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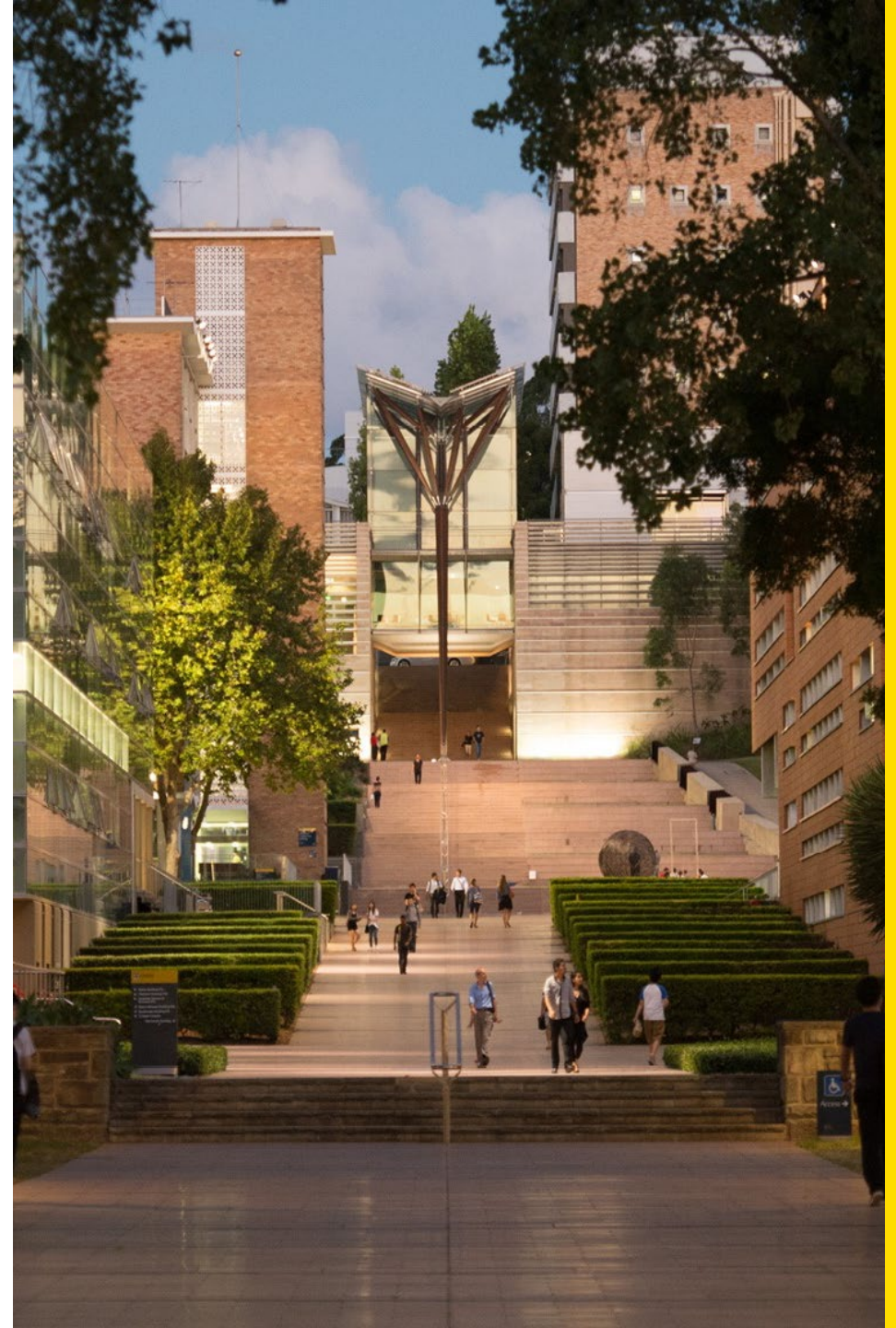
# Active Learning at UNSW



# Links to the 2025 Strategy

Active Learning (AL) is an integral part of Educational Excellence at UNSW, specifically, the [2025 Strategy](#) to create an outstanding set of connected places, physical and digital, where students, staff, alumni, members of the local community and our diverse range of partners, can come together to innovate, transform, learn and contribute to society (refer to Appendix A).

The integration of physical and digital campuses will provide a world class environment, able to adapt to changing circumstances. The flexible use of learning spaces and integrated technology are critical to achieving this.





# What is Active Learning?



AL is a broad concept associated with a variety of learning and teaching strategies intended to improve students' higher level learning. Such strategies include problem-based learning, self-regulated learning, inquiry-based instruction/inquiry-guided learning, collaborative learning, experiential learning, blended learning and flipped classrooms (Carr et al., 2015; Nicol et al., 2017).

The focus of AL is on developing students' skills rather than on the transmission of information. Hence, AL represents a paradigm shift away from traditional notions of 'teaching as telling' (i.e. teacher-centered approaches), towards more student-centered approaches.

# What is Active Learning?



It promotes a 'learning by doing' approach (e.g., discussing, reading, writing, participating in learning activities) which engages students in higher-order thinking, and thus develops deeper, more complex knowledge structures (Grabinger & Dunlap, 1995).

AL is key to student engagement, measured by both the (NSSE) National Survey of Student Engagement and the (AUSSE) Australasian Survey of Student Engagement. Research into AL classrooms report high student engagement (Vercellotti, 2017), increased student motivation (Owens et al., 2017) and performance (Freeman et al., 2014).

# What is Active Learning?



At UNSW, our long-held Beliefs about Learning note that learning is an active process involving a conscious intention on a student's part to make sense of new ideas and experiences, involving action and reflection.

This understanding is supported in the domains of the Scientia Education Experience (SEE) and through the implementation of our integrated curriculum.



# Active Learning and Teaching at UNSW

AL may be **defined** as an active and reflective process involving a conscious intention by a student to make sense of new ideas and experiences in order to construct knowledge.

AL **teachers** are facilitators of the learning process, guiding students to solve problems and engage their higher order thinking skills.

AL **students** take responsibility for and control of their learning, working collaboratively with others.

AL **spaces and technologies** are vital for student learning, and ideally should accommodate both traditional and interactive teaching practices in order to support a diverse range of student learning styles and experiences.



# References

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# Appendix A: Cross Reference to UNSW 2025 Strategy

## **Theme A2: Educational Excellence – the UNSW Scientia Educational Experience**

### **3. Systematically integrating technology into teaching**

We will develop a culture that allows us, through our integrated digital campus strategy and investment in technology, to innovate and improve our educational capabilities. This will enhance both the educational experience and campus life more generally. We will integrate the best available technologies to design and deliver systems that enable students to personalise their education and allow the University to individualise student support programs. We will ensure coordination of University-wide support services for flexible use of learning spaces and integrated technology. Alongside the investment in new technology-enabled solutions, we will disinvest from those activities and technologies that are not adding value or where better solutions exist.

### **Enabler D3: World-class environments**

#### **2025 Vision**

Our University environments will provide a sense of place and pride in UNSW. We will have an outstanding set of connected places, physical and digital, where students, staff, alumni, members of the local community and our diverse range of partners, can come together to innovate, transform, learn and contribute to society. Objectives

1. To integrate our physical and digital campuses to provide a world-class environment, flexible in adapting to changing circumstances.



# Appendix A: Cross Reference to UNSW 2025 Strategy

## **Enabler D3: World-class environments**

### **2025 Vision (continued)**

2. To provide a campus environment that promotes safety, social engagement, accessibility and collaboration, and that contributes to environmental sustainability.

3. To provide a holistic individualised experience utilising the physical and digital assets of UNSW and providing fully integrated services to students and staff. Our initiatives

#### 1. Campus development

UNSW will develop a physical campus development strategy that focuses on providing contemporary spaces and facilities that will meet student and staff needs, create a vibrant community of activity and that are safe, accessible and environmentally sustainable. We will utilise the completion of the new Light Rail project to open up new opportunities to connect our campus to the city of Sydney.

#### 2. Digital solutions

UNSW will ensure our staff and student service systems and practices offer digitally enabled solutions that meet individual needs, are readily accessible, and provide efficient and effective advice and assistance.

# Appendix A: Cross Reference to UNSW 2025 Strategy

## **Enabler D3: World-class environments**

### **2025 Vision (continued)**

#### 3. Integration of the physical and digital campus

We will design our physical and digital campus to achieve a seamless integration in the experience of staff and students in a way that is flexible enough to accommodate rapid change.

#### Measures of progress

- Increase in the scale of world-class shared research infrastructure.
- Benchmarking against other Australian universities for service access and quality in digital/Information Technology service delivery.
- Student and staff satisfaction with our physical and virtual environments.
- Benchmarking against other Australian and international universities for space utilisation.



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