce the ability to offer places and supports to other students, including those from other equity groups?</p>	<p>We will continue to discuss with the Department of Education as details are finalised.</p>

Uncapping Indigenous CSP	<p>a) How many Indigenous students are enrolled at all universities within your group?</p> <p>b) Can you please provide this broken down by university?</p> <p>c) Of those enrolled, how many Indigenous students are full fee-paying students versus those in a Commonwealth Supported Place?</p>	<p>These questions are best directed to the Department of Education which will be able to provide the Committee with the data requested.</p>
Uncapping Indigenous CSP	How many of your 39 member universities are currently at, over or below their CSP cap?	This question is best directed to the Department of Education which will be able to provide the Committee with the data requested.
Uncapping Indigenous CSP	Given your strong support for equity and uncapping Indigenous places to support Indigenous advancement and more opportunities for Indigenous Australians, do you support this uncapping being limited to only Table A providers?	UA would welcome uncapped places for Indigenous students being made available through all higher education providers.

Uncapping Indigenous CSP	<p>a) Can you please provide in the most recent year of data collected the number of applications you have received from Indigenous students at each of your member universities?</p> <p>b) Can you provide this data broken down by university?</p> <p>c) Can you provide this data broken down by equity cohort?</p> <p>d) Can you provide this data broken down by metropolitan, regional, rural and remote students?</p>	<p>These questions are best directed to the Department of Education which will be able to provide the Committee with the data requested.</p>
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Uncapping Indigenous CSP	<p>a) Can you please provide in the most recent year of data collected the number of offers made to Indigenous students at each of your member universities?</p> <p>b) Can you provide this data broken down by university?</p> <p>c) Can you provide this data broken down by equity cohort?</p> <p>d) Can you provide this data broken down by metropolitan, regional, rural and remote students?</p>	<p>These questions are best directed to the Department of Education which will be able to provide the Committee with the data requested.</p>
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Uncapping Indigenous CSP	<p>a) Can you please provide in the most recent year of data collected the number of acceptances by Indigenous students at each of your member universities?</p> <p>b) Can you provide this data broken down by university?</p> <p>c) Can you provide this data broken down by equity cohort?</p> <p>d) Can you provide this data broken down by location of the students i.e. metropolitan, regional, rural and remote?</p> <p>e) Of those applications and acceptances, how many received an offer for a Commonwealth Supported Place? Can you provide this data broken down by university, equity cohort and location of the</p>	<p>These questions are best directed to the Department of Education which will be able to provide the Committee with the data requested.</p>
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	students (i.e. metropolitan, regional, rural, remote)?	
Uncapping Indigenous CSP	<p>a) How will uncapping Commonwealth Supported Places for Indigenous Students change enrolments at your universities?</p> <p>b) Have you been advised how the funding will be adjusted for this for next year?</p>	<p>A) Universities Australia is hopeful that the uncapping of places will increase the number of Indigenous students who participate in higher education.</p> <p>B) No.</p>

<p>Uncapping Indigenous CSP</p>	<p>In terms of completion rates for Indigenous students, they have historically been low compared to that of other students. The four-year completion rates as at 2021 for Indigenous students is only 26.3% compared to overall completion rates of 40.7%. The six-year completion rates for the same period for Indigenous students is 41.3% compared to an overall completion rate of 62.5%. The nine-year completion rate for the same period for Indigenous students is 50% compared to an overall completion rate of 70.5%. Given this data, how do you believe uncapping Commonwealth Supported Places for Indigenous students will help improve completion outcomes for Indigenous students?</p>	<p>Completion rates for Indigenous students have increased over time as universities have invested in more individualised support programs for these students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The six-year completion rate of Indigenous students from Table A and Table B institutions has increased from 41.9 per cent for the 2005 cohort to 44.1 per cent for the 2016 cohort. • During the same period, the percentage of Indigenous students who were still enrolled after six years has also increased, from 11.7 per cent for the 2005 cohort to 16 per cent for the 2016 cohort. • Also, the percentage of Indigenous students who left in the first year and did not return within six years of commencement fell from 23.4 per cent for the 2005 cohort to 16.5 per cent for the 2016 cohort. <p>Six-year completion rate statistics for various Indigenous student cohorts, 2005 cohort to 2016 cohort</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Commencing Year</th><th>Com plet ed (%)</th><th>Still enroll ed (%)</th><th>Re-enrolled but dropped out (%)</th><th>Never came back after first year (%)</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2005</td><td>41.9</td><td>11.7</td><td>23.0</td><td>23.4</td></tr> <tr> <td>2006</td><td>43.2</td><td>11.7</td><td>24.4</td><td>20.7</td></tr> <tr> <td>2007</td><td>41.3</td><td>12.6</td><td>24.4</td><td>21.7</td></tr> <tr> <td>2008</td><td>43.6</td><td>12.3</td><td>24.8</td><td>19.2</td></tr> <tr> <td>2009</td><td>42.8</td><td>13.4</td><td>24.7</td><td>19.1</td></tr> <tr> <td>2010</td><td>43.6</td><td>13.0</td><td>24.5</td><td>18.9</td></tr> <tr> <td>2011</td><td>43.1</td><td>14.2</td><td>23.4</td><td>19.4</td></tr> <tr> <td>2012</td><td>44.2</td><td>14.4</td><td>22.5</td><td>18.9</td></tr> <tr> <td>2013</td><td>44.4</td><td>14.5</td><td>22.9</td><td>18.1</td></tr> <tr> <td>2014</td><td>44.9</td><td>14.4</td><td>23.7</td><td>17.1</td></tr> <tr> <td>2015</td><td>44.4</td><td>15.7</td><td>23.5</td><td>16.4</td></tr> <tr> <td>2016</td><td>44.1</td><td>16.0</td><td>23.4</td><td>16.5</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Department of Education visual analytics tool, link</p> <p>Note: The figures indicate the six-year completion rates of various cohorts of Indigenous students from Table A and Table B institutions enrolled in courses at Sub-bachelor, Bachelor and Postgraduate levels, as well as the percentage of</p>	Commencing Year	Com plet ed (%)	Still enroll ed (%)	Re-enrolled but dropped out (%)	Never came back after first year (%)	2005	41.9	11.7	23.0	23.4	2006	43.2	11.7	24.4	20.7	2007	41.3	12.6	24.4	21.7	2008	43.6	12.3	24.8	19.2	2009	42.8	13.4	24.7	19.1	2010	43.6	13.0	24.5	18.9	2011	43.1	14.2	23.4	19.4	2012	44.2	14.4	22.5	18.9	2013	44.4	14.5	22.9	18.1	2014	44.9	14.4	23.7	17.1	2015	44.4	15.7	23.5	16.4	2016	44.1	16.0	23.4	16.5
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		<p>students of these cohorts who were still enrolled after six years, the percentage who had re-enrolled but dropped out within six years of commencement, and the percentage who never came back within six years of commencement after leaving at some point in the first year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The trends mentioned earlier have coincided with the trend towards increasing part-time enrolment among Indigenous students. In 2011, 34.4 per cent of Indigenous students at UA member universities were enrolled in part-time studies whereas in 2021, the figure was 40 per cent. <p>Percentage of Indigenous students studying part-time and full-time, 2011 to 2021</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="691 509 2046 668"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of attendance</th><th>2011</th><th>2012</th><th>2013</th><th>2014</th><th>2015</th><th>2016</th><th>2017</th><th>2018</th><th>2019</th><th>2020</th><th>2021</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Full-time</td><td>65.6%</td><td>66.1%</td><td>66.6%</td><td>67.3%</td><td>65.7%</td><td>65.0%</td><td>64.1%</td><td>62.6%</td><td>62.1%</td><td>60.0%</td><td>60.0%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Part-time</td><td>34.4%</td><td>33.9%</td><td>33.4%</td><td>32.7%</td><td>34.3%</td><td>35.0%</td><td>35.9%</td><td>37.4%</td><td>37.9%</td><td>40.0%</td><td>40.0%</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Department of Education, unpublished HEIMS dataset</p> <p>Note: The table indicates the breakdown of Indigenous students studying part-time and full-time each year between 2011 and 2021 at the UA member universities.</p>	Type of attendance	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Full-time	65.6%	66.1%	66.6%	67.3%	65.7%	65.0%	64.1%	62.6%	62.1%	60.0%	60.0%	Part-time	34.4%	33.9%	33.4%	32.7%	34.3%	35.0%	35.9%	37.4%	37.9%	40.0%	40.0%
Type of attendance	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021																											
Full-time	65.6%	66.1%	66.6%	67.3%	65.7%	65.0%	64.1%	62.6%	62.1%	60.0%	60.0%																											
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Uncapping Indigenous CSP	a) Your submission to the Accord Panel stated that before demand-driven funding, the number of Indigenous students commencing their studies was growing by only 3% per year. Under demand-driven funding, the number of Indigenous students commencing their studies grew by 8.2% per year. What data did you rely on to	<p>A. This data was provided by the Department of Education ('2021 Section 11 - Equity groups': link). Data from 2010 to 2021 demonstrates an Indigenous student commencement and completions increased between this period.</p> <p>B. N/A.</p>																																				

	<p>calculate these rates of growth?</p> <p>b) What was your methodology and how did you interrogate that data?</p>	
Uncapping Indigenous CSP	<p>The uncapping of places for Indigenous students does not include medical places – if we are trying to advance equity cohorts and Indigenous people, what are your thoughts on this excluding medical places?</p>	<p>Medical places are handled separately from other student places due to their capped nature. UA is not calling for uncapped medical places.</p> <p>It is important to note that uncapped medical placements would not necessarily result in more equity-based doctors. Medical practitioners, in particular, require extensive additional training post-university training. Without additional supports in this area, uncapped places would place pressure on an already under-resourced post-tertiary medical practitioner training system, resulting in further unintended consequences.</p>
50% pass rule	<p>a) How many students had the 50 per cent pass rule applied to them and lost their CSP as a result in the calendar year 2022 at each of your member universities?</p> <p>b) Can you provide this data broken down by provider?</p> <p>c) Can you provide a breakdown of this data</p>	<p>UA has previously given evidence that at least 13,000 students were affected by the 50 per cent pass rule, based on data collected from 27 member universities.</p> <p>At present, UA is not able to provide additional data to the Committee within the available timeframe. UA has written to member universities requesting additional data. This can be provided to the Committee when available.</p>

	<p>by equity cohort?</p> <p>d) Can you provide a breakdown of this data by location of the students (i.e. metropolitan, regional, rural, remote)?</p>	
50% pass rule	<p>a) Are universities themselves responsible for assessing exemption applications from students?</p> <p>b) How many students who had the 50 per cent pass rule applied to them and lost their CSP as a result in the calendar year 2022 at each of your member universities applied for an exemption?</p> <p>c) Can you provide this data broken down by provider?</p>	<p>A) Universities make an initial assessment when a student makes an application for special circumstances. Students have various avenues to appeal the initial decision made by the university. These policies comply with the legislative requirements outlined in the TEQSA Act, Threshold Standards and the Higher Education Provider Guidelines.</p> <p>B) At present, UA is not able to provide additional data to the Committee within the available timeframe. UA has written to member universities requesting additional data. This can be provided to the Committee when available.</p> <p>C) N/A.</p>

50% pass rule	<p>a) How many students who applied for an exemption after having the 50 per cent rule applied to them in the calendar year 2022 at each of your member universities were granted an exemption and under what category?</p> <p>b) Can you please provide a breakdown of this data by provider?</p> <p>c) Can you provide a breakdown of this data by equity cohort?</p> <p>d) Can you provide a breakdown of this data by location of the students (i.e. metropolitan, regional, rural, remote)?</p>	<p>At present, UA is not able to provide additional data to the Committee within the available timeframe. UA has written to member universities requesting additional data. This can be provided to the Committee when available.</p>
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50% pass rule	<p>a) How many students who applied for an exemption after having the 50 per cent rule applied to them in the calendar year 2022 at each of your member universities were not granted an exemption and the reason for refusal?</p> <p>b) Can you please provide a breakdown of this data by provider?</p> <p>c) Can you provide a breakdown of this data by equity cohort?</p> <p>d) Can you provide a breakdown of this data by location of the students (i.e. metropolitan, regional, rural, remote)?</p>	<p>At present, UA is not able to provide additional data to the Committee within the available time frame. UA has written to member universities requesting additional data. This can be provided to the Committee when available.</p>
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50% pass rule	<p>a) What is the process at each of your member universities for when a student is flagged as potentially at risk of failing 50% of their courses?</p> <p>b) Is this different for each university? Please describe or provide the policy for each university.</p> <p>c) What student support policies are in place at each of your member universities to correct a student's performance academically to reduce their risk of failing?</p> <p>d) What are the reporting requirements of the universities regarding this data?</p> <p>e) What data points are your member universities required to collect?</p>	<p>A) Each university will have its own policies and procedures for identifying students requiring additional academic support, as a requirement for grievance procedures outlined in the Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2003. These policies comply with the Threshold Standards broadly, though section 5.3 outlines specific reporting requirements to support student wellbeing. These requirements align with the HESA, with specific applicable references made to subdivision 19-C – The Quality Requirements. These requirements include the collection and analysis of data to continuously review and amend data collection and policies that affect student wellbeing, among other measures.</p> <p>Generally, universities have policies and procedures in place that help identify at-risk students well in advance of any significant harm affecting the student. For example, universities typically use the student learning profile to assess at risk student behaviour. I.e., students that do not access their learning profile for a period of time are considered at risk. This leads universities to reach-out to these students to discuss their circumstances and options for continuation, change or deferment when appropriate. This reach-out typically occurs prior to census date, during exam period and semester 2 or equivalent enrolment periods.</p> <p>B) Universities Australia is unable to answer this question within the available time frame. We note however that universities have a legislative requirement to ensure the wellbeing of its students and provide access to support services and advice about student wellbeing and progress at university. These requirements are outlined in the Higher Education Provider Guidelines and the Threshold Standards. Individual institutions must also abide by state legislation, which may include provisions for certain reporting requirements; however, this is a matter for individual universities.</p> <p>C) In addition to the above, all universities have range of responsibility delegations appropriate to different groups, which include students, academic and professional staff, and services. Generally, universities develop policies that identify specific support types, which could include personal, academic and community supports. Each of these typically include a range of support areas that link with support services and triggering action systems – student profiles that are likely indicators of at-risk academic performance. For academic support, students often receive a learning access/support plan, which is developed by support service personnel and outlines recommended measures to support students succeed academically.</p> <p>D) Under the existing 50 per cent pass rule no specific reporting requirements were established to monitor the impact of the rule. However, aligning with university requirements to support student wellbeing, universities collect data on activities that affect students and staff. This data includes changes to a student's eligibility to</p>
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	<p>f) What was the timing for reports to be submitted to the Department of Education?</p>	<p>receive a CSP.</p> <p>E) These are broadly outlined through the Tertiary Collection of Student Information (TCSI) platform on the Department of Education's website.</p> <p>F) N/A.</p>
50% pass rule	<p>a) Can you provide the number of students to whom the 50 per cent rule was applied?</p> <p>b) Can you provide this data broken down by provider, equity cohort and location of the students (i.e. metropolitan, regional, rural, remote)?</p> <p>c) Of the total number of students to whom</p>	UA has previously given evidence that at least 13,000 students were affected by the 50 per cent pass rule, based on data collected from 27 member universities. At present, UA is not able to provide additional data to the Committee within the available timeframe. UA has written to member universities requesting additional data. This can be provided to the Committee when available.

<p>the 50 per cent rule was applied, how many chose to leave the system?</p> <p>d) Of the total number of students to whom the 50 per cent rule was applied, how many chose to leave the system continue with their studies as full fee paying students?</p> <p>e) Can you provide this data broken down by provider, equity cohort and location of the students (i.e. metropolitan, regional, rural, remote)?</p>	
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50% pass rule	<p>a) The Minister has stated that Universities Australia undertook a survey with 27 universities advising more than 13,000 students were impacted by this policy. Did the Department of Education officially engage Universities Australia through a contract or tender to undertake this work?</p> <p>b) On what basis did Universities Australia undertake this survey? Was it as a result of a request from the Department of Education or was it something you were independently doing and it just so happened to coincide with a need from the Department? Could you please table a copy of the correspondence received regarding the survey on how university students were</p>	<p>A) No.</p> <p>B) The data was gathered from members following a verbal request from the Department of Education.</p> <p>C) For privacy reasons the data provided by universities cannot be shared publicly.</p> <p>D) No timeframe was requested by the Department.</p>
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<p>affected by or at risk of being affected by the 50 per cent pass rule between Universities Australia and the Department of Education and/or the Minister of Education's office?</p> <p>c) Could you please table a copy of the correspondence received regarding the survey on how university students were affected by or at risk of being affected by the 50 per cent pass rule between Universities Australia and your member universities?</p> <p>d) What was the timeframe given to you from the Department or the Minister's office regarding the survey i.e. they requested you obtain the data on x date by y date?</p>	
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50% pass rule	<p>a) How was the survey conducted amongst your member universities? i.e. was a formal collection request with a deadline to provide the data or was it more informal, based on who had the data already on hand?</p> <p>b) What specific data did you request from your member universities?</p> <p>c) Could you please provide a copy of the survey request sent to your member universities?</p> <p>d) Were all data collection elements provided by the universities?</p> <p>e) Was the data sought only for the year 2022 or did it also include the beginning of the year 2023?</p>	<p>A) On 3 May 2023, all UA members were asked to provide information on the impact of the 50 per cent pass rule by means of their internal data collection policies and provide this information to UA by 11 August. A request was sent by email to Deputy Vice Chancellors (Academic) at each of our member universities.</p> <p>B) UA requested information on the following elements relating to the 50 per cent pass rule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of students at your institution who have lost eligibility for a CSP • the background characteristics of such students (including equity-group status) • level of program, including full-time or part-time <p>C) A copy of the survey request is attached (Attachment 1).</p> <p>D) No.</p> <p>E) Data was sought for the period in which the 50 per cent pass rule was enforced.</p> <p>F) No. Data was requested on a confidential basis.</p> <p>G) Twelve UA members did not provide data.</p> <p>H) Our analysis was provided to the Department by email and is attached (Attachment 2).</p> <p>I) The data was provided to the Department qualifying that it was indicative only.</p> <p>J) As above. The analysis provided to the Department is attached (Attachment 2).</p> <p>K) Friday 26 May 2023.</p> <p>L) On Monday 13 July the Department asked for updated figures for 2023. This information was provided by email and is attached (Attachment 3). On Monday 17 July 2023 UA updated the Department by text message (Attachment 3A) that the total number of students affected was 13,296.</p>
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	<p>f) Could you please provide the data collected from the universities which did respond to the survey?</p> <p>g) Which of your member universities did not provide data for the survey and what was the reason provided for not doing so?</p> <p>h) What quantitative analysis and interrogation did you undertake on the data?</p> <p>i) Were you satisfied that the data you provided to the Department had all of the correct analytical data points and was sufficiently sound?</p> <p>j) Did you provide any caveats against the data? Please provide a copy of any caveats and correspondence regarding the caveats</p>
--	---

<p>you made to the Department regarding the survey data.</p> <p>k) On what date did you provide the survey data to the Department?</p> <p>l) Did the Department seek any additional information from you on the data you provided to them?</p> <p>Please provide a copy of the correspondence between you and the Department regarding the survey data provided.</p>	
--	--

50% pass rule	<p>a) What data did you have from your member universities that informed UA's position in your Accord Discussion Paper in April 2023?</p> <p>b) On what basis did UA make the claim that the 50 per cent pass rule was punitive?</p> <p>c) On what basis did you make the claim that students from low socio-economic backgrounds were the most impacted? Please provide the data on which you based this claim in your submission.</p>	<p>A) UA had anecdotal data from a large number of member universities indicating that it was low-SES students who were disproportionately affected by the 50 per cent pass rule.</p> <p>B) The 50 per cent pass rule is a blunt instrument that unfairly disadvantages students who need the most support. It has not had its intended effect. While we acknowledge the previous Government's intention behind the measure – to prevent students from accruing unnecessary debt – the rule punishes students with strong aspirations for higher education who are impacted by circumstances sometimes beyond their control.</p> <p>C) See above.</p>
50% pass rule	<p>a) Do your member universities have a policy or process to notify students of their appeal rights when they are affected by the application of the 50 per cent pass rule, i.e. a letter is sent to the</p>	<p>This question is best directed to member institutions who will be able to provide any relevant information to the Committee.</p>

	<p>student advising them of their appeal rights against the decision?</p> <p>b) Please provide a copy of the correspondence that your member universities send to students who are affected by or at risk of being affected by the 50 per cent pass rule.</p>	
Student Support Policy	<p>a) The Department of Education has released a consultation paper to develop a student support policy. Did the Department or the Minister's Office consult with yourself or any of your member universities in developing this paper?</p> <p>b) If so, please advise the date Universities Australia or any of your member universities were consulted.</p>	<p>A. UA was not consulted prior to the release of the discussion paper. To the best of our knowledge, member universities were not consulted.</p> <p>B. N/A.</p>

Student Support Policy	a) Has the Ministers Office or the Department provided information on how compliance with the policy would be governed? b) Who will do this, the Department of Education or TEQSA? Or even the new authority mentioned in the Interim Report?	<p>A. Compliance measures have been outlined in the proposed Guidance Document, which is currently out for consultation.</p> <p>B. These considerations have been covered in the legislation and the guidelines.</p> <p>Currently, the Department of Education will be responsible for collecting data relating to the Student Support Policy. However, UA has recommended TEQSA, as the sector regulator, have the authority to regulate this policy if it were to be introduced.</p>
Student Support Policy	a) In terms of student satisfaction with teaching and course quality, do you support a student ombudsman being put in place as a mechanism for students to escalate complaints if they are unsatisfied with the response provided by the university processes? b) There has been significant discussion publicly recently about student safety on campus in relation to	<p>A. UA has not called for a student ombudsman. It is unclear what a student ombudsman would achieve and how it would operate, including its terms of reference.</p> <p>As part of their registration as a higher education provider, all providers must have grievance policies in place to facilitate students and staff to make complaints on a range of issues, including quality of teaching and learning received. If a person is unsatisfied with the complaint's resolution and/or handling, a person may contact the Ombudsman or the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). Alternatively, a person may submit a complaint to the state/territory ombudsman, if they attend a public provider, which includes most TAFEs and universities. The same process applies for both domestic and international students.</p> <p>Without a clear policy appraisal and impact assessment conducted on the need for a student ombudsman, significant risks to the integrity of degrees and functioning of providers may be a core outcome. Until an appropriate assessment has been conducted on the need for an additional level of administration and compliance, UA does not recommend a student ombudsman be established.</p> <p>B. UA has undertaken significant stakeholder engagement to improve the mechanisms in place and to help facilitate additional measures be implemented to support student welfare on university campuses. Launched in 2016 and renewed in 2023, UA's world first Respect. Now. Always initiative aims to lead universities and</p>

	<p>sexual assault and harassment. How are your member universities managing this?</p> <p>c) Have you consulted with Fair Agenda and End Rape on Campus on your management strategies?</p> <p>d) Is Universities Australia supportive of legislation governing the student support policy being passed before the policy is actually developed?</p>	<p>communities address sexual assault on campus and improve how both groups respond to and support people who have been affected.</p> <p>Additionally, in 2021 UA undertook a comprehensive survey of its members. All members have rigorous policies, activities and supports in place to support students, including access to critical services to support students and staff. Universities respond to the needs of their staff and student cohorts through ongoing adaption of these activities and services. Further information on the survey, supportive guidelines and other measures can be found on the UA website.</p> <p>C. UA has consulted with a wide range of advocacy groups (both student and staff) through the development of our Respect.Now.Always program and subsequent initiatives from 2016 onwards. This includes (but is not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End Rape on Campus • National Union of Students • eSafety Commissioner • Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations • Our Watch • Council of International Students Australia • Australian Council of Graduate Research • Full Stop Australia • Migration Council of Australia • Australian Psychological Society • Victorian Office for Women • LGBTQI+ Health Australia <p>UA has also worked closely with a long list of leading experts in the field of sexual violence prevention.</p> <p>D. N/A.</p>
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Student Support Policy	<p>Can you provide an outline of the current student support policies your member universities have in place? A summary will be sufficient.</p>	<p>Universities Australia does not have a complete list of support policies in place at each of our 39 member institutions. However, UA is aware that universities maintain relevant policies, procedures, strategies concerning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious Student Incidents • Diversity, Equity and Inclusion • Student Access and Participation • Mental Health and Wellbeing • Retention and Success • Enrolment • Admission • Reasonable adjustments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Teaching and learning ◦ Assessment • Monitoring progress • Addressing poor progress • Providing additional support • Actively managing non-participating enrolments • Monitoring levels of engagement • Cancelling enrolment for genuine non-participating students. • Review of academic and peer support services • Requesting for adjustments to assessment • Tailored support to Indigenous students • Identifying students at risk, and • Reviewing and appealing academic decisions, <p>We note that each of these policies relate to student support and that this list is indicative only.</p>
Student Support Policy	<p>Can you provide a copy of the correspondence you have received regarding the consultation process timeline for the</p>	<p>UA was provided information from the Department by email on 17 August 2023. This correspondence is attached (Attachment 6).</p>

	government's student support policies?	
Legislation	<p>Please provide a copy of any correspondence Universities Australia, or any of your member universities, have sent to or received from Minister Clare, his office or the Department of Education in relation to the Higher Education Support Amendment (Response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report) Bill 2023 (the Bill) or any of the individual elements contained within the Bill. This includes informal correspondence such as emails and whatsapp messages.</p>	<p>Attached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Attachment 4) Letter from Universities Australia to Minister Clare. • (Attachment 5) Response to Universities Australia from Minister Clare's office. • (Attachment 6) Email from Department of Education advising on timing of guidelines consultation.

Request for Information [Thursday 11 May] - number of students affected by the JRG 50% rule + best practice examples for managing at risk students

Wed 2023-05-03 2:19 PM

To

Cc

Good afternoon DVCs-A,

As part of UA's submission to the Accord, we called for an end to the 50 per cent pass rule brought in through the JRG legislation. As part of our consultation with the Department and Accord Panel, and building on a request made in August 2022, we're seeking updated information on the impact of the 50 per cent rule on:

- the number of students at your institution who have lost eligibility for a CSP
- the background characteristics of such students (including equity-group status)
- Level of program, including full-time or part-time

As part of this request for information, we're also seeking **examples of good practice** in supporting at-risk students, particularly those considered to be or potentially to be affected by the 50 per cent pass rule.

We understand some of this data may not be available, particularly for part-time students; however, any information on actual or predicted students affected at this time would be useful.

If you could please provide this information by **Thursday 11 August** that would greatly aid our discussions with the Department.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please reach out to either myself or (cc'd).

Kind regards,



Senior Policy Analyst (A/G), Academic

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Insights on the 50% Pass Rule

Fri 2023-05-26 4:32 PM

To

Hi

As discussed, please find below our analyses of the impacts of the 50% pass rule, based on data provided by 18 of our members. All thanks to [redacted] for putting these insights together.

The data collected varies between providers, including the provision of aggregated or specific student data, impact on the student, including attrition and retention rates, and data matching between different cohorts of students. The below comments reflect the relative impact of the 50 per cent pass rule on students; however, the impact varies across different cohorts and universities. Therefore, **it is recommended the data provided be used as an *indication* rather than an absolute on the impact of the 50 per cent rule.**

The term “affected” used throughout refers to students who have had their enrolment status changed to restricted, full-fee paying, withdrawn, changed degree, suspended or reinstated. This may be inclusive of loss of a CSP.

Some points about the data we have received:

1. **8879 students** have either been affected (5141 people) or are at risk of being affected (3738 people) by the 50 per cent pass rule in 2022/23. (If 2023 enrolments look similar to 2021 enrolments, then this is probably about 0.5% of the total enrolled student population.)

2. The majority of those affected by the pass rule were from an equity group (3089 students) – **See chart 1 below.**

3. Proportion of Full-Fee-Paying students by equity status

a. Students who were affected by the 50 per cent rule but came from higher income families and didn't meet any equity criteria were much more likely to have stayed at university despite losing their CSP. Students in the medium to high SES bracket are disproportionately represented in the Full-Fee Paying status and students from universities with, on average, higher entry (ATAR) requirements had more FFP students compared to other universities. 134 students (or 4.33 per cent of students whose enrolment status was recorded) affected by the 50 per cent pass rule became FFP students.

b. The majority of students affected by the 50% rule have been put onto a restricted study plan, which includes part-time study, changed course structure or another restriction to avoid loss of CSP and loss of ability to pay up-front – **See chart 2 below.**

4. **The majority of affected students were Bachelor (1838) and sub-Bachelor students (2324).** Bachelor students, relative to bachelor students from previous years, were more affected than any other group by the implementation of the 50 per cent rule.

a. New Adjusted Retention rate for domestic students from Table A and Table B universities for 2020 was 84.26, which was a decrease of 0.46. In 2020, the Attrition rate was 15.02, which was an increase of 0.35. The attrition rate for the 50 per cent rule affected students - those withdrawn or suspended - is 20.7%. Based off the data provided, this suggests more students have been affected by, or are at risk of being affected by, non-completion due to the 50 per cent rule.

5. 50 per cent rule attrition relative to Total Attrition – Bachelor (inclusive of honours)

a. New Adjusted Attrition Rates for Bachelor students was 12.74 in 2020, which was a decrease of 0.49. Bachelor students affected by the 50 per cent rule represented 35.8 per cent of all students affected. Based off the data provided, this suggests bachelor students are more susceptible to attrition under the 50 per cent rule than they were otherwise. The impact this may have on completions could, over time, have a greater impact on undergraduate student success.

6. 50 per cent rule attrition relative to Total Attrition – sub-Bachelor (inclusive of enabling programs)

Attachment 2

08/09/2023, 10:43

a. New Adjusted Attrition Rates for sub-Bachelor students was 34.35 in 2020, which was an increase of 3.84. Sub-Bachelor students affected by the 50 per cent rule represented 33.4 per cent of all students affected. Based off the data provided, this suggests that the 50 per cent rule has somewhat increased the attrition of sub-Bachelor students, though the increase has been minimal. However, the increase remains as a reflection of the 50 per cent rule and is a contributor to increasing student success in sub-Bachelor degrees.

7. There was little difference between males (433) and females (573).

8. Of the reported student study loads (2003 students) the majority of affected students studied full-time (1644) compared to part-time (359). If 2023 enrolments look similar to 2021 enrolments, we can suggest that the proportion of full-time to part-time students affected by the 50 per cent rule is 5:1

9. University responses:

a. Universities typically use the Learner Management Software (LMS) to assess at-risk student behaviour. I.e., students that do not access their LMS for a period of time, have not submitted an assessment, lack of lecture/tutorial/laboratory participation are considered at risk. This leads universities to reach-out to these students to discuss circumstances and options for continuation, and/or to terminate a student's enrolment in the subject. This latter approach is consistent with universities assessing 'non-genuine' students, or 'ghost-students'. This reach-out typically occurs prior to census date, during exam period and semester 2 enrolment period. Universities typically use a combination of communication strategies to contact the student, put them in contact with relevant existing university services, and make study plans and degree recommendations based off discussions with the student.

b. Most students considered at risk of being affected have been placed on a restricted enrolment status, and/or have been informed of their study options, which include withdrawal, deferral, change of degree or move to paying in full (see chart 2 below). Only a very small proportion of students have had access to CSPs reinstated due to 'Special Circumstances', which are consistent with those circumstances outlined in *HESA 2003, 104-30*.

Chart 1:

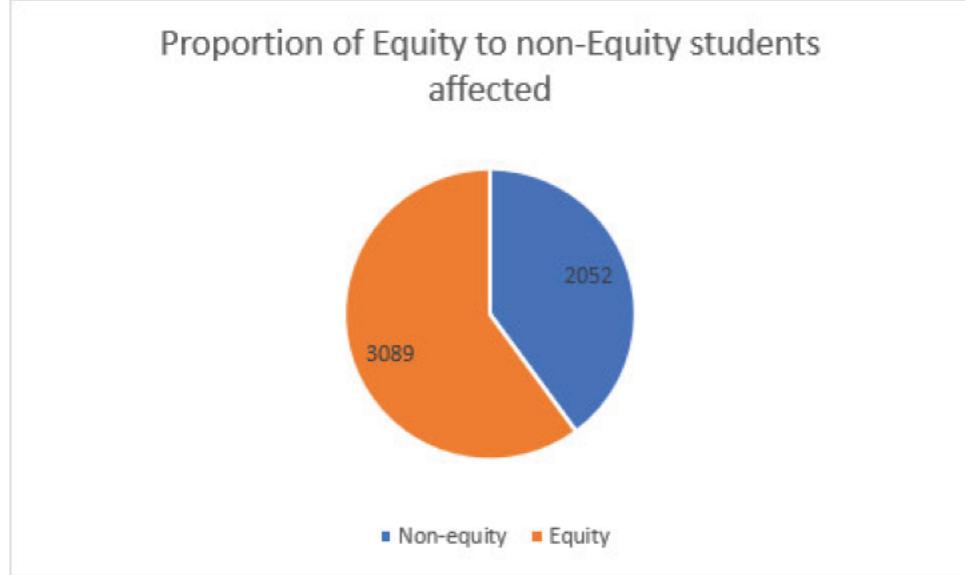
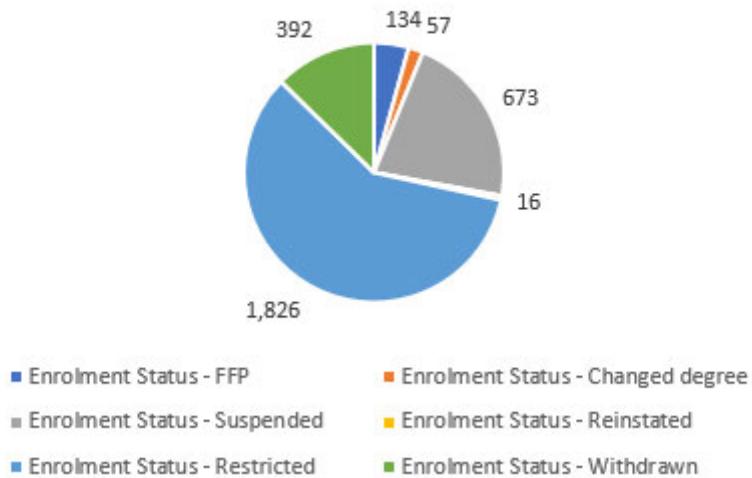


Chart 2:

Affected Student Enrolment Status

3098 students



Hope that's helpful for the Accord panel, [REDACTED]. Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions, about this or anything else.

Warm regards,

**Policy Director, Academic**

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RE: Insights on the 50% Pass Rule [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thu 2023-07-13 2:56 PM

To

Cc

Hi

Nice to speak on the phone earlier. As mentioned, we don't have any new data since we sent this through to in May. There should be more data available towards the end of the year.

Warm regards,



Policy Director, Academic

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From:

Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2023 2:34 PM

To:

Subject: FW: Insights on the 50% Pass Rule [SEC=OFFICIAL]

EXTERNAL EMAIL:

H

I have taken on [redacted] role in Accord Taskforce, nice to meet you. I have a follow up question on your previous email.

Minister Clare's Office has asked us to see if there are update figures on the impacts of the 50% pass rule from your members?

They are currently quoting a figure of ~8000 students. If there aren't any more update figures I am happy to pass that on.

Assistant Secretary

Accord Panel Secretariat Branch
Australian Universities Accord Division
Higher Education, Research, and International Group
Phone

EA:

From:
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2023 2:30 PM
To:
Subject: FW: Insights on the 50% Pass Rule [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Here was the old data they gave us

From:
Sent: Friday, May 26, 2023 4:32 PM
To:
Subject: Insights on the 50% Pass Rule

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Hi

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The data collected varies between providers, including the provision of aggregated or specific student data, impact on the student, including attrition and retention rates, and data matching between different cohorts of students. The below comments reflect the relative impact of the 50 per cent pass rule on students; however, the impact varies across different cohorts and universities. Therefore, it is recommended the data provided be used as an *indication* rather than an absolute on the impact of the 50 per cent rule.

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 - a. Students who were affected by the 50 per cent rule but came from higher income families and didn't meet any equity criteria were much more likely to have stayed at university despite losing their CSP. Students in the medium to high SES bracket are disproportionately represented in the Full-Fee Paying status and students from universities with, on average, higher entry (ATAR) requirements had more FFP students compared to other universities. 134 students (or 4.33 per cent of students whose enrolment status was recorded) affected by the 50 per cent pass rule became FFP students.

Attachment 3

08/09/2023, 10:46

b. The majority of students affected by the 50% rule have been put onto a restricted study plan, which includes part-time study, changed course structure or another restriction to avoid loss of CSP and loss of ability to pay up-front – **See chart 2 below**.

4. **The majority of affected students were Bachelor (1838) and sub-Bachelor students (2324).** Bachelor students, relative to bachelor students from previous years, were more affected than any other group by the implementation of the 50 per cent rule.

a. New Adjusted Retention rate for domestic students from Table A and Table B universities for 2020 was 84.26, which was a decrease of 0.46. In 2020, the Attrition rate was 15.02, which was an increase of 0.35. The attrition rate for the 50 per cent rule affected students - those withdrawn or suspended - is 20.7%. Based off the data provided, this suggests more students have been affected by, or are at risk of being affected by, non-completion due to the 50 per cent rule.

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b. Most students considered at risk of being affected have been placed on a restricted enrolment status, and/or have been informed of their study options, which include withdrawal, deferral, change of degree or move to paying in full (see **chart 2 below**). Only a very small proportion of students have had access to CSPs reinstated due to 'Special Circumstances', which are consistent with those circumstances outlined in *HESA 2003, 104-30*.

Chart 1:

Proportion of Equity to non-Equity students affected

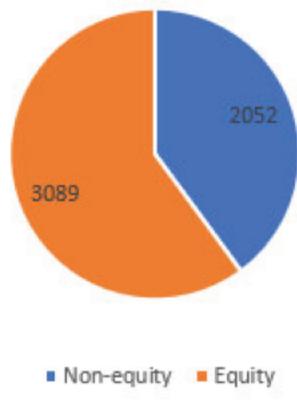
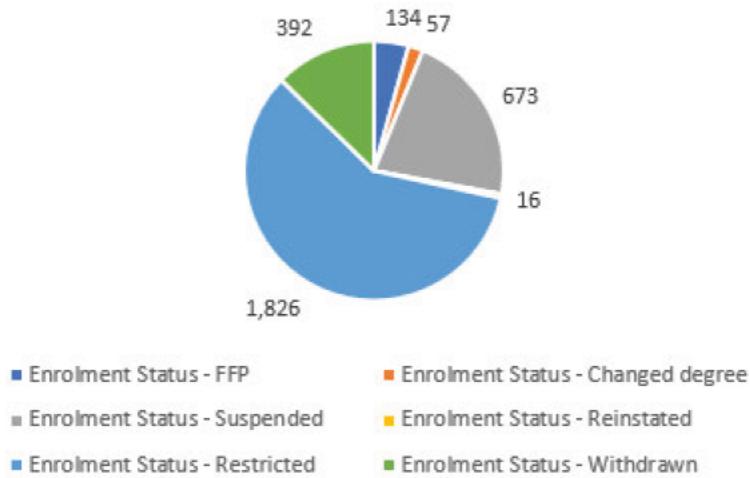


Chart 2:

Affected Student Enrolment Status 3098 students



Hope that's helpful for the Accord panel, . Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions, about this or anything else.

Warm regards,



Policy Director, Academic

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Attachment 3

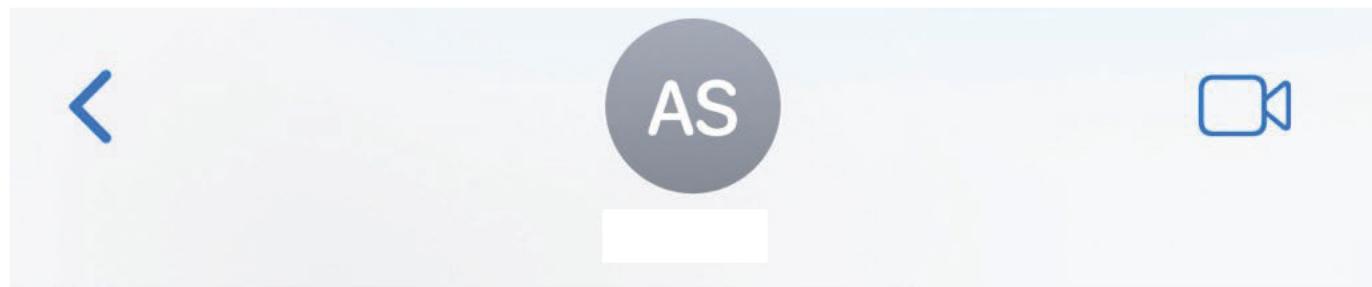
08/09/2023, 10:46

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Attachment 3A



Mon, 17 Jul at 5:59 pm

Hi [REDACTED] I've had 2 more come in this afternoon, which puts us at 27 unis and 13,296 students affected, in case that's still useful.

Tue, 18 Jul at 10:26 am

Thanks. I'll send on to [REDACTED]

Attachment 4



8 August 2023

The Hon Jason Clare MP
Minister for Education
Member for Blaxland
Parliament House
Canberra

By email: Minister.Clare@education.gov.au

Dear Minister

Higher Education Support Amendment Bill

On behalf of the Universities Australia Board, we are writing to convey UA's strong support of the Higher Education Support Amendment (Response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report) Bill 2023. As you know, Universities Australia has called for the extension of the demand driven system to all Indigenous students, and we have previously raised concerns about the 'punitive' fifty per cent pass rule.

However, there are three aspects of the Bill we believe may have unintended consequences, in both the short term for students and universities, as well as in the long term for the sector if we are to realise your ambitions for increasing access.

Support-for-student policies in Guidelines

As we understand from your Second Reading speech introducing this Bill, it is your intention to release a discussion paper on the proposed content of the Support for Student Policies that will be included in the Higher Education Provider Guidelines.

While we welcome the opportunity to provide feedback to this discussion paper, we are concerned that the Bill is likely to have made its way through the Parliament before this feedback can be considered.

There may be vitally important elements of support-for-student policies that, while initially intended to be incorporated within the Guidelines, would be more effective, and future-proofed, if included within the Act.

Allowing universities and other stakeholders sufficient time to provide comment on draft guidelines, before this Bill is passed, could lead to far better policy outcomes for students requiring additional support to complete their studies.

We are also concerned important elements of the Bill being in guidelines, rather than in legislation.

Regulatory overlap

As you know, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority (TEQSA) has primary responsibility for the regulation of higher education institutions in Australia. The Threshold Standards administered by TEQSA are key to regulating the objects of the TEQSA Act, many of which concern student wellbeing and student experience.

To avoid duplication of reporting and to ensure maximum resource allocation for the proposed measures, UA suggests the proposed Support for Student Policies amendment could be more effectively implemented through TEQSA, rather than the Department of Education, whose responsibilities do not directly include regulatory and compliance activities.

Timing of legislation entering into force

We would also like to draw your attention to potential unintended consequences of the timing of the Bill entering into force.

As currently drafted, Section 19-43 would enter into force immediately upon receiving Royal Assent. We are concerned that this does not allow universities enough time to develop, implement and then report on measures that have been put in place to support students.

While the Explanatory Memorandum notes that many universities will already have had these types of measures in place in order to comply with the fifty per cent pass rule, there are additional monitoring and reporting requirements that this Bill will create that universities will need time to understand and implement across their institutions.

We would therefore urge you to consider an amendment to this section that would bring the provision into force from 1 January 2024. This period will allow our members to fully understand their obligations under the new policy, and to make any necessary changes to our existing systems currently in place to monitor student success.

We reiterate our appreciation of your move to end the fifty per cent rule and look forward to working with you to ensure that the implementation of this important policy change serves the policy intent as fully as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Catriona Jackson
Chief Executive



Office of the Hon Jason Clare MP
Minister for Education

Reference: MC23-003756

Ms Catriona Jackson
Chief Executive Officer
Universities Australia
1 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600

By email: ceo@universitiesaustralia.edu.au

Dear Ms Jackson

Thank you for your correspondence of 8 August 2023 to the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, regarding Higher Education Support Amendment Bill. Minister Clare has asked me to respond on his behalf.

The Australian Government's proposed requirements, to be included in the Higher Education Provider Guidelines, are set out in the newly released consultation paper. The consultation paper includes information on proposed compliance approach and implementation timelines.

While the amendments would commence from Royal Assent, it is expected that higher education providers will be able to meet the requirements in the Bill. These are essentially the same obligations, as you have noted, they have under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*. The reason for incorporating them in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* is to provide more focused accountability for providers in supporting their students, which the '50 per cent rule' does not incentivise.

I would like to invite Universities Australia to take part in the consultation process. Submissions can be provided online at www.education.gov.au/new-requirements-support-students/announcements/consultation-paper-support-students-policy-requirements until 15 September 2023.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

SCOTT DAVIES
Chief of Staff

23/8/2023

Consultation Paper on Support for students policy requirements [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

on behalf of

Thu 17/08/2023 12:04

EXTERNAL EMAIL:

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Good afternoon

I am writing to you with an update regarding one of the priority measures in the [Australian Universities Accord Interim Report](#).

As you may be aware, the Government is removing the pass rate requirements, which applied to universities from 1 January 2022 and independent higher education providers from 1 January 2018. These require students to pass 50 per cent of their units of study in their course to maintain access to Commonwealth assistance. Legislation to remove the pass rate requirements is currently before Parliament.

Subject to its passage, accountability and reporting requirements for higher education providers will be strengthened through new *Support for students policy* requirements, which providers will be required to have for their students.

The intention of these policies is to ensure that students at risk of failing to pass their courses successfully are identified, and students, particularly equity students, are properly supported to study successfully.

Specific requirements around what these policies must include and new reporting requirements on providers will be prescribed in the Higher Education Provider Guidelines.

The Government's proposed approach to these requirements are set out in the newly released Support for students policy Consultation Paper.

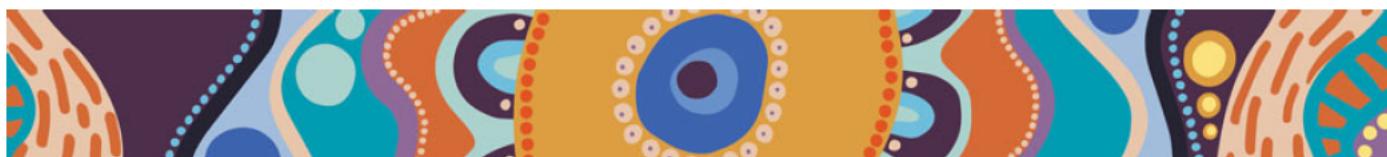
We are conscious of course that there is significant good practice across the sector on these and related topics, and that there is much to learn for all of us on how best to ensure that students at risk are supported to succeed.

We welcome your insights and feedback on these matters. I would like to invite you and your organisation to take part in the consultation process in relation to these policies. Submissions can be provided online at [Consultation Paper on Support for students policy requirements - Department of Education, Australian Government](#) until 15 September 2023.

(he/him)

Deputy Secretary
Higher Education, Research and International
Australian Government Department of Education

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The Department of Education acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and Elders past, present and emerging.

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

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