



Australian University of Theology Strategic Plan 2026-2030

In keeping with AUT's Christian Foundation, to give glory to God by forming people in godly character and equipping people to faithfully serve God's Church and God's world through:

1

Excellence in Christian Teaching,
Research and Scholarship

2

A Healthy Consortium

3

Regulatory Compliance that is a
Witness to our Christian faith

4

Engagement with Society

Goals

1. Excellence in Christian Teaching, Research and Scholarship
 - a. Courses and units of a high academic standard, taught by high quality lecturers, using student-centred teaching methods, with excellent student learning experiences
 - b. Teaching and learning experiences that foster the AUT's Graduate Attributes of Christian people, Christian scholars, Christian professionals and Christian leaders
 - c. Fostering individual and community spiritual formation among students and staff
 - d. A Graduate School of Research fostering research publications and higher degree research at or above world standard
 - e. Scholarship activities and publications that support the Church and AUT teaching and learning
2. A Healthy Consortium
 - a. Christ-like relationships among staff at Affiliated Colleges and with the AUT Office
 - b. Collaborative decision-making through the AUT Council and Committees, Principals' Forum and Affiliated College Boards that demonstrates the Fruit of the Spirit
 - c. Greater cross-institutional sharing of expertise, teaching, research and scholarship
 - d. The AUT Office and the Affiliated Colleges serving each other in their mutual goals
3. Regulatory Compliance that is a Witness to our Christian Faith
 - a. Pro-active understanding and implementation of regulatory requirements and quality improvement processes
 - b. Transparent risk management, good governance and financial sustainability
 - c. Critical and constructive engagement with current theories and practices in higher education
4. Engagement with Society
 - a. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with Australia and the world
 - b. Fostering society's understanding of Christian perspectives
 - c. A commitment to social responsibility in keeping with the AUT's biblical basis
 - d. Exploring the expansion of AUT's course offerings

Detailed Version with Actions

In keeping with AUT's Christian Foundation, to give glory to God by forming people in godly character and equipping people to faithfully serve God's Church and God's world through:

1. Excellence in Christian Teaching, Research and Scholarship

a1. Courses and Units of a high academic standard

- Maintain the high standards of the Course Development process, with further work on ensuring theologically rich cross-disciplinary areas
- Maintain Course Review and Unit Review processes, with further work on integrating scholarship
- Continue processes of external review and moderation to maintain high academic standards

a2. taught by high quality lecturers

- Continue AQC qualification review and approval processes and research supervisor approval policies and processes
- Implement Faculty Expectations Policy and related approval processes
- Foster ongoing professional development for lecturers in relevant scholarship

a3. using student-centred teaching methods,

- Review current teaching methods in Affiliated Colleges, and disseminate examples of good practice
- Continue training programs for lecturers in student-centred teaching and learning practices, including short courses and Graduate Certificate of Theological Education
- Use educational technology and artificial intelligence when appropriate to the mission of Affiliated Colleges, the needs to students, and the nature of the delivery mode and content
- Foster assessment assurance for AI through use of open and secure assessment methods in each unit¹

a4. with excellent student learning experiences

- Maintain excellent student evaluations relative to universities and peer institutions
- Continue to identify and improve areas of lower performance, including at Affiliated College level

b1. Teaching and Learning experiences that foster AUT's Graduate Attributes of Christian people, Christian scholars, Christian professionals and Christian Leaders

- Maintain the alignment of Courses, Units, teaching and learning activities and assessments with AUT Graduate Attributes
- Explore the inclusion of appropriate and ethical use of technology, including AI, in the AUT Graduate Attributes
- Foster the adoption of new assessment approaches that better assess the practical and holistic learning expected in the AUT Graduate Attributes, including open and secure assessments for AI
- Collaborate with churches and other Christian organisations to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of AUT graduates over the long-term, and revise current teaching and learning activities accordingly
- Support freedom of intellectual inquiry in keeping with the Christian Foundation of the AUT
- Explore opportunities for additional Courses and Units in keeping with AUT's Christian Foundation and Self-Accrediting Authority in O9 Society and Culture.
- Foster understanding of, and research based on, the data of the National Church Life Survey (NCLS)

¹ Except in specific approved cases, such as single assessment units

c1. Fostering individual and community spiritual formation among students and staff

- Maintaining and growing spiritual formation activities for individuals and communities, including in online environments for online courses
- Encourage “extra-curricular” spiritual formation activities in Affiliated Colleges that can be formally recognised and integrated into AUT Courses where appropriate, or recognised through other related structures, such as denominational requirements and Affiliated College non-AQF certificates
- Foster spiritual formation that is not only positive in its focus (such as the Fruit of the Spirit), but also addresses actual or potential future weaknesses, and seeks to build “spiritual resilience” to temptation, and a commitment to repentance from sin

d1. A Graduate School of Research fostering research publications at or above world standard

- Foster research publishing at and above world standard, including mentoring, funding and guidance for early career high performing researchers
- Continue to meet world standard research requirements, including meeting the ERA minimum threshold (50 research publications over six years)
- Continue to use AUT Wipf and Stock publishing for Scholarship goals (see e1 below), and increase research monograph publishing with designated world standard publishers
- Promote collaborative and interdisciplinary research that brings theological perspectives to bear on current issues in the Church and society.

d2. A Graduate School of Research fostering Higher Degree Research at or above world standard

- Continue the Graduate School of Research for overseeing HDR supervision requirements
- Foster greater co-ordination of HDR across the AUT, including a yearly HDR student conference, central listing of HDR seminars available face to face and online, co-ordinated acquisition of digital library resources, and growth in cross-college co-supervision arrangements
- Foster HDR projects and other research that uses NCLS data
- Encourage HDR internships with industry partners such as denominations, parachurch organisations, and not-for-profits.

e1. Scholarship activities and publications that support the Church

- Recognise the importance of scholarship for AUT’s service to the Church, including publications for church and related contexts that draw on scholarly ideas, and “popular” writing for church and community engagement as scholarship activities
- Continue to use the AUT Publication series with Wipf and Stock to meet Scholarship goals, with ongoing funding for publications supporting applied research and community engagement, including Australian Evangelical History

e2. Scholarship activities and publications that improve teaching and learning

- Continue to document how current scholarship helps improve Course and Unit reviews, and Course Development proposals
- Foster scholarship in the teaching and learning of theological education

2. A Healthy Consortium

a1. Christ-like relationships among staff at Affiliated Colleges, and with the AUT Office

- Foster greater sharing of resources and expertise among Affiliated Colleges for mutual benefit, including cross-college teaching structures
- Provide a range of forums for discussion of concerns among Affiliated Colleges (including Principals Forum, Academic Deans, Postgraduate Coordinators, Departmental Meetings, Professional Development Conference, Registrars, Librarians and Finance Officers), recognising the potentially dual collaborative and competitive nature of cross-college relationships

a2. Constructive relationships among Affiliated Colleges and the AUT Office

- Continue AUT Office provision of regular detailed information to Affiliated Colleges on regulatory requirements, and provide mechanisms for assistance wherever possible
- Continue Affiliated Colleges response to regulatory requirements with best efforts, and provide rapid feedback on any problems with implementation, gaps in required information, etc.

b1. Collaborative decision-making through the AUT Council and Committees, Principals' Forum and Affiliated College Boards that demonstrates the Fruit of the Spirit

- Maintain the high standards of academic governance of the AUT Academic Board and its Committees, with input from Affiliated Colleges and external experts
- Maintain the high standards of overall governance, including finances, of the AUT Council and its Committees, including a majority of independent Directors
- Continue the Principals' Forum as a consultative body for discussion of strategic and operational leadership issues
- Continue engagement with Affiliated College Board Chairs and Boards, including in the areas of AUT and Affiliated College strategic planning
- Continue to encourage AUT Consortium members to reflect deeply on, and act on, how the Fruit of the Spirit can be demonstrated in their work in the AUT – including through committee work, teaching, research, and administration

c1. Cross-institutional sharing of expertise, teaching, research and scholarship

- Encourage ongoing sharing of expertise, teaching, research and scholarship across the whole AUT Consortium, and among subgroups of colleges
- Encourage Affiliated Colleges to develop plans for mutually beneficial cross-teaching arrangements, and staff appointments based on cross-teaching arrangements

d1. The AUT Office and the Affiliated Colleges serving each other in their mutual goals

- Continue to foster the AUT Office and the Affiliated Colleges serving each other in the mission of the AUT Consortium according to relevant regulatory requirements, while demonstrating the Fruit of the Spirit
- Continue the AUT Office's support Affiliated Colleges through central specialist services, including: technology (e.g., Student Management System, Student Course Planner, Moderation portal, Moodle support), liaison with reference groups (e.g., disability), support networks (e.g. international student support), industry bodies, legal services, etc.

3. Regulatory Compliance that is a Witness to our Christian Faith

a1. Pro-active understanding and implementation of regulatory requirements and quality improvement processes

- Continue the AUT Office's active engagement with TEQSA, the Department of Education, ATEC, the National Student Ombudsman and other relevant regulatory bodies to remain up to date on current and evolving requirements, and share relevant information with Affiliated Colleges
- Continue the AUT Office's assistance to Affiliated Colleges to understand and implement regulatory obligations and quality improvement processes in a timely way and in good faith
- Foster Affiliated Colleges' regulatory compliance and quality improvement processes that bring credit to themselves, the AUT Consortium, and Christian higher education generally

b1. Transparent risk management, good governance and financial sustainability

- Foster transparent risk management in both academic and non-academic domains through the work of the AUT Office, at the direction of the AUT Council and Vice-Chancellor

- Implement good corporate governance, and both short and long term financial sustainability, at the direction of the AUT Council and Vice-Chancellor
- Implement regulatory requirements for workplace obligations, Gender-based Violence, racism and good governance

c1. A provider category that best supports the AUT Consortium's goals

- Sustain AUT's status as an Australian University with a specialised focus, including Self-Accrediting Authority in "09 Society and Culture" and provision of courses in 09 that enhance the mission of AUT
- Seek resolution of outstanding concerns with TEQSA's handling of the AUT's change of provider category applications

d1. Critical and constructive engagement with current theories and practices in higher education

- Contribute to theoretical and practical debates about the nature and future of higher education, especially as it relates to theological education
- In cases where the AUT's Christian Foundation might conflict with future regulatory issues, seek to positively engage with government, TEQSA and the wider academic regulatory community to make the case for maintaining the ethos of Christian providers, and where relevant, other religious higher education providers

4. Engagement with Society

a1. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with Australia and the world

- Foster AUT Consortium members, and AUT graduates, taking the good news about Jesus Christ into their homes, their workplaces, their communities, and the whole world
- Foster AUT researchers contributing to debate at the highest academic levels, both Christian and secular, that makes the case for the good news of Jesus Christ

b1. Fostering society's understanding of Christian perspectives

- Encourage AUT Consortium members to engage in the public square to provide Christian perspectives on contemporary issues, including through media, podcasts, writing and presenting
- Develop and share data and insights in the public square regarding the Church and Christian perspectives, including through the use of NCLS data

c1. A commitment to social responsibility ²in keeping with the AUT's biblical basis

- Encourage members of the AUT Consortium, and AUT Graduates, to commit to biblically-based social responsibility, including serving the poor, protecting the vulnerable, and seeking justice for the oppressed (e.g., Is 1:17) in line with the Christian Foundation Policy
- Foster a context within the AUT for Biblically-based discussion and debate about the interpretation of social responsibility that is appropriate to the AUT's Christian Foundation
- Undertake research that makes a positive difference to the Church and society, including areas such as mental health, domestic and family violence, disability, aged care, etc.

d1. Exploring the expansion of AUT's course offerings

- Refine and expand existing AUT courses, including in specialist areas, to meet the needs of AUT stakeholders, the Church and society
- Explore new fields for courses, such as counselling, psychology, and liberal arts, in keeping with AUT's Christian Foundation and theological expertise, and AUT's regulatory context, to meet the needs of AUT stakeholders, the Church and society

² A commitment to social responsibility is a requirement of Australian Universities under HESF (2021) B1.3.13.

Signs of Success and Key Performance Indicators

This section assumes that not all goals are easily measured as KPIs, but still remain important pointers towards success - for this reason, the broader phrase “signs of success” (SoS) is used where relevant. This section should be read in conjunction with the more detailed version of the strategic plan which includes actions.

1. Excellence in Christian Teaching, Research and Scholarship

a. Courses and Units of a high academic standard, taught by high quality lecturers, using student-centred teaching methods, with excellent student learning experiences

SoS: Quality assurance processes for teaching and learning continue to operate at a high standard

KPI: Maintenance of AUT’s high Student Experience Survey education scores, and improve any lower sub-areas

KPI: Maintenance of AUT’s high freedom of expression scores

KPI: Implementation of assessment assurance for AI, including open and secure assessments in each unit³

b. Teaching and Learning experiences that foster AUT’s Graduate Attributes of Christian people, Christian scholars, Christian professionals and Christian Leaders

SoS: Growing alignment of Courses and Units with AUT Graduate Attributes

KPI: Reviewing AUT Graduate Attributes to consider adopting appropriate and ethical use of technology, including AI

SoS: Growing use of NCLS data in AUT teaching and research, including in HDR projects

c. Fostering individual and community spiritual formation among students and staff

SoS: Healthy Christian community across the AUT Consortium in thought, word and deed

d. A Graduate School of Research fostering research publications and Higher Degree Research equivalent at or above world standard

KPI: Publish at least 50 research publications over each six year rolling period

KPI: Achieve a score of at least 3 “world standard” on any research assessment exercise conducted using an ERA-equivalent process, such as in preparation for reregistration

e. Scholarship activities and publications that support the Church and AUT teaching and learning

SoS: AUT lecturers conducting scholarship of benefit to churches, Christian organisations and other relevant groups

KPI: Affiliated Colleges meeting AUT benchmarks for scholarship publishing and scholarly activities

KPI: Processes of Course and Unit improvement that document input from recent scholarship, including from scholarship by AUT lecturers

³ Except in specific approved cases, such as single assessment units

2. A Healthy Consortium

a. Christ-like relationships among Affiliated Colleges, and with the AUT Office

SoS: Regular positive engagement through the Principals' Forum and other consultative mechanisms

KPI: AUT Office coordination of regular meetings of Academic Deans, Postgraduate Coordinators, Registrars and Finance Officers, together with Departmental Meetings and the AUT Professional Development Conference

b. Collaborative decision-making through the AUT Council and Committees, Principals' Forum and Affiliated College Boards that demonstrates the Fruit of the Spirit

SoS: Regular positive consultation among the leaders of Affiliated Colleges with the AUT Council, Vice-Chancellor and Committees

SoS: Respectful engagement among staff and students, including "disagreeing well" (such as in committees and in classes)

c. Greater cross-institutional sharing of expertise, teaching, research and scholarship

SoS: Increased cross-college sharing of teaching, teaching resources and HDR supervision

SoS: Maintenance of the AUT Consortium HDR conference and shared HDR seminar series

d. The AUT Office and the Affiliated Colleges serving each other in their mutual goals

SoS: Mutual support and service within the AUT Consortium that demonstrates the Fruit of the Spirit

KPI: Provision of a range of centrally supported services available to Affiliated Colleges

3. Regulatory Compliance that is a Witness to our Christian Faith

a. Pro-active understanding and implementation of regulatory requirements and quality improvement processes

SoS: Engagement with TEQSA regulatory requirements, including Statements of Regulatory Expectations for academic matters

KPI: Successful provider reregistration with TEQSA in 2031

KPI: Successful ESOS/CRICOS reregistration with TEQSA in 2026

KPI: Conduct review of corporate and academic governance in 2027

b. Transparent risk management, good governance and financial sustainability

SoS: Engagement with TEQSA regulatory requirements, including Statements of Regulatory Expectations for non-academic matters

KPI: Implementation of government and TEQSA requirements for workplace obligations, Gender-based Violence, racism and good governance

c. A provider category that best support the AUT Consortium's goals

SoS: Maintaining status as an Australian University with a specialised focus

d. Critical and constructive engagement with current theories and practices in higher education

SoS: Relevant AUT staff engaging with higher education theory beyond the AUT Consortium, such as theological education conferences and TEQSA conferences

4. Engagement with Society

a. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with Australia and the world

SoS: Fostering activities to share the gospel in a range of contexts, including internationally

b. Fostering society's understanding of Christian perspectives

SoS: Encouraging AUT Consortium members in their engagement with the public square through media, podcasts, writing and presenting, including through the use of NCLS data

c. A commitment to social responsibility in keeping with the AUT's biblical basis

SoS: Course content and activities that foster a commitment to support the poor, the oppressed, and those suffering injustice, in conjunction with churches and Christian organisations

d. Exploring the expansion of AUT's course offerings

SoS: Refine and expand existing course offerings to meet the needs of AUT stakeholders, the Church and society

SoS: Explore new course offerings that are appropriate to AUT's focus and could meet the needs of AUT stakeholders, the Church and society