



SDG 1 No Poverty

Overview

UQ actively advances SDG 1 through inclusive education, student support, community engagement, and impactful research. UQ aims to contribute to the prosperity of Queensland through education and research innovation that has local, national and global impact. [The Queensland Commitment](#) aims to recruit 30% of domestic undergraduates from low socio-economic or regional backgrounds. In addition, the University provides support, financial aid and scholarships to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, directly addressing educational poverty.

With sustainable development principles embedded in teaching programs, including development studies, public health and environmental sciences, students are encouraged to explore solutions to poverty-related issues through policy, innovation and community development.

Community-focused initiatives foster sustainable local enterprises across Queensland and UQ also improves access to critical services through activities including pro bono legal aid, nutrition clinics, and health services. The UQ [Stretch Reconciliation Plan \(RAP\)](#) promotes cultural inclusion and economic empowerment.

Research informs policy on poverty reduction and alleviating disadvantage, while training programs build capacity in understanding and developing strategies for poverty reduction. Collaborations with organisations worldwide contribute to capacity-building in low-income countries and support knowledge exchange on sustainable development.

Progress made in 2024 towards SDG 1 is reported here with reference to the following domains and enablers from UQ's Strategic Plan 2022-2025:

- Learning and student experience
- Research and innovation
- Enriching our communities
- Our global profile.

Related SDGs

- [SDG 2 Zero Hunger](#)
- [SDG 4 Quality education](#)
- [SDG 5 Gender equality](#)
- [SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation](#)
- [SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth](#)
- [SDG 10 Reduced inequalities](#)
- [SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions.](#)

Learning and student experience

UQ aims to ensure equitable access to education for all across Queensland including the most underrepresented groups, with an immediate focus on students from low socio-economic backgrounds, regional or remote areas, and those identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Access and progress for low income students

Launched in 2022, [The Queensland Commitment](#) is a pledge to break down barriers to education and build a brighter future for the state by 2032. This comprehensive and ambitious initiative will deliver evidence-based strategies to build aspiration, grow pathways to higher education and support student success, including equitable access to education.

How we are achieving this

- In 2024 UQ launched [The Queensland Commitment Roadmap](#), with 58 strategic actions to achieve more equitable education access by 2032. Key admission targets are:
 - 30% of UQ's domestic undergraduate students coming from a regional, remote, or low socio-economic (SES) background
 - Ensuring that the proportion of domestic students identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reflects the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland
- A commitment to annual intake in proven pathway programs by 2032
- A commitment to increasing scholarships for students from underrepresented groups
- In 2024 UQ raised more than \$31.2 million for The Queensland Commitment, representing 12.4% of its ambitious goal to raise \$250 million by 2032.
- Introduced The Queensland Commitment Student Lifecycle Metrics Report, enabling data-driven actions to track and celebrate progress in admissions, enrolments, academic performance, and completion rates for students from Indigenous, low socio-economic, and regional or remote backgrounds.
- Committing to strengthening partnerships with Queensland schools in low SES areas and Regional University Study Hubs
- Committing to improving student accommodation availability and affordability.

In addition to increasing the number of students from underrepresented groups, UQ also ran several initiatives to support their transition and success. These included:

- wraparound support services for students on equity-based scholarships, such as a dedicated case manager for each student supporting access and transition to university, assisting with search for accommodation, mentoring through to graduation, as well as tangible items, such as laptops and funding for books
- increased funding for these students to access co-curricular and extra-curricular activities (funded short term overseas study tours, placement grants)

- engaging 338 mentors and 1,625 mentees through the “Get Involved” mentoring program to support both the [Learning and Student Experience Roadmap](#) and [The Queensland Commitment](#) goals of offering every commencing UQ student the opportunity to connect with a mentor. Mentoring is recognised as central to student success and has been introduced across the student lifecycle from secondary school to graduation. This includes mentoring in high school, transition to university mentoring and alumni mentoring programs to support students' transition into employment or further studies.

Living support for low-income students

- UQ is committed to supporting international and domestic students by addressing financial barriers through a wide range of scholarships and financial aid. These scholarships assist with tuition, accommodation, mentoring, industry experience, and financial hardship. UQ's scholarships are tailored to support various student needs and backgrounds, including:
 - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students
 - high academic achievers
 - students needing accommodation support
 - creatively talented students (e.g. music or the arts)
 - under-represented groups, such as people with disabilities, women in non-traditional fields, non-English speaking backgrounds, and LGBTIQ+ individuals
 - students seeking employability-enhancing experiences
 - those facing financial hardship
 - students from regional, rural or remote areas
 - athletes with sporting excellence.
- In addition, the UQ Union provides targeted bursaries for students in financial distress, including emergency financial support, placement bursaries, gender affirmation bursaries, and assistance for international Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students with families. These initiatives reflect UQ's dedication to equity, inclusion, and student success.
- **[Financial Hardship Scheme](#)**: During 2024 UQ provided more than \$130,000 in emergency payments for students experiencing urgent and unexpected financial problems affecting their studies, in the form of emergency hardship grants. These funds support students in financial need to access books, study materials, laptops, grocery vouchers and public transport. Recipients included homeless students, international students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students under 18. This allocation was doubled for 2025 to support more students in financial hardship.
- UQ supported 696 identified low SES students, 140 First Nations students, and 12 students on equity scholarships with financial support to access books, courses, laptops, grocery vouchers and public transport cards.

- In 2024 about half of the international students who received financial assistance originated from countries deemed as low- or lower-middle- income.
- In addition to providing nights of emergency accommodation for students in financial hardship or at risk, UQ also has access to a consistent room at UQ Res (an independent student accommodation provider for UQ students) for emergency housing. It has also built relationships with other student accommodation providers to support short term accommodation when there is vacancy.
- UQ provides a [list of community based services](#) that students can also reach out to for further guidance and support, as well as some helpful and practical ways to stay on track.
- UQ purchased 25 laptops in 2024 for students in financial hardship, with 6 allocated to date. If a student's laptop suddenly stops working and they don't have the money for repairs or replacement, they may be eligible to [borrow a short-term laptop](#).
- The UQ Student Union and [Student Rights Collective](#) run activities around placement bursaries, UQU SAS Cost of Living week, and promotion of the NUS End Student Poverty campaign.

The Queensland Commitment – Advancing SDG 1 through educational equity

[The Queensland Commitment](#) (TQC) directly advances SDG 1 by recognising educational equity as a clear and powerful pathway out of poverty. TQC seeks to uplift the representation and success of students from low socio-economic (SES), regional, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, who are disproportionately affected by intergenerational disadvantage.

[The Queensland Commitment Roadmap](#), endorsed in 2024, sets out 58 tangible actions that UQ will enact to help deliver on its mission, many specifically focused on enhancing educational equity to improve access, participation and success for students from underrepresented backgrounds.

TQC's comprehensive approach includes setting ambitious growth targets for flagship initiatives such as the [Young Achievers Program \(YAP\)](#), which provides residential camps, mentoring, and financial assistance.

The Roadmap has also driven the development of an enhanced [InspireU program](#), to offer financial support, enriching experience, and enhanced pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students as they progress to UQ.

Additional Roadmap actions help overcome financial disadvantage by expanding pathway programs, optimising adjustment factors, improving student accommodation affordability, and enhancing scholarships with inclusive rules and automatic awarding. This strategic focus ensures TQC is a tangible framework for poverty reduction that is research-backed, informed by community, and accelerated through philanthropy. It equips students who otherwise would not have had access to a university education with qualifications to secure higher-paying employment and significantly raise their standard of living.

Curriculum

Within the [Bachelor of International Studies](#), the [International Inequality and Development Major](#) introduces students to the relationship between global development and inequality. The courses in this major cover key issues, concepts and approaches to global development and poverty.

Within the [Bachelor of Arts](#), a range of majors are offered to support understanding of global social issues:

- The [International Relations major](#) helps students gain a deeper understanding of global issues with a particular focus on economics, culture, education and political science.
- A [Peace and Conflict Studies major](#) is designed to build students' knowledge of the causes of contemporary conflict and the conditions that contribute to conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding.
- In the [Political Science major](#), students explore the Australian government and international political systems, including the values and ideologies that influence political action in contemporary society.
- The [Sociology major](#) helps students learn how individuals are shaped by education, socioeconomic status, religion, gender and ethnicity, and understand how to analyse social problems and issues.
- In the [Economics Major](#), students explore how economics, globalisation, development and sustainability shape the availability of resources.
- A major in [Geography](#) develops student understanding of the relationship between natural systems and social systems, preparing them for becoming involved in addressing issues like climate change and population growth.
- Courses in the [Religious Studies major](#) cover the history of religions and religious thought, western and eastern religious traditions, sociology and ethnography of religion, contemporary religious movements, and the relationship between science and religion.

Research and innovation

With a comprehensive discipline profile, UQ is positioned well to deliver cross-sectoral, mission-driven research that is aligned with industry, government and community priorities, along with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. UQ aspires to promote a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that allows its researchers to address complex problems and make innovative new discoveries. UQ academics work with various levels of government to contribute towards policy making to support implementation of programmes and policies to reduce poverty.

How we are achieving this

- [Lifting up the lives of extremely disadvantaged youth: The role of staying in school longer](#): Researchers from UQ's Faculty of Business, Education and Law collaborated with a researcher from Erasmus University of Rotterdam to examine the impact of staying in school longer on extremely disadvantaged Australian youth.

Comparing early school-leavers aged 14-17 to those who left at 18 or older, they found that males who leave school early face higher risks of homelessness, incarceration, and substance abuse later in life. No similar effects were found for females, possibly due to differing reasons for leaving school and support programs available. The findings highlight the importance of targeted interventions to keep disadvantaged young males in school to help break cycles of multi-dimensional disadvantage. Overall, they reinforce other results in the education literature that male disadvantage in education is a critical policy issue.

- **Alliance for social impact:** [The Alliance for Social Impact](#) is undertaking a research project, funded by Queensland's Department of Trade, Employment and Training, exploring challenges facing social enterprises (SEs) in Queensland, especially in regional areas, Indigenous-led organisations, and start-ups. Using a multi-stage action research approach, including case studies and surveys, the project aims to support SE growth and resilience. The findings will help shape future policies and practices to boost economic and social outcomes across Queensland. This research moves beyond past survey-based studies by fostering collaboration and deeper understanding of the SE sector's unique needs.
- **The [International Comparison Database \(UQICD\)](#),** developed by the UQ School of Economics is a unique resource that combines international data on real incomes and income inequality to assess economic welfare across different countries. It integrates and analyses large-scale economic data, which is made publicly available for researchers and policymakers to access and apply to global economic challenges. The database was first made available in 2011. The most recent major update was in 2023 and further functionality was added in 2024. The website remains public and continues to have impact, with new users accounting for 70% of 2024 access. The 2024 presentations and articles sourcing data from UQICD included:
 - "Convergence in the World Economy – Evidence from the Last Fifty Years" at the 38th International Association for Research on Income and Wealth General Conference, London, 26-30 August 2024. Presented by Professor Alicia N. Rambaldi
 - M. Moatsos and A. Lazopoulos, "Stress-testing the international poverty line and the official global poverty statistics". Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11(1):850, 2024. DOI: 10.1057/s41599-024 03260-6. ISBN: 2662-9992. (Professors Rao and Rambaldi acknowledged for the assistance provided to the authors).
 - Hajargasht, G, "Divergence Between Parametric Income Distributions", Economics Letters, 2024, pp. 111543.

Enriching our communities

UQ delivers a broad range of initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty and addressing community needs. Through entrepreneurial support, inclusive research, and accessible services, UQ empowers individuals and small enterprises to thrive. Programs focus on reducing barriers to health, education, legal aid, and economic participation – especially for vulnerable populations. By fostering innovation, early intervention, and evidence-based policy, UQ strengthens community resilience and promotes equitable, long-term outcomes across Queensland and beyond.

Local enterprise and start-up support

As one of Australia's leading research and teaching institutions, UQ is passionate about enriching its entrepreneurial ecosystem and creating leaders of the future.

Through UQ Ventures, entrepreneurs are supported at every stage of their journey, working alongside staff and alumni and connecting with a wide range of global experts. Support includes practical and financial assistance for businesses that are economically sustainable, have positive social impact, and provide real opportunities for the community.

How we are achieving this

- **UQ Ventures** provides a range of entrepreneurial programs, training, and opportunities for students, staff, alumni, and the broader community. Ventures provides some funding support via competitive processes.
- The **Indigenous Business Hub** is a unique collaboration with industry to strengthen the positive impact of Indigenous businesses in Australia.
- The **Food and Beverage Accelerator (FaBA) Kickstarter program** provides successful applicants with access to food technology laboratories and FaBA experts (from UQ, QUT and UniSQ) to develop new products through market analysis, prototyping and commercialisation. The FaBA MakerSpace, a fee-for-service laboratory that supports businesses in the food and beverage manufacturing sector, is also available. The Kickstarter Program is a competitive scheme that provides up to \$50,000 for small to medium enterprises and start-ups to conduct research that advances the food and beverage industry in Australia.
- **UQ's Executive Education** offers training to the community such as **Innovation for Growth**, supporting industry peers to learn frameworks and tools to effectively manage disruption and change.

Providing services for community members

UQ aims to improve access for all to services such as health, nutrition, and legal support. These initiatives focus on reducing barriers, supporting vulnerable populations, and promoting early intervention. By enhancing wellbeing and resilience, they contribute to more equitable outcomes and long-term community benefits.

How we are achieving this

- The **UQ Pro Bono Centre** provides free legal support to communities in need by connecting law students with organisations serving vulnerable groups. Through supervised projects, students assist with legal education, research, casework, and law reform, helping those who may not otherwise access justice. Initiatives like the **Climate Justice Initiative** and the **Regional, Rural and Remote (RRR) Project** extend services to underserved areas. These efforts improve legal literacy, empower individuals, and promote fairness. The Centre strengthens community resilience and ensures legal support reaches those who need it most.
- The **360-Kids Community Network** addresses the risks associated with developmentally vulnerable children starting school, including poor health, education and social outcomes. Located within UQ's Faculty of Health, Medicine and

Behavioural Sciences, the network promotes early intervention and prevention, aiming to improve health, learning, and wellbeing before school entry. It focuses on high-risk children and disadvantaged communities, working in partnership with local groups and agencies.

- **The UQ Nutrition and Dietetics Clinic** provides free, personalised nutrition consultations to the community, helping individuals improve their health and wellbeing. Led by student dietitians under expert supervision, the clinic offers tailored advice for a wide range of conditions – from diabetes and heart health to pregnancy and sports nutrition. These free services remove financial barriers, making expert dietary support accessible to all, especially those who may not afford private care. By promoting healthier lifestyles and preventing chronic disease, the clinic benefits individuals and reduces long-term public health costs, contributing to a healthier, more supported community. No referral is required to attend.
- **Health services provided to the community:** a range of client-focused health services are available to community members, from children through to seniors, provided by UQ students working under supervision as part of their training. Services include exercise, nutrition, ageing, disability support, psychology, audiology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech pathology, telerehabilitation and dentistry.

Our global profile

UQ research in SDG 1 contributed knowledge and insights in 2024 through publications that address various socio-economic challenges and their implications on different populations globally. Each study employs diverse methodologies to uncover insights and propose solutions to these pressing global issues. Publications authored or co-authored by UQ researchers in 2024 addressing poverty-related challenges across the world included:

- research from UQ's School of Social Science exploring the **barriers to microfinance for people with disabilities in Bangladesh**. Identifying significant obstacles such as stigma, stringent credit conditions, and negative staff attitudes, analysis suggested that inclusive policies and effective implementation are crucial for ensuring access to financial resources for people with disabilities, enabling them to achieve greater socio-economic independence.
- research on **poverty monitoring in Lebanon** amidst a data-deprived environment undertaken by a researcher in UQ's School of Economics in collaboration with international colleagues. The study introduced a novel data augmentation technique to analyse poverty in the absence of traditional income data. The findings underscored the importance of leveraging alternative data sources for poverty analysis, providing a robust approach to understanding economic conditions in Lebanon.
- a review of the challenges and opportunities of **millet production in the Asia-Pacific region**, co-authored by a researcher from Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation (QAAFI). Highlighting the importance of millets as nutrient-dense grains that can address food insecurity and malnutrition, various production and processing methods were explored, emphasising the need for improved crop management and adoption of better varieties. The research identifies constraints such

as inadequate rainfall and high input costs, while also exploring the potential health benefits and contributions of millets to national food security.

- **Australia–Mongolia Partnership, Sustainable Mining and Green Energy Transition:** In 2024, this Australia Awards Fellowship strengthened Australia–Mongolia collaboration through professional development focused on sustainable mining and climate action. By building capacity in Mongolian institutions, promoting inclusive practices, and supporting vulnerable groups, the project addressed SDG 1 through equitable access to knowledge, decent work, and sustainable resource development. It fostered long-term partnerships and integrated social performance principles to ensure mining benefits reached disadvantaged communities.