

Operations and performance

A creative and innovative university

By 2030 we will be internationally regarded for excellence in teaching and research and recognised for being at the forefront of creativity and innovation.

2025 outcome achievements

- Ranked in the top 100 universities globally, ranking 96th worldwide (QS World University Rankings).
- Established the Faculty of Design and Society as the foundation of our Creative Industries Strategy.
- Enhanced UTS Startups with increased opportunities for students, researchers and external innovators.

Creative industries

The establishment and naming of the Faculty of Design and Society marked the first major milestone for our Creative Industries Strategy. The recruitment of a new faculty executive team is complete, and Professor James Bennett will start as dean of the new faculty in January 2026.

Tech Central

UTS continues to contribute to the NSW Government's Tech Central Strategy and support the NSW Innovation Blueprint. In June, the NSW Government announced the commitment of an additional \$38 million in funding for Tech Central related initiatives. A substantial proportion of this commitment will be focused on moving the Sydney Startup Hub to Tech Central, which will firmly place our precinct at the centre of the government's efforts to support and grow the NSW innovation ecosystem.

UTS Startups

UTS Startups support the UTS 2030 strategy by enabling industry-engaged learning, translation of research and skills into practice, and the creation of new economic and social value.

This year we launched UTS Startups for early-stage, technology-enabled ventures in a new location in Tech Central. UTS Startups supports student and founder capability development through internships, in-subject projects and mentoring, access to UTS expertise and facilities, and opportunities for collaboration with students, alumni, researchers and industry partners.

Through this approach, UTS Startups contributes to graduate employability, industry-engaged education and entrepreneurship pathways, while supporting the development of ventures aligned to real-world challenges and the public good, strengthening UTS's role in Sydney's innovation ecosystem.

As part of its UTS Startups schools engagement portfolio, UTS continues to deliver its NESA-accredited Practical Entrepreneurship program through UTS Startups, providing a 60-hour course for year 11 students that appears on their HSC record. This fully online, UTS-assessed program applies a structured approach to entrepreneurship and builds early capability for students in problem-solving, market validation and digital enterprise.

Digital presence

In 2025, UTS completed a major phase of its Digital Presence Program (DPP) through the launch of its new website, strengthening the university's ability to engage students, partners, alumni and the broader community.

Performance indicators for the new website demonstrated increased digital engagement, including more audience interaction, growth in new users and improved content consumption across priority markets.

The new website was awarded a silver medal in the Digital Education category at the Better Future World Design Awards 2026.

Research performance

UTS's research excellence was recognised in the 2026 QS World University Rankings where we ranked 1st in Australia for citations per faculty.

Our external research income total for 2025 was \$135 million.

We also achieved substantial growth in HERDC Category 1, including the ARC competitive funding, achieving a \$6.9 million above budget, and an increase of \$1.4 million from last year.

Research translation

This year we established the Research to Impact initiative to include our research translation projects under the one umbrella. The program allows for our research community to easily identify and access support for their research translation endeavours.

This increased focus on research translation, and on supporting our research community, has resulted in more opportunities for our researchers.

More than 47 active translation projects progressed across all faculties. The commercialisation pipeline also strengthened significantly, with 68 active opportunities, 12 royalty-bearing licence prospects and 7 spinout candidates.

The impact of our research beyond commercialisation also continued to grow. Around 25% of active projects are pursuing non-commercial pathways (including policy impact, health interventions, and social innovation), supported by new communities of practice and targeted initiatives such as the ageing research translation foci, which contributed directly to shaping the new federal Aged Care Act 2024 and national aged care funding reforms.

Deep sector engagement

We have launched a deep sector engagement initiative to build stronger, mutually beneficial relationships between UTS and its partners. This initiative is designed to transform how we connect with industry sectors where our interdisciplinary research expertise can make a difference.

The initial 4 deep sector engagement (DSE) teams – agriculture and horticulture-tech; health; climate; and space and defence – were launched in July. Core researchers for each sector have been identified, in addition to the network of researchers supporting activity.

Two further DSE teams, manufacturing and creative industries, are proposed for 2026.

First Nations engagement

We approved a new Indigenous Education and Research Strategy 2025-2030 this year. The strategy will build on the success of previous strategies to give effect to Indigenous self-determination in the pursuit of excellence in Indigenous education and research.

Significant progress was also made in 2025 to refine and update the draft Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) guidelines, led by senior Indigenous staff and informed by broad consultation. The guidelines aim to implement a human rights-based approach, which involves positive measures by institutions developed together with Indigenous peoples, including Indigenous self-determination and free, prior and informed consent.

A connected and engaged university

By 2030, we will be preferred by industry in the areas we work, we will increase collaboration within UTS, and with our communities and partners; and demand for our graduates will grow.

2025 outcome achievements

- Positioned UTS as a leader in digital education and global engagement with a new global digital operating model, featuring the launch of CinLearn, UTS's first online postgraduate offering in Mandarin.
- Reached up to 200,000 global alumni through our improved alumni communications strategy.
- More than 700 donors collectively contributed more than \$11 million to support UTS students, research and programs.

Industry partnerships

In 2025, UTS strengthened its position as an industry-connected university by developing a university-wide industry partnerships model that emphasises integration, specialisation and alignment of interests between UTS and industry, as well as delivering partnerships that translate research capability into operational, national and commercial outcomes across government and industry.

We established key strategic partnerships and initiatives with new partners including the Australian Federal Police and Hitachi to accelerate green transformation and decarbonisation outcomes in Australia.

Our CISCO relationship has expanded, incorporating new industry-funded roles and enhanced collaboration platforms like Innovation Central Sydney (ICS) and the National Industry Innovation Network. Situated at the heart of Tech Central, ICS provides a platform for industry and government to explore emerging technologies through innovation projects, engage with world-leading experts, access state-of-the-art facilities, and contribute to the development of the next generation workforce.

We also established a formal RNA manufacturing collaboration between UTS's Biologics Innovation Facility and the University of New South Wales. The Biologics Innovation Facility is nationally recognised for its hands-on Good Manufacturing Practice training programs, which equips trainees with industry-relevant skills essential for the large-scale manufacture of RNA-based products.

Alongside Space Machines Company (SMC), we announced the creation of Australia's largest industrial-scale spacecraft manufacturing facility. Located at UTS Tech Lab, the Optimus Factory (OF-01) marks a major milestone in Australia's space industry, establishing critical sovereign capability for the design, assembly and testing of 300kg class spacecraft at scale.

This partnership, renewed for a further 3 years, allows for joint research and development, enabling UTS and SMC to shape the future of the space industry in Australia and globally. It will provide UTS students and researchers with access to leading-edge technology and real-world experience, placing them at the forefront of space innovation.

Global partnerships

This year marked a major milestone in positioning global and digital growth as a core strategic priority under the UTS 2030 strategy. Through sector leadership, strategic collaborations, and the launch of new international online offerings, we strengthened our reputation as an entrepreneurial and future-focused university.

Under our global and digital growth program, we became the first university in Australia to deliver online postgraduate programs entirely in Modern Standard Chinese. Through our 10-year partnership agreement with CinLearn Education, UTS launched 2 programs in May this year, the Master of Technology Innovation and the Master of Business Analytics.

The programs were developed to respond to a growing demand from Chinese learners for flexible, high-quality international education that fits around their work and personal commitments.

Enterprise learning

Through its enterprise learning partnerships, UTS delivered tailored, industry-driven education to support the upskilling and reskilling of the workforce.

Notably, enterprise learning programs continued to demonstrate UTS's capacity to design and deliver flexible, applied learning aligned to partner needs, including modular short courses, microcredentials and bespoke professional education for government and industry organisations.

These models reinforced UTS's role as a trusted partner in addressing complex, skills-intensive challenges and generated a rise in incoming enquiries, increased traffic to the Plus UTS website, and enhanced visibility at learning and development and human resources conferences and events. In 2025, areas of strong growth were in AI enterprise education, data and cybersecurity.

Alumni engagement

In 2025, UTS advanced its ambition under its UTS 2030 strategy by strategically strengthening alumni networks across Australia and in key international regions. Enhanced alumni engagement and recognition programs deepened connections and increased visibility.

Key highlights

- A reimagined alumni communications strategy reached up to 200,000 alumni globally, delivering open and click through rates well above sector benchmarks and significantly increasing advocacy and awareness. Social media engagement experienced substantial growth across all platforms in 2025 and the UTS Global Alumni Network LinkedIn Group grew by 15%, increasing membership from 14,000 to 16,000.
- Alumni engagement grew by 6% to almost 28,000 actively engaged alumni, reflecting sustained investment in networks and relationship management.
- A strategic partnership approach was embedded through domestic and international advisory boards, alumni ambassadors and senior alumni engagement aligned to UTS priorities that translated to industry, business and philanthropic lead generation.
- Global alumni communities were strengthened through international engagement across North America, the United Kingdom/European Union, China and Southeast Asia, directly supporting reputation, partnerships and the university's global engagement agenda.
- The UTS Alumni Awards achieved record nominations and continue to recognise and celebrate outstanding achievement, build external connections and enhance UTS's reputation. Alumni storytelling was re-vitalised through digital content showcasing the real-world impact of our alumni driving positive change.
- The UTS Young Alumni program attracted significant levels of engagement with over 500 alumni 35 years of age and under attending alumni connection events. The Young Alumni Committee now represents all UTS faculties and the 2025 program focused on alumni-to-alumni connections, career support, creativity and collaboration.

Philanthropy and fundraising

UTS has strengthened its philanthropic program, reinforced donor confidence and advanced its UTS 2030 commitment to being a connected and engaged university. We aligned our philanthropic activity with faculty priorities and major institutional themes, including research excellence, Indigenous leadership, technology and social justice. We also secured significant partnerships, alongside improvements to governance, transparency and systems to support sustainable, long-term fundraising.

Donor generosity in 2025 was broad-based and impactful. 718 donors collectively contributed \$11.27 million¹ to support UTS students, research and programs, reflecting confidence in UTS's vision and priorities. This support enabled hundreds of students to progress their education, and funded research and community initiatives delivering real-world impact.

Donor engagement was strengthened through a scalable, brand-aligned stewardship and storytelling approach and philanthropic outcomes included major gifts, multi-year commitments and generous bequests. Bequest giving, demonstrating a deep affinity with UTS, including from alumni from antecedent institutions, will be relaunched in 2026 to recognise this opportunity for growth.

Despite a challenging operating environment, philanthropic momentum strengthened across the year, with a clearer and more robust pipeline emerging to support future initiatives.

Key highlights

- A total of \$11.27 million¹ in philanthropic support was secured from 718 donors, providing broad-based funding for scholarships, research and community programs aligned to UTS priorities.
- Minderoo Foundation: \$1 million gift supporting the MERMAID project (Marine Ecosystems Research Mobilising AI and Data).
- Rebecca L Cooper Medical Research Foundation: \$2 million awarded to 2 next generation UTS biomedical researchers through the AI & Val Rosenstrauss Fellowships (\$1 million each).
- Rolex: A 3-year commitment through the Perpetual Planet Initiative, accelerating UTS's global leadership in marine science and expansion of the Coral Nurture Program across the Great Barrier Reef and internationally.
- Google Asia Pacific: \$300,000 supporting research into AI productivity and innovation ecosystems.
- Wicking Trust: \$420,000 supporting an ageing and end of life research project in the Faculty of Law.
- Donor engagement was re-energised with delivery of the first 2 large scale philanthropic appeals in several years, reaching more than 100,000 alumni, donors and friends and supported by refreshed impact storytelling and communications.
- Significant bequest support, including a \$2.2 million estate gift and additional bequests, reinforcing long-term confidence in UTS and expanding future investment in student access and research.

1. Philanthropic income received differs from donation and bequest revenue reported in volume 2 (note 2.7). Philanthropic income received reflects cash and in-kind philanthropic contributions, while donation and bequest revenue in volume 2 is recognised under accounting standards and includes eligible non-cash contributions, such as in-kind research income. Accordingly, the 2 amounts are not directly comparable.

A student-centred university

By 2030, we will meet student, industry and community expectations in line with our distinctive identity. We will support academic success for all students, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds.

2025 outcome achievements

- Launched UTS Pathways Plan to advance educational access and equity to students from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Implemented a new non-ATAR pathway for equity cohorts.
- Built on the Student Experience Framework to improve student onboarding and student wellbeing.
- Implemented an improved online portal for gender-based violence reports, providing a trauma-informed, person-centred approach.

Student diversity and success

We launched the UTS Pathways Plan in February. Under the plan, UTS will offer more flexible and equitable opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds by embracing non-traditional pathways and reducing reliance on ATAR-based admissions.

The plan's aim is to ensure that all students, regardless of background or circumstance, can succeed and thrive in higher education. The plan will prioritise First Nations and low socio-economic status (SES) students in line with UTS's commitment to social justice and inclusion.

We saw an initial impact of the pathways plan with our low-SES access rate increasing from 7.7% in 2024 to 7.8% in 2025, and a continued growth with total Indigenous student participation (all courses) increasing by 34 students from 406 in 2024 to 440 in 2025, making it the highest number of Indigenous students in UTS history.

Jumbunna engaged in strategic outreach including the development of a new Indigenous leadership program with 6 pilot schools with high Indigenous student participation (years 9 to 12). The program was developed through ideation workshops and community consultation and feedback to date has been very positive. Future tailored workshops based on student need and school interest are planned for the expanded program in 2026.

The UniReady Enabling Program, UTS's free academic program specifically developed for First Nations students and/or students who have experienced financial disadvantage, received accreditation and was piloted, establishing a new non-ATAR pathway for equity cohorts.

Student voice and experience

Building on the Student Experience Framework, we implemented a new onboarding communications strategy this year, targeting our domestic undergraduate commencing cohort. These curated emails are designed to equip, guide and empower students as they start their learning journey at UTS.

As a result, we saw a 15% increase in Orientation attendance compared to 2024, a reduction in enquiry volumes, and an 11% increase in Orientation registrations, with record engagement and waitlists for many face-to-face events. In recognition of this work, the student onboarding communications optimisation project was named a finalist at the Australian Marketing Institute Marketing Excellence Awards.

We continued to strengthen how student insights shape our decision-making. Through thematic feedback surveys and the development of new student voice principles, we embedded a more systematic approach to translating student perspectives into ongoing improvements across services and administrative processes. The new 2025–2027 Student Partnership Agreement, co-developed with ActivateUTS, the UTS Students' Association, and student members of Council and Academic Board, further embeds student wellbeing, belonging and academic engagement at the centre of UTS decision-making.

Student wellbeing was a significant area of focus and investment. The Wellbeing Lounge pilot in UTS Central attracted over 35,000 visits during the Spring session, hosted 65 wellbeing events, and connected 72 students to counselling and wellbeing coaches. Feedback from over 1500 survey responses found that 74% of respondents reported an improved university experience, reflecting our commitment to a holistic view of student success that reduces stigma and strengthens belonging.

Our student safety caseworkers marked their first full year of providing trauma-informed support for students impacted by gender-based violence, contributing to the implementation of the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence. Refer page 33 for more information on our university-wide response to GBV.

We also worked to improve efficiency and deliver a better experience for students through the roll-out of student-facing AI agents. Deployed across subject areas and service contexts, these tools have reduced response times and improved the quality of both learning conversations and administrative support.

Complementing this, the Students as Partners Project Grants Program, UTS's program that allows students to work individually or as part of a small team and engage with a staff partner to collaborate on a project, delivered several high-impact initiatives, including a nursing placement swap platform that recorded 91% satisfaction among more than 250 student testers, and a student centre chatbot that has since been integrated into UTS systems.

A resilient and agile university

By 2030 people will aspire to work and engage with UTS. We will demonstrate excellence in our enabling operations, which will improve organisational agility and our ability to take on new opportunities.

2025 outcome achievements

- Generative AI framework and AI governance implemented, including the release of Use of AI in Research Guidelines.
- Achieved the 2025 climate positive plan target of 100% renewable electricity (refer page 29).
- Won the International Green Gown Award for sustainability institution of the year.

Operational sustainability

This year we progressed with our operational sustainability initiative (OSI). The initiative involves a wide-ranging review that aims to ensure UTS is financially and operationally sustainable into the future.

OSI will include changes to our academic profile and curriculum, and our operating model. This year the focus was on receiving feedback from staff, students and other stakeholders on the proposed changes.

The feedback and insights we received were vital in shaping the future sustainability of the university. The work will continue into 2026.

Staff growth and support

We continued to support staff career development with the delivery of key programs such as LEAD, which supports emerging and early career leaders, Management Essentials, and Leadership Essentials. These programs equip our staff with essential capabilities to assume leadership responsibilities.

We also implemented inclusive recruitment practices to support gender targets in faculties that feature STEM, developed supervisor capabilities through inclusive career conversations to support the retention of underrepresented groups in STEM, and introduced a range of systemic and support initiatives to reduce barriers to academic promotion for underrepresented groups in STEM.

Work was also underway this year on a UTS psychosocial risk management framework, which was refined based on the insights gained from 25 psychosocial risk assessments and staff focus groups. The framework will be finalised through consultation in early 2026 and implemented through a range of updates to policy, processes and training.

Agility and technology

Through the implementation of our data and AI strategy, we established a generative AI framework. The roll out of student and staff facing AI conversational agents delivered improved efficiency and better staff and student experiences.

Work continues on subject-level AI bots within the teaching and learning space, including reflection bots and a clinical practice assessment bot pilot.

The Use of AI in Research Guidelines was approved in April. Developed by a working group comprising various areas of the university, the guidelines are structured to give guidance at each stage of a research project.

A key takeaway from this year, which will remain relevant as the field continues to evolve, is that the growing adoption of generative AI necessitates robust AI governance that balances the ability to innovate with governing high-risk AI applications.

Digital strategy

UTS Council endorsed Digital UTS: Building towards 2030, a new plan that leverages previous achievements and sets a clear vision for the next phase of digital transformation at UTS. Digital UTS is focused on delivering sustainable innovation, strengthening technology capabilities and supporting the university's priorities.

Staff

	2024	2025
FTE staff (non-casual)¹		
Academic	1,472.7	1,555.3
Professional	2,112.6	2,161.5
Total	3,585.3	3,716.8
FTE staff (casual)²		
Academic	457.6	450.0
Professional	250.5	232.2
Total	708.1	682.3
Actual persons (non-casual)³		
Academic	1,415	1,460
Professional	2,135	2,167
Total	3,550	3,627

Note: Staff may be employed as both academic and professional staff.

Data was sourced from the NEO HR Information System (for non-casual staff data) and the Ascender system (for casual staff data) at 11 February 2026.

1. Figures are the average nominal FTE for continuing and fixed-term staff over 2025.
2. Figures are an average of the finance FTE paid to casual staff over 2025.
3. Figures are based on continuing and fixed-term staff over 2025.