5. Building an agile, responsive and efficient university operation

UQ is committed to ensuring that our operations and professional services are responsive to the needs of the University, built on a One UQ approach that drives service improvements and creates efficiencies—particularly in the student administration area. Streamlining and automating business processes, and building professional, advisory and technical skills in our workforce are key priorities.

5.1 Proactively build the capacity and capability of our workforce to achieve our strategic goals.

UQ2U

UQ2U aims to support the development of high-quality online and high-value on-campus active blended learning experiences that meet the needs of students.

In 2018, a number of significant milestones in course design and development, including those with experience in UQx, was established to support the UQ2U program of work. A schedule for implementation across a number of courses in late 2018 and throughout 2019 has been established.

The UQ2U program will benefit academic staff by providing support for course renewal, increased flexibility in the modes and timing of teaching activities, and will provide staff with the opportunity to demonstrate leadership in education innovation and research, together with the opportunity to work in partnership with students.

5.2 Enhance IT governance to ensure that UQ’s information technology aligns with the University’s strategy and priorities, appropriately considers risk and provides maximum value.

IT governance

During the year, Information Technology (IT) governance at UQ was enhanced through:

- developing a Cyber Risk Management Framework and Cyber Risk Register to record, monitor and manage mitigation strategies to protect UQ’s critical assets;
- revising all information and communications technology (ICT) policies and procedures—significantly improving the clarity of expectations, processes and responsibilities, with the development and publishing of seven new procedures;
- developing an ICT Procurement Framework to standardise ICT procurement and contracts across the University; this includes rolling out UQmarket to ICT suppliers to create a faster, more seamless purchasing experience for the University community developing the Cloud, Application Rationalisation, Integration and Information Management strategies to establish clear roadmaps and future goals for ICT across UQ;
- composing the Application Portfolio mapping of all known software applications to UQ’s business capabilities developing multiple local operation procedures (e.g. Change Management, Incident Management, System Patching Management, Security Incident Management) to standardise processes for IT staff across UQ, providing greater oversight and governance of IT.

The NTRO Collection Development project, which supports ‘Payment-by-Application’ (PaBA), will commence in early 2019 and will complete the recent introduction of the MyBalance budget management and expenses system to provide greater oversight of accounts payable and accounts receivable transactions, in order to reduce or eliminate manual processing.

Accounts payable and receivables

A key strategic focus for UQ’s Finance Division is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of transactional processing, which led to the establishment in 2018 of the Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable (APARA) project. Its main objective is to standardise and streamline accounts payable and accounts receivable transactional functions, in order to reduce or eliminate manual processing.

Accounts Payable (AP) is focusing on the introduction of an options-based reconciliation (OCR) system, by providing greater visibility of the AP cycle, the automated system will deliver efficiencies for the AP function, and will also act as an enabler to ensure that new business processes are followed. Accounts Receivable is delivering PeopleSoft (UQ’s financial system) enhanced procedures that improve oversight and control, as well as automatically generating a request to invoice form, which will support a future state-centralised trade billing model.

5.3 Simplify, streamline, standardise and automate administrative process and work flows across the University.

UniForum

In 2018, UQ was recognised as a stand-out performer in the annual UniForum benchmarking exercise, with the biggest improvement in the sector for the year. UniForum conducts a deep and extensive operational efficiency benchmarking exercise annually—covering universities in Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

In 2018, the number of purchase orders raised after an invoice has been processed has already decreased significantly.

Contract and grants financial management

The design of improved processes for financial management of contracts and grants is substantially complete, in order to achieve the objectives of improved transparency, efficiency, risk management and clarification of roles and responsibilities. Implementation of the new processes will commence in early 2019 and will complement the recent introduction of the MyBalance budget management and financial reporting system for researchers.

MyBalance is a collaborative tool that enables business function to work with researchers to budget in the way researchers prefer. It enables Finance to manage research expenditure in a consistent manner, more easily exposing funding agency requirements to the researcher and other staff.

The researcher’s project finances are up-to-date, easily visible, and include overheads, margins and collaborative payments in a manner that can be more easily understood.

Financial reporting and forecasting

Under the new operating model for the finance function, UQ established a financial performance review process in 2018, which provides a greater level of assurance regarding financial performance and accountability, and resulted in improved forecast accuracy and financial planning.

HR services and solutions

Following the success of the automated workflow trial for Change of Hours and Days in late 2017, the new system was released to the wider University community in early 2018. The Casual Academic Hire and Payment project, which supports ‘Payment-by-Schedule’, which has also been trialed in late 2017, was released across UQ around the same time. In February, the second iteration of the Fixed-term Appointment Expiry workflow was launched, providing easy access to upcoming appointment expiry and enabling school managers to load the renewal process online.

These initiatives are expected to deliver:

- improved encasing time and reduced operating costs
- improved customer service
- improved compliance and increased control and oversight
- reduced overdue trade debt and improved cash flow.

In parallel to the APARA Project, UQ Finance is focusing on raising awareness of and educating stakeholders on compliance with existing UQ procedures. As a result of the communication sent to suppliers in July, the number of purchase orders raised after an invoice has been processed has already decreased significantly.

Non-Traditional Research Outputs (NTROs)

Related initiatives for 5.2

Related initiatives for 5.1

- developed a Cyber Risk Management Framework and Cyber Risk Register to record, monitor and manage mitigation strategies to protect UQ’s critical assets;
- revising all information and communications technology (ICT) policies and procedures—significantly improving the clarity of expectations, processes and responsibilities, with the development and publishing of seven new procedures;
- developing an ICT Procurement Framework to standardise ICT procurement and contracts across the University; this includes rolling out UQmarket to ICT suppliers to create a faster, more seamless purchasing experience for the University community developing the Cloud, Application Rationalisation, Integration and Information Management strategies to establish clear roadmaps and future goals for ICT across UQ;
- composing the Application Portfolio mapping of all known software applications to UQ’s business capabilities developing multiple local operation procedures (e.g. Change Management, Incident Management, System Patching Management, Security Incident Management) to standardise processes for IT staff across UQ, providing greater oversight and governance of IT.

Research Management Business Transformation (RMBT) Program

The Research Management Business Transformation Program is an interconnected set of initiatives required for UQ to retain and build on its competitive position in research and research training into the next decade. This is a long-term initiative spanning eight major business functions—higher degree research (HDR) training, research partnerships, research funding management, research ethics and compliance, research integrity, research data management, and research performance monitoring.

In 2018, a number of significant milestones were reached. The ORCID project was fully operationalised, integrating a researcher’s unique identifier across UQ systems and providing opportunities to re-use data throughout the research life cycle. The Library continues to support this activity with workshops and other resources to...
implement change to HJR administration. In 2018, a “wholesale institution” approach to research training was adopted at UQ. This transformation was driven by the desire to provide high-quality and consistent support to all higher degree research (HDR) students and their advisors across the University. Clear and consistent roles for staff were introduced to improve efficiency and deliver best practice in HDR administration, and HJR Liaison Officers were created. Along with the reorganisation of administrative staff into portfolio teams, a stronger focus on student support and efficiency gains was enabled, with a partnered approach to administration and advisory functions.

These changes have positioned UQ as a leader in the sector for research training. Its professional and coordinated approach to HDR administration enables effective facilitation of candidate development and industry engagement, as well as the ability to respond to changing national expectations.

5.4 Review our delivery model for student services and administration to maximise effectiveness and efficiency and enhance the student experience.

Student administration
A collaboration between central administration, schools and faculties, this project aims to improve the student experience and reduce staff effort by digitising a number of paper-based forms and processes around student administration. Following a delayed start midway through 2017, progress accelerated in 2018 with additional strategic funding provided. To date, 15 student administration processes have been digitised and are available to students, with more than 22,000 student submissions lodged through the system. User feedback has been largely positive and processing times have decreased. The current focus is on enhancing integration with other University systems such as SI-net and the data warehouse, in order to further automate some aspects of some processes and develop reporting tools. This will further decrease processing times for the benefit of students and will provide UQ policymakers with useful data.

Implement change to HJR administration. In 2018, a “wholesale institution” approach to research training was adopted at UQ. This transformation was driven by the desire to provide high-quality and consistent support to all higher degree research (HDR) students and their advisors across the University. Clear and consistent roles for staff were introduced to improve efficiency and deliver best practice in HJR administration, and HJR Liaison Officers were created. Along with the reorganisation of administrative staff into portfolio teams, a stronger focus on student support and efficiency gains was enabled, with a partnered approach to administration and advisory functions.

These changes have positioned UQ as a leader in the sector for research training. Its professional and coordinated approach to HJR administration enables effective facilitation of candidate development and industry engagement, as well as the ability to respond to changing national expectations.

Website updates
Workflow automation and consolidating siloed websites into two primary digital assets—the myUQ and Current Staff web portals—provided tangible outcomes, whilst aligning with UQ’s principles of Accessible Values, Personalisation and Context. 2018 delivered new and upgraded core UQ websites—including Future Students, Starting at UQ, and Teaching and Learning—to support accessibility, and make best use of the newly designed information architecture and visual styles.

UQ’s Information Technology Section continued to partner with the Human Resources, School Administration, Finance and Student Administration units to apply a systems approach across all identified student and staff-related processes. The workflow automation program delivered major upgrades and integrations for 30 existing processes and delivered 17 new processes. Unitask processed 38,000 requests in 2018.

Overhauling legacy web content also continued throughout 2018 to make the University’s online services clear, accessible and well maintained. Content from legacy web pages was updated and migrated into the myUQ and Current Staff websites, and the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system was used to provide contextual support information on these new pages. The CRM was also used to manage page-level enquiries; students and staff can now submit questions to the most relevant service queue directly from the relevant content page. The consolidation of service information with support information and inquiry management points provides a clear pathway for users to find the information they need and will improve the user experience.

6. Diversifying our income streams and managing our resources to establish a sustainable financial base

Competing in a world market where government funding is declining in relative terms, UQ needs to achieve a more sustainable financial base to pursue our strategic agenda. We are doing this by opening up more places for international students, increasing non-government research funding from industry and international sources, boosting income from philanthropy, and improving our management of costs with a stable financial budget.

6.1 Increase our international student revenue.

International students comprised 33.7 per cent of the University’s student population in 2018, with the three top source countries being China, Malaysia and Singapore.

Key performance indicators

Sustainable finances

An improvement in source country diversity among our international students

Proportion of international students from a single source country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Growth in philanthropic income to $500 million

Philanthropic income 2013–2020, aligned with Not It, When campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative philanthropic income ($m)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sustainable financial performance in line with our strategic ambitions

Financial performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underlying EBITDA as a percentage of turnover</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory accounting return ($m)</td>
<td>56,285</td>
<td>62,646</td>
<td>35,550</td>
<td>12,548</td>
<td>1,613</td>
<td>74,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures for 2018 are preliminary. Data will be finalised in mid-2019.