Education at UWA – Key Statements
(extracted from the UWA Strategic Plan, Strategic Directions 2009-2013, Operational Priorities Plan and Educational Principles)

Vision
Achieving International Excellence
The University of Western Australian will be recognised internationally for its excellence in teaching and research and as a leading intellectual and creative resource to the communities it serves.

Mission
To advance, transmit and sustain knowledge and understanding through the conduct of teaching, research and scholarship at the highest international standards, for the benefit of the Western Australian, Australian and international communities.

Values
The core values underpinning our activities are a commitment to:

- a high performance culture designed to achieve international excellence
- academic freedom to encourage staff and students to engage in the open exchange of ideas and thought
- continuous improvement through self-examination and external review
- fostering the values of openness, honesty, tolerance, fairness, trust and responsibility in social, moral and academic matters
- transparency in decision making and accountability
- equity and merit as the fundamental principles for the achievement of the full potential of all staff and students.

Defining characteristics
The University of Western Australia will be recognised by the following defining characteristics:

- **high quality**, as the pervading criterion for all our activities
- **comprehensive**, with a broad teaching and research profile in the arts, sciences, and professions
- **selective**, within a comprehensive base, to develop particular areas of research strength and emphasis
- **research-intensive**, with a strong teaching and research nexus across all our disciplines
- **internationally-focused**, for both the content and standards of our activities
- **technologically innovative**, to maximise our flexibility
- **responsive**, to meet the needs of the community, our students and our graduates.

Achieving international excellence as a comprehensive teaching and research university calls for fully funded growth to achieve economies of scale. The University has set a growth target to exceed 25,000 students by 2020 and to move towards a 65:35 ratio of undergraduate to postgraduate students.
Strategic priorities
The University has identified four priority strategic objectives of particular significance to achieving international excellence over the period 2009-2013:

- **Teaching and Learning** – improve the quality of the student learning experience
- **Research and Research training** – improve the quality and impact and productivity of research and research training
- **External Relations** – improve the University’s positioning and reputation and develop strategic relationships and community engagement
- **People and resources** – develop our people and resources.

Education Operational Objectives
- To recruit and graduate a diverse student cohort of the highest quality
- To improve the University’s courses
- To extend high-quality teaching approaches and improve learning outcomes
- To further develop the links between teaching, learning and research
- To improve student engagement in a high-quality campus community

Research priority areas
The University will engage in a number of strategic research areas and emerging and seed priority areas while continually improving the quality of research discoveries, publications and research productivity.

Strategic research areas include:
- plant sciences and sustainable food production
- ecology, evolution and the environment
- energy and minerals
- indigenous knowledge
- medicine and health
- mind and the nervous system.

Emerging and seed research priorities include:
- Australian literature and post-colonial cultures
- bio-engineering and bio-sensing
- economic and regional development
- future cities
- measurement science
- medieval and early modern studies
- nano and bio-technologies
- organisational behaviour
- public and business policy
- radio astronomy
- science, engineering and mathematics education
- theory and practice of education
- world economic growth and the role of the Asian region.

Education Primary Goal
The University aims to provide courses of study and a learning environment at the highest possible quality to meet individual, local (state), and national needs and internationally recognised standards; and to foster the relationship between teaching and the conduct of research across the range of its disciplines in a way that sustains the quality of the institution's teaching and learning activities and distinguishes it from other institutions in the State, and many others in the sector.
Educational Principles
(Endorsed by Academic Council R125/09)

The University of Western Australia (UWA) is committed to those educational values which imbue student learning at all levels, summarised within its Educational Principles.

The University seeks to nurture excellence, enable creativity and intellectual exploration, and promote effective citizenship among its students and graduates in the Australian community and beyond. In pursuit of these values, and to support a distinctive UWA education, the University will promote among its students the ability and desire:

1. to develop disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and skills through study and research-based enquiry, at internationally recognised levels of excellence
   - to think, reason and analyse logically and creatively
   - to question accepted wisdom and be open to innovation
   - to acquire the skills needed to embrace rapidly changing technologies.

2. to further develop the skills required to learn, and to continue through life to learn, from a variety of sources and experiences
   - to develop attitudes which value learning
   - to acquire skills in information literacy.

3. to develop personal, social, and ethical awareness in an international context
   - to acquire cultural literacy¹
   - to respect Indigenous knowledge, values and culture
   - to develop ethical approaches and mature judgement in practical and academic matters
   - to develop the capacity for effective citizenship, leadership and teamwork.

4. to communicate clearly, effectively and appropriately in a range of contexts
   - to develop spoken and written English communication skills at high levels
   - to acquire skills in critical literacy and interpersonal communication.

¹ The terms ‘cultural competence’ and ‘cultural literacy’ are often used interchangeably in the literature. Cultural competence has been defined as ‘a set of skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding of cultural differences within, among and between’ diverse cultural groups, marked by respect for such diversity. [Ana E. Nunez, ‘Transforming cultural competence into cross-cultural efficacy in women’s health education’, Academic Medicine, 2000, 75, 11, 1071-1080.] The term is most often used with reference to diversity based on nationality, race and ethnicity, although it has also been used with reference to difference based on gender and sexuality.

The term ‘cultural literacy’ used within this document builds on such definitions of generalised ‘competence’. It denotes the further development of skills to enable students to engage effectively with cultural diversity in more specific scholarly and/or professional contexts, as appropriate to their major area of study.