

In-School Enabling Programs: A Practical Guide for Implementation

For High Schools and Universities

2026

Collaboratively developed by the following universities, with input from school communities and students across Western Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales.



Introduction

The Australian education system should enable all students to thrive, yet persistent inequities remain, starting in the early years and continuing through to tertiary education outcomes (Department of Education, 2024). The Australian Universities Accord sets an ambitious goal: by 2050, 55% of Australians will hold a bachelor's degree (Department of Education, 2024). Achieving this requires new approaches to support students who do not flourish in traditional senior high schooling.

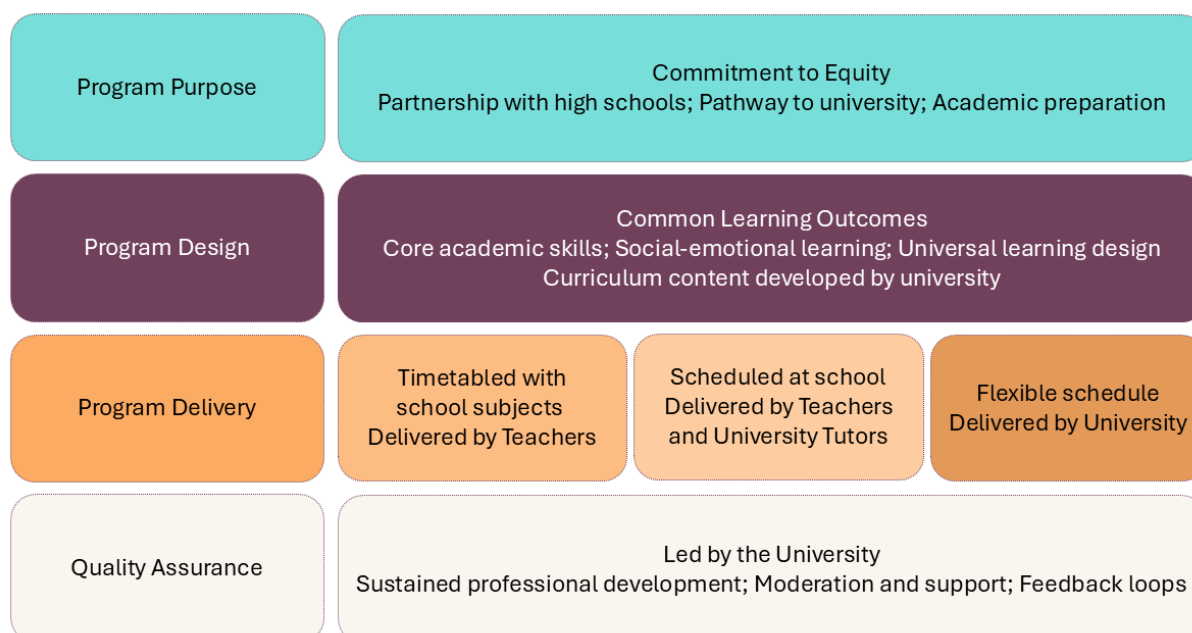
In-School Enabling Programs (ISEPs) are one way to address this challenge. These programs provide opportunities for students who have experienced educational disadvantage or disruption, or who have not thrived in traditional senior school pathways. They are particularly important for students from equity groups, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, first-in-family learners, students from low-socio-economic status backgrounds, students with disabilities, and those in regional or remote areas (Olds et al., 2022; Pilcher & Torii, 2018).

Despite their potential, ISEPs are a relatively new approach, and there is limited understanding of their structure and impact. To address this, four universities and their partner high schools collaborated through a project partially funded by the Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success (ACSES). The research spanned 94 high schools across Western Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales, and included an advisory group of one to two high school representatives per university. Together, they explored different program models, how they operate in diverse contexts, and the experiences of teachers and students. One product of the collaboration is this **In-School Enabling Programs: A Practical Guide for Implementation**. This guide gives an overview of good practice based on the project and should be developed further according to individual university and community contexts.

Typology of In-School Enabling Programs

ISEPs create a direct pathway from high school to first-year university, supporting students in their transition to tertiary education. Designed by universities, ISEPs equip students with the academic skills and confidence needed for success at university. ISEPs are offered to Year 11 and Year 12 students, and are typically integrated into the high school timetable. They are delivered through formal partnerships between high schools and universities as part of a collaborative approach that is central to their effectiveness.

Image 1. Typology of In-School Enabling Program models across four universities



Snapshot of In-School Enabling Programs: 2021 to 2023

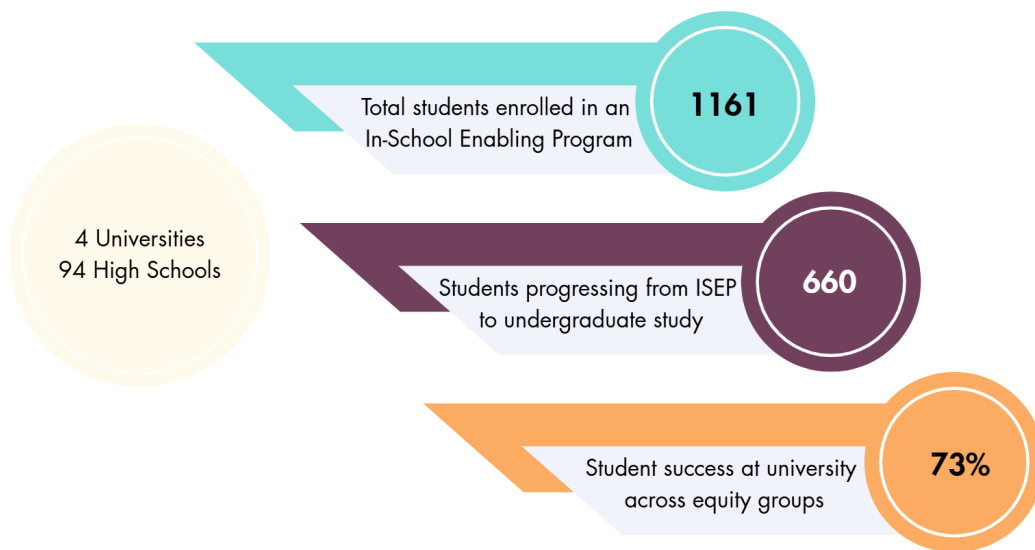


Image 2. Visual representation of ISEP student success: 2021 to 2023

Implementing an In-School Enabling Program

The implementation of ISEPs varies across high school and university contexts. For this guide, high schools and universities are considered collaborators, working together to bridge the gap between secondary and tertiary education, and support students' transition to university. Implementation is an iterative process that requires research, action, and reflection. To support this process, the guide adopts a three-phase model (NSW Department of Education, n.d.)

1. Engage: Key Actions

- Identify target cohorts and equity priorities
- Establish shared goals between university and high school partners
- Assess resources and readiness for a program.

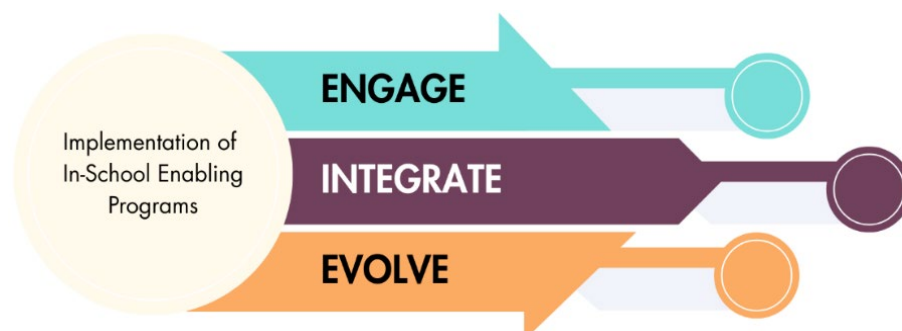
2. Integrate: Key Actions

- Select an appropriate program model
- Define roles, responsibilities and communication processes
- Establish the program in the high school ecosystem.

3. Evolve: Key Actions

- Evaluate student outcomes and feedback from all stakeholders
- Adapt collaboratively to meet changing needs of partnership
- Ensure ongoing relevance through refinement of program.

Image 3. Visual representation of three phases of implementation



Section One: Implementation Advice for High Schools

ENGAGE

The Engage Phase helps schools assess their context, student needs, and available program options to ensure alignment in philosophy, pathways vision, and resources before partnering with a university on an ISEP. This includes reviewing current supports and constraints, exploring suitable models, consulting research, and setting conditions for success through collaboration and clear communication.

Guiding Questions

1. Which student groups face the greatest barriers to university pathways and how are we currently supporting them?
2. Do our current practices and resources meet the academic and cultural needs of senior students, especially those from equity backgrounds?
3. What would success look like if an ISEP was implemented here?
4. Are we prepared to support an ISEP in terms of staffing, systems, and funding?
5. Which ISEP model best fits our high school community?

Image 4. Visual representation of Engage Phase for high schools



Good practice

“I always wanted to attend university and then I began ATAR and found it quite difficult to maintain along with moving out of home at 16. There was complications with family, so I had to leave home and it just got too stressful.”(Student interview 006)

Students and educators spoke about the many reasons that academically capable students wanted to complete an ISEP as their preferred pathway to university (including mental health concerns, personal circumstances, and stress related to grades). Educators advised it was important to have a program that fit the local context of the school community and students.



Good practice

“It’s so well scaffolded and it’s amazing what [students] produce. It blows my mind every time to see because I get to see aspects of their work when they want me to have a look at it. And you look at it and go, ‘wow’.” (Educator interview 001)

ISEPs are intentionally designed to provide high-level support to students, coupled with high expectations, and for universities and schools to work in partnership. There are different models of delivery to suit the requirements of schools and universities, but all provide a bridge between secondary and tertiary institutions. These programs are not distance education.



Good practice

“I was quite nervous before the course for things such as referencing and academic writing. Learning these skills ... made me feel more prepared for university.” (Student interview 013)

Students and educators spoke about the importance of curriculum design that aligned with university expectations, provided scaffolding for learning and addressed the socio-emotional elements of learning.



Step 1.

Identify school community needs

What does this mean in practice?

- Review the aspirations, demonstrated abilities, and learning needs of the student cohort.
- Identify which students would benefit from an ISEP.
- Pinpoint gaps in the senior school curriculum and whether an ISEP may address them.
- Define what success looks like for your students early in the program (beyond completion or university entry).

Step 2.

Evaluate models of programs

What does this mean in practice?

- Review how different ISEP models operate, including the level of support from the university.
- Assess the level of support required for students and teachers.
- For small or regional high schools, confirm models include extra supports (e.g. synchronous classes, university tutors).

Step 3.

Check program curriculum alignment

What does this mean in practice?

- Confirm the program develops academic literacies (reading, writing, critical thinking) and aligns with Enabling Education.
- Ensure the program also addresses social-emotional needs and self-efficacy.
- Look for universal learning design principles and explicit instructional materials (unit guides, rubrics, exemplars, engaging digital content).

Good practice

“So the program with [university] was actually developed in partnership with my foundation principal ... And he wanted to form a better partnership with our, at that time, our only university ... so he actually worked with [university] to develop a program where the students could get that exposure to the university.” (Educator interview 008)

Partnership is fundamental to effective ISEPs. Educators said it was important for the school and program philosophies to align and that communication mechanisms between institutions were understood early. This included understanding the appropriate resources required for program implementation.



Step 4.

Assess school readiness for a program

What does this mean in practice?

- Confirm the program's values align with your high school's vision and culture.
- Assess resource availability: timetable space, teacher allocation, reliable technology and internet access.
- Select teachers with strong digital pedagogy skills, experience in senior school, and understanding of Enabling Education principles.

INTEGRATE

The Integrate Phase moves plans into practice by formalising the university partnership, embedding program processes, and launching delivery with clear roles, expectations, and systems for monitoring and improvement. High schools achieve this by establishing strong communication channels with university teams, integrating the program into timetables and operational systems, coordinating ongoing moderation, and promoting program awareness across the school community.

Guiding Questions

1. What are the expectations of our high school to ensure successful implementation of an ISEP?
2. How will we create awareness of the program among students, staff, and families?
3. What high school-based processes need to be established for effective delivery?

Image 5. Visual representation of Integrate Phase for high schools



Good practice

“We had been getting feedback from universities, not specifically to our school, but as a sector, that students were arriving at university ill-prepared for the academic rigours of their courses, so that this was a way for our students to arrive at university, ready for things like academic writing, referencing, that kind of stuff.” (Educator interview 011)

Benchmarking highlighted that universities and high schools should work together to define student needs, partnership requirements, and program expectations.



Good practice

“So, because we don't have the breadth of pathways through all the range of subjects, this was an addition to what we do to allow a university pathway for our students.” (Educator interview 012)

Within the collaboration, a school community is an important stakeholder in building success for students. Unlike post-school programs, families and supporting school staff should be included in conversations about the pathway to university.



Good practice

“My school had one of our high school teachers teach the course where he gave out wrong information to students ... which made the transition to university confusing and confronting.” (Student survey 23)

Insights from surveys reinforce the importance of well-equipped senior school teachers in successful delivery of ISEPs. Teachers are a key feature of a school-led program because they are also aware of student social-emotional needs.



Step 1

Establish shared understandings

What does this mean in practice?

- Clarify student needs, university provisions, and partnership requirements.
- Confirm any recognition by state curriculum authorities and completion processes.
- Agree to a formal program agreement outlining responsibilities and deliverables.
- Consider piloting the ISEP before committing long-term.

Step 2.

Build program awareness and student selection

What does this mean in practice?

- Inform parents and the wider high school community about the program.
- Ensure students meet university entry requirements, including English language competency.
- Support students through the application and admissions processes.

Step 3.

Prepare teachers for delivery of program

What does this mean in practice?

- Train at least two teachers and a member of leadership to ensure continuity and stakeholder support.
- Participate in ongoing professional development offered by the university.
- Encourage collaboration with university tutors where applicable.

Good practice

“Having the support but then also having that schedule given ahead, so, like, we would know all the assignments that are expected and then when they were due. So that really helped me rather than me waiting for when's the next one due, like, it actually helped.” (Student interview 004)

Accountability for student outcomes begins with clear communication responsibilities and adherence to reporting timelines. This clarity then transfers to the student voice that highlighted clear assessment requirements.



Step 4

Confirm reporting processes

What does this mean in practice?

- Agree on reporting methods for student outcomes.
- Clarify responsibilities for reporting to state curriculum authorities, as these vary by jurisdiction.
- Align timelines with high school reporting deadlines and university processes.
- Maintain high school-level records for reporting progress to parents.

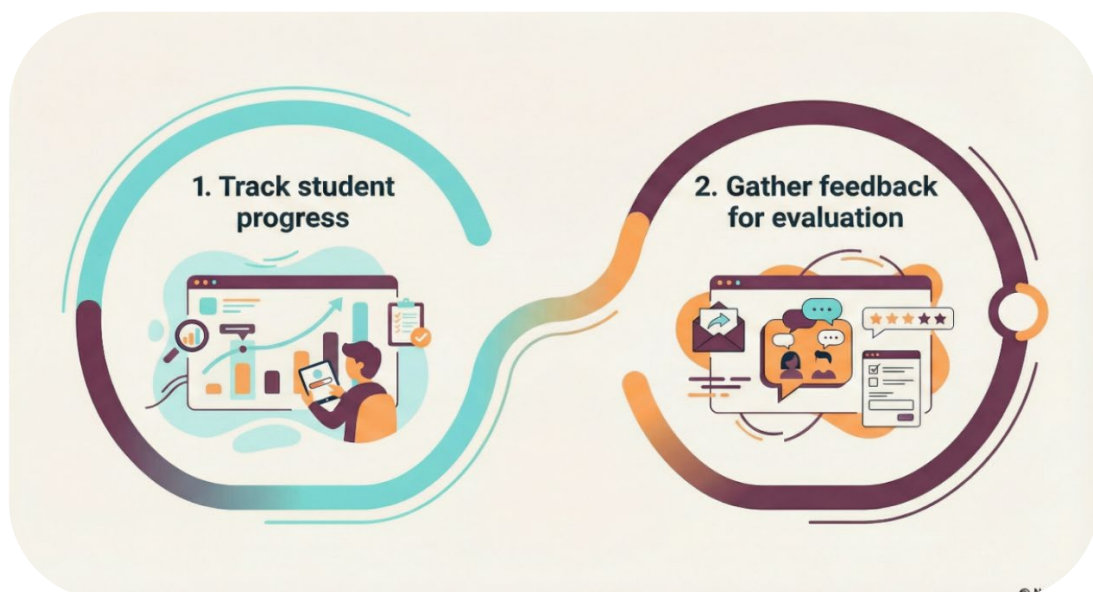


The Evolve Phase focuses on sustaining program relevance by evaluating outcomes, addressing changing needs, and refining processes for long-term impact on student pathways.

Guiding Questions

1. What outcomes is the In-School Enabling Program achieving?
2. Do these outcomes align with our definition of success?
3. What changes or recommendations could improve student learning?

Image 6. Visual representation of Evolve Phase for high schools



Good practice

“That’s why I was really curious about this research project, because I think it’s something that needs to be tracked and we need to see how successful the students are and, you know, is it making a difference and are they being able to retain their course and not drop out?” (Educator interview 014)

The insights from educators who had delivered the program highlighted the need for robust tracking of student progress and outcomes. This reinforces the importance of establishing shared processes for monitoring achievement.



Good practice

“I’ve been to [university] open days before as well. But specifically, that excursion. They were showing us a lot of the different rooms and what the area looks like. So, coming in knowing where all the different buildings were was, like, really easy. So, I just knew how to walk my way around, because it can be overwhelming.” (Student interview 004)

The evolution of a program cannot be based on program completion rates alone. It is important to hear directly from students, schools, and families on the progress of their learning and experience across senior school.



Step 1.

Track student progress

What does this mean in practice?

- Recognise that success may include increased awareness of pathways and readiness for future study.
- Establish shared processes for tracking student achievement throughout the program and into post-school transition.
- Create alumni opportunities for past students to share feedback and inspire future cohorts.

Step 2.

Gather feedback for evaluation

What does this mean in practice?

- At the end of each iteration, meet with all stakeholders to review: student selection and application processes; teacher, student, and parent satisfaction; graded outcomes and overall implementation.
- Provide two-way feedback on insights, challenges, and areas for improvement.
- Use surveys or pulse checks to capture timely feedback and close the loop within the same year.

Section Two: Implementation Advice for Universities

ENGAGE

The Engage Phase establishes the foundation for successful implementation by assessing context, capacity, and alignment before moving to design and delivery. Universities focus on identifying priority student groups, reviewing relevant Enabling Education models and school pathways, and ensuring alignment with strategic goals and compliance requirements. This stage also involves auditing resources for scalability, formalising partnership agreements, and initiating structured consultations with high schools.

Guiding Questions

1. Which student groups in our local context face the greatest barriers to university pathways and how are we currently engaging with their high schools?
2. What are high schools currently doing to address those barriers?
3. Do our Enabling Education practices and resources meet the academic and cultural needs of equity groups?
4. Is our university prepared to support ISEP delivery in terms of staffing, systems, and sustained funding?
5. What inputs can the university provide and what activities must occur in high schools for successful implementation?

Image 7. Visual representation of Engage Phase for universities



Good practice

“[Students] maybe lack confidence in schooling and education and they've got a lot of baggage that stayed with them ... We can challenge some of those stereotypes and I think a program like this enables them to do that and see some really positive outcomes from it.” (Educator interview 013)

Educators noted building trust through community engagement, clear agreements, and shared processes ensures programs are positioned to make a lasting difference in student success.



Good practice

“Prior to completing the enabling program, my thoughts of university were that it was incredibly difficult to ‘get in’ and that the workload was unbearable. However, as you immerse yourself into the university environment it is very welcoming, people are willing to help you, and most importantly it was not a rigid/unfair process to apply to university!” (Student survey 09)

Student feedback highlights how Enabling programs transform perceptions of university from intimidating to achievable. This underscores the importance of fostering equity and access throughout the processes.



Good practice

“[Program] showed me that uni isn't like school in the sense that it's not as controlled, you have more freedoms with your studies. You also get given way more feedback that is helpful in improving.” (Student survey 22)

Benchmarking highlighted the importance of designing curriculum for success by helping learners experience university as flexible, supportive, and feedback-rich.



Step 1.

Build foundations of partnerships

What does this mean in practice?

- Engage local communities through information sessions and high school visits to build trust.
- Ensure compliance with AQF, TEQSA, and curriculum authority endorsement.
- Draft an agreement covering intellectual property, privacy, duty of care, quality assurance, and reporting obligations.
- Clarify roles, decision-making processes, and single points of contact early.

Step 2.

Foster equity and access

What does this mean in practice?

- Commit to widening participation and addressing systemic barriers.
- Prioritise outreach to regional, remote, and equity high schools.
- Develop transparent eligibility criteria (e.g. high school recommendations, English competency).
- Offer programs at no or low cost to reduce financial barriers for disadvantaged students.

Step 3.

Design curriculum for success

What does this mean in practice?

- Align curriculum with Enabling Education principles and AQF/TEQSA standards.
- Map outcomes to adapted NAEEA Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs).
- Design flexible and explicit curricula that complement senior high school programs and adapt to local contexts.
- Use common assignment types across units with standardised rubrics
- Select platforms suited to inclusive design principles.

Good practice

“For this pathway, it's not done like a school course where you just sit down, you listen, you learn, and then you do a test ... you know, we are supporting them the whole way through. Our goal is to get them through, not to fail them.”

(Educator interview 003)

Educators emphasised that ISEPs require a supportive, student-centred approach where the goal is progression, not failure. This reinforces the need to choose university staff with direct experience in high schools.



Good practice

“I felt that [program] had set me up early in advance to succeed in my units of work, being able to spend more time learning the content instead of trying to juggle the transition into uni life.”

(Student survey 31)

Students felt well-prepared for university, able to focus on learning rather than managing the transition. This connects to benchmarking that found effective programs rely on data systems that track progress, provide timely insights, and support early intervention.



Step 4.

Structure team and staffing

What does this mean in practice?

- Recruit educators experienced in secondary contexts and ensure Working with Children Checks.
- Build a core team including program leadership, curriculum specialists, and administration support.
- Provide thorough initial training and ongoing professional development.
- Develop assessment moderation understandings.

Step 5.

Develop data and monitoring systems

What does this mean in practice?

- Develop light-touch, purposeful monitoring systems for attendance, task completion, and early performance.
- Ensure privacy and consent compliance.
- Provide dashboards for timely insights and early intervention.
- Use scaffolded assessments to support progression and meaningful data capture.
- Provide transparency about program requirements and pathways to improve student motivation and preparedness.

INTEGRATE

The Integrate Phase transitions from planning to implementation, starting with pilot delivery and moving toward full-scale rollout. Universities focus on formalising agreements, embedding the program into school operations, and ensuring resource readiness. This includes training and supporting facilitators, maintaining quality and compliance through moderation, and establishing feedback mechanisms to monitor engagement and inform improvements. Regular communication and pilot insights guide refinements to processes and online learning systems before scaling up to include more schools and/or students.

Guiding Questions

1. What professional learning and ongoing support do high school-based facilitators need?
2. How will moderation processes ensure consistency and compliance with AQF and TEQSA standards?
3. What mechanisms will capture early indicators of student engagement without creating excessive administrative burden?
4. How will communication between university staff and high schools be maintained (e.g. escalation pathways, regular check-ins)?
5. How will the transition from pilot to full delivery be managed to maintain program fidelity?
6. What adjustments to digital platforms or resources are needed based on feedback?
7. How will data be collected during this phase to inform continuous improvement?

Image 8. Visual representation of Integrate Phase for universities



Good practice

“How to structure their academic writing, the language that they need to use within it, but also we're teaching them how to access the library and how to access the student support servicing, but teaching them how to use our systems.”(Educator interview 003)

Benchmarking showed that commencing with a pilot program to explore opportunities and limitations of an ISEP within a context is a vital first step for feedback and iteration before scaling up.



Good practice

“I think teaching this course in a school, I said before it requires the right staff. There's got to be a real balance between their content knowledge and then the academic side of things.” (Educator interview 012)

As the typology of ISEPs shows, there are different models of program delivery. But all models require training and support for educators to assure shared practice and student success. This also builds a community of practice that educators can lean into beyond the university, making ISEPs a broader pathway to success.



Good practice

“And I think the whole process ... often leads to improvement across other areas of their life. So, developing their self-esteem and confidence, but also improvement in their academic results and other subjects within the school context.” (Educator interview 004)

Educators and students expressed how their experience with ISEPs went beyond learning content and into wider impacts of positive well-being. This then supported the transition to university.



Step 1.

Pilot program through to full operation

What does this mean in practice?

- Begin with a structured pilot to test systems, processes, and teaching approaches before scaling.
- Finalise operational agreements and confirm readiness across all partners.
- Use low-stakes, skill-building assessments with clear rubrics to build confidence and academic skills early.
- Align learning outcomes with program goals and provide detailed feedback and reflection opportunities.

Step 2.

Develop and support educators

What does this mean in practice?

- Provide comprehensive induction and ongoing training for teachers, including early access to program resources.
- Maintain fidelity through university-led check-ins, mentoring, and peer networks (especially for regional schools).

If university tutors deliver the program, select tutors with Enabling Education experience and strong communication skills and digital literacy.

- Provide pre-program training days, clear expectations, and ongoing support.
- Create a community of practice for tutors to share insights and refine approaches.

Step 3.

Provide inclusive supports

What does this mean in practice?

- Keep programs free or low-cost to remove financial barriers.
- Provide clear information about requirements for students and parents.
- Move from universal design principles to documented accommodations (alternative formats, flexible timelines, assistive technology).
- Promote social and emotional learning to foster confidence and belonging.

Good practice

“How assignments are structured was a great assistance on the difference between how we've been taught, even down to essay writing. Finding peer-reviewed sources. It was such a useful thing to already know going into university of how I'm going to find my sources for certain assignments ... and even simply down to the structure to the LMS page which we use.” (Student interview 003)

Students' readiness for university is strengthened through academic literacies (referencing, writing) and familiarity with university systems. Benchmarking of four ISEPs confirmed that these gains are most effective when paired with scaffolded assessment and rubrics, creating a cohesive support structure for success.

Good practice

“Humanising the university—as a high school student, I was terrified of the workload and the harsh expectations, but in reality, university life has been very supportive and accommodating to my needs.” (Student survey 48)

Benchmarking highlighted that ISEPs were aligned to NAEEA CLOs, ensuring rigour and portability despite the absence of an AQF level. This alignment, combined with efforts to humanise the university experience, helps ensure transparent pathways.

Good practice

“The information that comes out of the unis that we send to parents and we send the students is quite clear and very, I guess, welcoming, if you like to say, you know, this is what we offer and this is what you can achieve and this is where you can go.” (Educator interview 001)

Educators expressed that clear communication from universities helps parents and students understand pathways. They also noted that effective delivery depends on well-defined roles to maintain smooth collaboration between schools and universities.

Step 4.

Design responsive learning and assessment

What does this mean in practice?

- Refine learning and assessment design based on pilot feedback.
- Adopt scaffolded tasks that increase in complexity with clear milestones to balance challenge and support.
- Balance explicit instruction of academic skills (research, writing) with enquiry-based learning to explore and apply academic knowledge (critical thinking, problem-solving).
- Provide explicit marking criteria and rubrics in accessible language, supported by varied feedback methods and growth mindset principles.

Step 5.

Assure quality and capture evidence

What does this mean in practice?

- Align ISEPs with the same outcomes and expectations as other university enabling programs.
- Implement moderation practices (pre-release checks, sample comparisons, marker calibration) to ensure consistency across schools.
- Capture evidence (rubrics, exemplars, calibration notes) for audit readiness and continuous improvement.

Step 6.

Optimise operations and resourcing

What does this mean in practice?

- Streamline processes with templated communications and a single escalation channel with clear service timeframes.
- Define responsibilities for academic leads, school liaisons, and administrative staff to ensure accountability.
- Plan for additional resourcing during peak periods (applications, moderation, reporting).

EVOLVE

The Evolve Phase focuses on reflective practice, continuous improvement, and sustainability. Universities and schools collaborate to evaluate program impact through structured feedback and outcome analysis, comparing results against initial objectives and equity commitments. Adaptation is key. Program components, pedagogy, and partnership models are refined to improve relevance and student experience.

Guiding Questions

1. What feedback mechanisms will ensure authentic input from high schools, students, and facilitators?
2. How do first-year outcomes compare to initial objectives and equity commitments?
3. Which program elements need adaptation to improve student experience and learning outcomes?
4. How will sustainability be achieved through funding models, staffing strategies, and governance structures?
5. What is the most effective approach to scaling without compromising quality or partnership integrity?
6. How will evidence of good practice be captured and used for research, compliance, and recognition?
7. What processes will ensure ongoing alignment with AQF and TEQSA standards as the program evolves?

Image 9. Visual representation of Evolve Phase for universities



Good practice

“I think traditionally, in high schools, they are a little bit worried about data looking poor and only wanting students that they pretty much know they’re going to have success with to ever engage in this stuff.”

(Educator interview 012)

Effective partnerships require ongoing review and responsiveness, incorporating stakeholder feedback and adapting to school contexts. Addressing schools’ risk perceptions is essential to promote equitable access and strengthen collaboration.



Good practice

“Just having that connection with the university, I talk a lot about, you know, when I went to uni, I remember doing this stuff in my first unit at uni. They have an advantage because you’re learning how to reference properly and you’re learning how to read a peer-reviewed article”

(Educator interview 004)

Educators emphasised how a university’s responsiveness and adaptability is critical for program success, alongside sustained teacher support and contextual flexibility. This translates to the student experience within an ISEP.



Good practice

“As cheesy as it sounds, but this course was one of the best things [that] ever happened to me. Since then I have encouraged 14 people to do [it], including my partner who did the course and is a psychologist now, and my sister who is a school teacher in one of the best schools in WA.”

(Student survey 44)

Central to Enabling Education principles is keeping equity at the heart of program growth, ensuring opportunities reach regional, remote, and disadvantaged schools.



Step 1.

Review and report impact of partnerships

What does this mean in practice?

- Go beyond enrolment numbers to evaluate whether the program delivers on its ethical commitments: belonging, confidence, and pathway clarity.
- Analyse outcomes using quantitative data (retention, progression) and qualitative feedback from students, teachers, parents, and school leaders.
- Close the feedback loop within the same year to inform curriculum refinement and operational adjustments.
- Share improvements and recognise exemplary practice to reinforce trust and accountability.

Step 2.

Strengthen curriculum and assessment

What does this mean in practice?

- Use evidence and feedback to iteratively improve curriculum and assessment design.
- Ensure adaptability for different school contexts while safeguarding Enabling Education principles.
- Maintain consistency through moderation practices, while embedding flexibility in delivery methods.

Step 3.

Widen access opportunities

What does this mean in practice?

- Keep equity central as the program scales to broaden outreach to regional, remote, and disadvantaged schools.
- Maintain no- or low-cost delivery to remove financial barriers.
- Track participation and outcomes against widening participation goals to ensure accountability.
- Use targeted strategies to engage communities and sustain trust.

Good practice

“We'd love to see the data of how many students are actually, like, going from the high school enabling programs into university, and then getting to their degree.” (Educator 014)

Benchmarking recommendations highlight that strong external collaboration and sector benchmarking underpin program quality and consistency across institutions. This then translates to high schools in understanding the role of ISEPs in widening access to tertiary education.



Good practice

“It's also giving them a foothold and a step up for some of our students, [for] who[m] other things have gotten in the way, who are actually getting a foot in the door into university that they might not have had as well.” (Educator interview 008)

Educators expressed that these programs provide a vital entry point for students who might otherwise miss out on university opportunities. This highlights the benchmarking findings that long-term success depends on building sustainable structures to maintain continuity and trust with school communities.



Step 4.

Build external collaboration and benchmarking

What does this mean in practice?

- Engage with professional networks and peer institutions to share insights and co-develop improvements.
- Conduct annual compliance reviews and external referencing against AQF, TEQSA, and adapted NAEEA CLOs.
- Participate in NAEEA and ISEP special interest groups to strengthen sector benchmarking and best practice.
- Maintain consistency across programs for easier comparison and quality assurance.

Step 5.

Strengthen sustainability of program

What does this mean in practice?

- Move beyond reliance on individual champions to build resilient teams through cross-training and documented processes.
- Mentor new academics and facilitators to ensure continuity and institutional memory.
- Establish structured feedback loops between schools and university curriculum teams for ongoing refinement.
- Embed succession planning and governance structures to maintain trust-based collaboration.

Participating Universities and Researchers for ACSES Project

Increasing Access and Opportunity: Nesting Enabling Programs in Senior Schooling

This project examines models and academic outcomes of Enabling Programs integrated into high schools, offering guidelines for establishing effective, portable, and scalable university-high school partnerships.

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Country

Edith Cowan University, Murdoch University, University of Southern Queensland and Southern Cross University are committed to reconciliation and recognise and respect the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' communities, cultures and histories. Further, we acknowledge the cultural diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and pay respect to Elders past and present. We celebrate the continuous living cultures and acknowledge the important contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have and continue to make in Australian society.

The authors that contributed to this benchmarking report did so from the following Lands:

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Yugambah Chagun	Southern Cross University (<i>Gold Coast</i>)

References

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APPENDIX

Table 1

In-School Enabling Program student success, completion, and conversion to undergraduate rates

Program	Success rate	Course completion rate*	Conversion to undergraduate rate*
ECU UniPrep Schools	85%	494	260
MU FlexiTrack High	91%	566	306
UniSQ UniPrep	84%	Not available^	70/166
SCU UniStart for Schools	73%	101	24
All programs	87%	1161	660

*Raw counts shown.

^166 UniSQ UniPrep students completed the course, however the denominator for this calculation was unknown. Total program enrolments ($n = 264$) included students who could not have completed the course due to being in Year 11 and continuing the program beyond the timeframe under analysis.

Table 2

Undergraduate retention and success rates of In-School Enabling Program pathway students, stratified by equity status.

University	Retention rate*			Success rate (%)		
	Non-equity	1 equity group	2+ equity groups	Non-equity	1 equity group	2+ equity groups
ECU	140/177 (79%)	41/52 (79%)	25/32 (78%)	83	86	73
MU	128/170 (75%)	80/113 (71%)	19/23 (83%)	74	74	73
UniSQ	-	20/28 (71%)	22/34 (65%)	-	77	48
SCU	17/24 (71%)	-	-	78	-	-

*Counts (numbers retained into second year versus total commencing undergraduates) and retention rate percentage shown. Where counts were less than 10, data are not reported.

In-School Enabling Programs: Findings of benchmarking four university programs

Finding 1: All programs include a partnership model: curriculum is designed by the university and implemented by the high school with university support.

Finding 2: All programs target specific cohorts, primarily regional and remote, or equity schools.

Finding 3: All programs have a process for student eligibility and admission, including recommendation by school, and English competency standards requirements.

Finding 4: Learning outcomes in all four programs emphasise common academic, learning and socio-emotional skills.

Finding 5: Assessments in all programs were highly scaffolded, shared assignment types, with a common academic skill focus in order for students to demonstrate comparable standards and alignment with common learning outcomes.

Finding 6: All four programs provided scaffolded assessment explanation and rubrics that are clear and explicit for students.

Finding 7: All programs include moderation practices prior to major assessments that ensure consistency of marking of assessments by teachers and within universities.

National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia (NAEEA) Common Learning Outcomes

Field	Outcome
Knowledge: Students completing an enabling program will have a knowledge of:	university environments and expectations, requirements, academic conventions, and ethical practice including academic integrity; knowledge of academic literacies; and may include some discipline specific and/or technical knowledge.
Skills: On completion of an enabling program, a student will demonstrate:	cognitive skills to understand, analyse, synthesise and critically evaluate information;
	information skills to find, retrieve and analyse information for use in academic contexts;
	communication practices to foster the exchange of knowledge and ideas within an academic context;
	academic literacy skills fostering the written communication of ideas, theories and analysis; and independent learning skills.
Application of knowledge and skills: A student completing an enabling program will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills by:	engaging with the university learning and teaching environment in an ethically and contextually aware manner;
	applying independent learning techniques to achieve their learning outcomes;
	using their developing critical thinking skills and broadening knowledge in particular contexts; and
	adopting student practices that meet their institutions' academic expectations.

Prompts for image creation

Theme headings for each phase were uploaded to NotebookLM as Sources, then each relevant Source was selected for "Infographic" generation function.

This was the adapted prompt: "I want to create a visual that shows *four steps of integrate* phase for implementation. Use these colours #78ded9 #70405c #fcab63 #f9f6f0 . DO NOT include title. ONLY USE standard Australian English. Use Engage Phase image as reference for simple style and simple images."