

Tertiary Education Reform

The WA Government is progressing a set of reforms to transform the higher education sector.

WA's public university sector needs a transformation

Western Australia's universities are critical to our economy and community. Their leadership, staff, students and researchers have served us well for generations. In a fast-changing world, however, it is important that WA stands ready to meet challenges and seize opportunities.

Recent reviews and reports have identified weaknesses in how our higher education sector is structured and positioned relative to national and international peers.

The 2023 University Sector Review and 2025 University Feasibility Study and Rapid Cost-Benefit Analysis have identified a range of specific challenges, such as lagging research performance, declining international and domestic competitiveness and underserved regional and remote students.

As part of the reforms, structural reform, the potential merger of the Curtin University, Murdoch University and the University of Western Australia (UWA), has been identified as an effective mechanism to achieve the scale, capability and strategic alignment required to strengthen the sector.

A well-designed merger can unlock several benefits:



Enhanced global reputation and competitiveness



Strengthen research capability and impact



Improved student experiences and outcomes, accessibility and future ready workforce



Stronger alignment with WA's economic diversification, workforce and innovation priorities

Reform agenda

The WA Government is committed to strengthening the national and international competitiveness of WA public universities, and ensuring the sector better serves the needs of students, industry, regions and the broader economy.

The WA Government is pursuing both structural and complementary reforms because the sector's challenges arise from both institutional structure and broader system settings.

Structural reform

The Government will undertake a business case for a university merger involving Curtin University, Murdoch University and UWA. A final decision will be made in 2027.

Complementary reforms

The Government is also considering broader tertiary education reforms, including:

- Regional expansion of course delivery, with a university presence in the seven regional cities across the State
- Better alignment between vocational education and training (VET) and universities
- Strengthening research, innovation and commercialisation
- Strengthening the student voice and coordination of workplace learning opportunities

Next steps

The WA Government will progress university merger to the business case stage and continue work on complementary reforms.

For further information:



[WA.gov.au/universityreform](https://www.wa.gov.au/universityreform)



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