


**National Tertiary
Education Union**

The Universities Accord

What does the Accord Vision mean for higher education?



The Universities Accord proposes whole of sector reforms that would significantly change our tertiary education system.



Bigger than Bradley Review (over a decade ago) - around 400 pages, 47 Recommendations.



Has taken over 12 months of consultation - NTEU made 3 main submissions, undertook 2 member surveys and was on the consultative group to the Minister.



Also involved in consultation over legislation and policy arising from Government early responses to the Accord - Student Support Legislation, Student Support Guidelines, Study Hubs and the Gender Violence Action Plan.



What does the Universities Accord Report seek to achieve?

“... the objective of the system is to

a) underpin a strong equitable and resilient democracy and

b) drive national economic and social development and environmental sustainability.”

Sets an objective for the system, with reforms based on 5 principles:


- Meeting current and future skills needs
- Expanding opportunity to all
- Delivering for students
- Producing and using new knowledge
- A dynamic, collaborative and responsive system that serves the national interest

Implementation plan - some things can be achieved in the short to mid term, but this is a 20 year+ strategy, across multiple governments and jurisdictions.



Universities Accord on Workforce

What are the findings and recommendations relating to the tertiary education workforce?



In agreement with Union on workforce issues:

The report has made a series of findings that agree with what NTEU has said:

- Staff workloads have increased, especially in relation to student to staff ratios
- Casual employment has ‘risen considerably’, as well as the use of fixed term contracts, especially in both teaching and research
- An increased use of redundancies
- Workplaces need to be safe for both staff and students - gender based violence and psychosocial risks are ongoing problems
- Non-academic executive roles in higher ed to have tripled since 1991



“The Review has formed the view that the consistently high rates of casualisation in the system since 2010 **hinder the higher education sector as it strives for improvement in learning and teaching quality.**

Large numbers of casual and fixed term working arrangements are **unlikely to attract or foster the capability, skills and number of academics required** to accommodate the needs of an expanded higher education system.

In addition, the Review has heard that casual pay rates, including the complexity of piece rates and activity misclassification, are the **primary causes of wage theft** in the higher education sector – **an untenable situation.**

Over-reliance on casual and fixed term working arrangements will limit effectiveness of the Review’s recommendations to build the capacity of academics through continuous professional development.”



Potential benefits for staff

The report includes several recommendations and findings that may benefit staff:

Professional/General Staff

- Improved access to **professional development** opportunities for all staff
- Discrete loadings be paid to support higher needs students – NTEU will campaign for this to be used by universities to **reduce the current burden on student support staff**
- **Funding** certainty and simplicity – NTEU wants to see this lead to sustainable and safe workloads
- Highlighted that there has been **considerable growth in senior & Executive** positions that outstrips lower-level positions
- **Future fund** – flagged that some of the revenue could be used to support student support services & initiatives, yet to be determined (NTEU to advocate).



Research Staff

- Establishing a **National Research Workforce Development Program** (a long term NTEU ask) – NTEU will use this process to advocate for continuing jobs for all research staff
- **Funding the *full cost of research*** (long term NTEU ask) – this would reduce research staff reliance on universities' discretionary powers over top up funding
- **Increasing grant numbers and duration** (to 5 years) and improving opportunities for **early career researchers** (long term NTEU ask)
- PhD stipend increase
- Recommend further investigation into a metrics based research quality assessment tool/framework



Casual and Fixed term Staff

- Acknowledgment of the need to “address reliance on casual employment” and for governance reform to address failures over wage theft (NTEU Accord ask)
- Improved funding coupled with more funding certainty, which should pave the way for more continuing employment (long term NTEU ask)
- A call for more transparency, data, and accountability on insecure employment (to be monitored by a new TEC) (long term NTEU ask)



Academic Staff

- Ensuring funding (and resourcing) per student is adequate by banning universities from enrolling students who are not government funded (aka over-enrolling) (long term NTEU ask)
- Adding new funding for high needs students – which should go into resourcing teaching and student support (long term NTEU ask)
- Adjusting funding based on better research into *true costs* of teaching in different contexts (this is an opportunity to win more resourcing for teaching)
- Teaching & Learning outcomes – more info is needed
- Relink scholarship with teaching – was severed by JRG changes, NTEU Accord ask.



Other things to know in Universities Accord

Summary of major objectives and recommendations



New regulatory authority, the **Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC)** to oversee funding, planning and regulation for the sector.

- ▶ The Australian Research Council (ARC) and the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) will sit under the ATEC.
- ▶ Will have 4 Commissioners (including First Nations Commissioner).
- ▶ It will be supported by an **advisory body of sector organisation and interests.**

The convening power of the Commission's Advisory Board is essential to bring all stakeholders - staff, unions, universities and others - together to build trust in the system.

It is also essential to ensure a positive workforce that is equipped to support the sector as it expands.... Recommendationsincluding funding certainty and the proposal for a planned system with a Commission, are expected to reduce institutional and system volatility, and to provide a more stable university operating and workforce environment.”

A new funding framework....

- ▶ **Significantly increase funding for both teaching and research**, based on real costs of teaching and scholarship
- ▶ work towards full funding of research, more funding for ARC.
- ▶ **Unis to still have autonomy over enrolments and funding, but within a framework.**
- ▶ **Funding reforms** - Institutions will have floor based funding + needs-based funding
- ▶ **Scrap the Jobs Ready Graduate scheme, simplify HECS-HELP.**
- ▶ **Higher education future fund.**



Other Accord big ideas (in a nutshell):



More than double the number of government-funded students by 2050



Bring about changes in working conditions, especially in research and teaching. Professional development for all staff



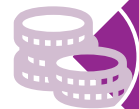
Skills growth focus



International education reforms



Student support focus - national student ombudsman, national student charter



Increase students' living allowances and PHD stipends



Expand the tertiary system across both higher education and vocational education with new and different types of education providers

Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education

An important win - Action plan on Gender based violence

Recognises that gender-based violence is a psycho-social hazard for both students *and* staff.

Is a multi-pronged approach, through 7 actions:

- ▶ establish a National Student Ombudsman
- ▶ higher education providers to embed whole-of-organisation approach to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (incl staff)
- ▶ introduce a National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (NTEU involvement)
- ▶ enhance the oversight and accountability of student accommodation providers
- ▶ identify opportunities to ensure legislation, regulation and policies can prioritise victim-survivor safety
- ▶ increase data transparency and scrutiny through reporting & monitoring
- ▶ regular review of progress against the Action Plan.



The Uni Accord going on from here....

The Universities Accord recommendations have **not yet been endorsed by Government.**

UA recommendations will also **need the support and commitment by multiple governments** at both Federal and State/Territory levels.

- ▶ Will also seek to be part of the **implementation advisory process**
- ▶ **May Budget** likely to have **Govt Accord recs.**
- ▶ **Ongoing governance reforms** - Gender violence action plan next steps, uni board memberships, industrial reforms (both Accord/IR ongoing)
- ▶ **“Soft ramp-up”** cited, to allow for new funding system & establish ATEC over next 5-6 years (within current funding envelop)
- ▶ **Later growth would see increased funding** - but some measures \$ unknown
- ▶ **NTEU has called for Govt lift on public spending to 1% of GDP (equal with international standards)** - this would underpin many Uni Accord recs.