

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 per cent 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 2025 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

UQ is committed to breaking down barriers to higher education and building a more equitable future for students across the state. Through evidence-based strategies, the university focuses on raising student aspirations, expanding pathways to tertiary study and supporting student academic success.

How we achieved this

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

To deliver on these broader TQC goals, the Queensland Commitment Roadmap outlines 58 strategic actions aimed at achieving more equitable education access. Under this framework, UQ has established key long-term admission targets, including 'increasing the proportion of domestic undergraduate students from regional, remote or low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds to 30 per cent', and 'ensuring that the proportion of domestic students identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reflects their representation in the Queensland population'. To progress toward these targets, UQ in 2025:

- developing the Student Transition Framework, a principle-based and systemic approach to transition aiming to improve student success for under-represented students
- developing the School Engagement Framework, with increased focus on schools with high under-represented student populations
- enhancing access through the Schools Opportunity Scheme and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Admission Scheme, recognising student potential beyond traditional metrics
- partnering with the Regional University Study Hubs network to provide alternatives to relocation and help support equitable access to higher education across regional Queensland
- launching the First Nations Growth Strategy with the goal of ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students make up 15 per cent of Central Queensland enrolments in UQ's Doctor of Medicine.

UQ also implemented targeted mentoring programs to support the transition, participation and success of students from underrepresented groups while actively driving enrolment growth. 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 as they progress into the professional workforce or further tertiary studies. Through the My Student Guide and Get Set mentoring programs, the University engaged 3,327 mentees and 362 mentors in 2025, supporting both the Learning and Student Experience Roadmap and TQC goal of offering every commencing UQ student the opportunity to connect with a mentor.

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 Torres Strait Islander students
- high academic achievers
- students needing accommodation support
- creatively talented students (e.g. music or the arts)
- underrepresented 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, disability bursaries, gender health gap bursaries and birth control subsidy. These initiatives reflect UQ's dedication to equity, inclusion and student success.

To further complement these student union services, the University provided its own support through the following avenues:

- providing personalised support through UQ Accessibility and Welfare Advisers for both domestic and international students who are experiencing health, disability, personal or life circumstances that may affect their ability to study. UQ helps students understand the options, arrange study or exam adjustments when appropriate, and connect the students with the right supports, including:
  - assistance for when the studies are impacted by a disability, neurodivergence, or a mental health issue
  - assistance for when the studies are impacted by a medical condition, illness or injury
  - assistance for when the studies are impacted by unusual or unexpected circumstances, like grief, loss, sorry business, natural disaster or international event
  - student Access Plans and Exam Adjustments

  - diversity and inclusion issues
  - crisis accommodation support
  - financial hardship assistance
  - international student support, including assistance with homesickness and cultural adjustment
  - domestic / family violence
  - support after experiencing a crime or scam.
- providing 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 with their academic progress.
- providing hardware assistance. In 2025, UQ provided 36 laptops to students experiencing financial hardship. In addition, any student whose laptop unexpectedly stops working and who cannot afford repairs or a replacement may be eligible to borrow a short-term laptop.
- offering financial hardship scheme. In 2024, UQ provided A$130,000 in the form of emergency hardship grants for students, and this allocation was doubled for 2025. This funding provides emergency payments for students experiencing urgent and unexpected financial problems affecting their studies, and provides access to 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.
- tackling structural poverty and educational barriers by offering a comprehensive financial aid ecosystem that includes more than 230 distinct scholarships specifically dedicated to relieving financial hardship. These initiatives provide vital lifelines across various study fields to ensure that socioeconomic disadvantage does not dictate academic opportunity. Key financial support avenues include:
  - Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) enabling grants, which provide up to A$2,000 to A$2,500 to help low-income students cover essential living, travel and material costs during mandatory degree placements, such as the Faculty of Science and School of Agriculture and Food Sustainability placement grants.
  - demographic-specific hardship awards, which offer critical, intersectional support, such as the Puttick Scholarship providing A$10,000 per year plus travel assistance for women entering low-SES STEM pathways, and the Diana Yallowley Scholarship supporting mature-age women experiencing financial distress.
  - regional health workforce support, which offers targeted equity awards like the BlueCare Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship. This scholarship allocates up to A$5,000 to healthcare students dealing with financial stress, thereby securing the pipeline of regional health professionals.

Broader Achievements of The Queensland Commitment

Endorsed in 2024, the Queensland Commitment Roadmap sets out 58 tangible actions to deliver on the broader goals of TQC by achieving more equitable education access by

2032. This framework advances SDG 1 by recognising educational equity as a clear and powerful pathway out of poverty, uplifting the representation and success of students from low SES, regional and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, who are disproportionately affected by intergenerational disadvantage. Building on the foundational frameworks, the overarching TQC strategy delivered broader, quantifiable impacts and key performance indicators in 2025:

- increasing domestic undergraduate enrolment from low SES or regional and remote backgrounds reached 19.7 per cent, tracking toward a strategic institutional target of 30 per cent
- granting underrepresented student cohorts received up to 5 entry rank adjustments to make elite academic pathways more accessible
- driving a remarkable 30 per cent increase in accepted offers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student through streamlined access to ATAR adjustment points
- growing total enrolment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reached 1.6 per cent, with long-term initiatives explicitly designed to close the gap and meet the 4.6 per cent Queensland population baseline recorded in the 2021 Census
- raising a total fund of A$45.2 million to back equity programs, hardship initiatives and regional student pipelines
- launching the Queensland Commitment Scholarship that formerly known as the UQ Link Scholarship, offering A$7,000 upfront payment to remove immediate financial obstacles for eligible incoming undergraduates
- doubling the total number of students benefiting from access-focused admission criteria through successful institutional policy revisions.

A key practical driver behind these 2025 metrics is the Young Achievers Program (YAP). While originally established in 2009, YAP has been fully integrated as a flagship operational initiative under the TQC framework to drive student success. In partnership with secondary schools across the state, YAP has been transforming lives by supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access higher education, providing holistic support across the entire student lifecycle from secondary school to career readiness. This includes financial support starting in high school and continuing for the length of their university degree at UQ.

More than a scholarship, YAP is a comprehensive program that provides mentorship, tailored transition programs, academic skill development, residential accommodation support, dedicated welfare services and employment opportunities. This wraparound approach empowers students to achieve their academic and career goals, fostering resilience and leadership that strengthens communities across Queensland. Key 2025 highlights include:

- supporting a total of 563 active students across the educational pipeline, welcoming 133 new participants into the program
- maintaining a diverse cohort consisting of 254 high school students, 312 undergraduate students, and 28 postgraduate students

- promoting profound social mobility with 72 per cent of participants identifying as first-in-family university students and 46 per cent hailing from regional or remote areas
- expanding institutional reach to 83 partner secondary schools across Queensland, incorporating 30 new schools into the network and ensuring 55 partners are based in regional or remote communities
- achieving a remarkable 89 per cent retention rate for undergraduate program participants transitioning from their first to second year of university
- celebrating the successful completion of degrees for 420 program graduates entering the professional workforce. Discipline-specific graduates include:
  - 145 graduates from Health, Medicine, and Behavioural Sciences
  - 117 graduates from Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
  - 87 graduates including 34 teaching graduates from Humanities and Social Sciences
  - 74 graduates including 18 law graduates from Business, Economics, and Law.

Alongside the expansion of YAP, the Roadmap has driven the development of an enhanced InspireU program, a free initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students designed to build confidence, explore academic interests, and ensure students arrive at UQ feeling ready, connected, and capable. While originally established in 2013, the program has successfully supported a generation of Indigenous students to reach their university goals through various touchpoints, ranging from exploration days to immersive five-day campus camps. In 2025, the team strategically redesigned the program, expanding its pathways to offer enhanced financial support, enriching experiences and strengthened transitions for high school students, thereby ensuring InspireU continues to foster another generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander excellence at UQ.

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:

- International Relations major helps students gain a deeper understanding of global issues with a particular focus on economics, culture, education and political science
- Peace and Conflict Studies major is designed to build student knowledge regarding the causes of contemporary conflict and the conditions that contribute to conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding
- Political Science major explores the Australian government and international political systems, including the values and ideologies that influence political action in contemporary society

- 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
- Economics major investigates how economics, globalisation, development and sustainability shape the availability of resources
- Geography major develops an understanding of the relationship between natural systems and social systems, preparing students to address issues like climate change and population growth
- Religious Studies major covers the history of religions and religious thought, Western and Eastern religious traditions, sociology and ethnography of religion, contemporary 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 achieved this

- 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. In a 2025 working paper, Lifting up the lives of extremely disadvantaged 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.
- The School of Economics supported an animation 'Indiginomics' designed by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The objective is to introduce economics in a relatable and engaging way, highlighting its relevance to community life, breaking down misconceptions, and encouraging young people to see economics as a valuable subject and career.
- Alliance for social impact: In September 2025, the Alliance for Social Impact and the Indigenous Business Hub at UQ's Business School launched a landmark research project, 'Building Resilient Social Enterprises in Queensland.' This high-impact study provides timely insights into the challenges and enablers shaping the future of social enterprises across Queensland. A significant part of the study focused on Indigenous social enterprises, recognising these as powerful vehicles for economic development, community empowerment, and cultural preservation within Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander communities. Commissioned by the Department of Trade, Employment and Training (Queensland Government), the research responds to a growing recognition within government and industry that social enterprises are integral to driving inclusive economic participation, building community capability and delivering essential services in areas underserved by traditional markets. The study provides policy directions for government and actions for practitioners to mitigate systemic barriers faced by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous social enterprises.

- In 2025, Professor Daniel Franks from UQ's Sustainable Minerals Institute (SMI) commenced work on the A$1.2 million Australian Research Council Future Fellowship, 'Assessing the mineral security dimensions of multi-dimensional poverty.' The project seeks to explore how the availability, access, stability and utilisation of minerals impact the prevalence and intensity of poverty. In parallel with the award, the SMI has announced the establishment of a new research centre, the Global Centre for Mineral Security, with Professor Franks serving as its inaugural Director. The Centre's multidisciplinary team is undertaking research, education, technical assistance and capacity building with international partners including the United Nations, World Bank, OECD, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and IKEA. The team comprises diverse skill sets and experience, having worked as international development practitioners and researchers for a wide range of development institutions, industry and government in more than 54 countries. Their aim is to bring evidence to policymakers, innovation to partners and new tools to realise sustainable development.

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.

How we achieved this

- UQ Ventures provides a range of entrepreneurial programs, training and opportunities for students, staff, alumni and the broader community. Ventures provides financial support via competitive processes, such as Momentum Accelerator, which offers a A$15,000 SAFE note via UniQuest for early-stage tracks, and up to a A$100,000 investment opportunity for later-stage tech tracks, subject to due diligence.
- Indigenous Business Hub is a unique collaboration with industry to strengthen the positive impact of Indigenous businesses in Australia.
- Food and Beverage Accelerator (FaBA) Kickstarter program provides successful applicants with access to food technology laboratories and FaBA experts to develop

new products through market analysis, prototyping and commercialisation. Its fee-for-service laboratory, the FaBA MakerSpace, supports businesses in the food and beverage manufacturing sector. As a competitive scheme, it provides up to A$50,000 for small to medium enterprises and start-ups to conduct research that advances the food and beverage industry in Australia.

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 achieved this

- UQ Pro Bono Centre provides free legal support to communities in need, operating as the only university-based centre of its kind in Australia. By connecting law students with organisations serving vulnerable groups, the Centre facilitates crucial student assistance with legal education, research, casework and law reform. Key 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.
- 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.
- UQ Health Care services provide 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 UQ Health Care Clinics include:
  - Cornwall St Medical Centre
  - Bremer Medical Centre
  - Meadowbrook Medical Centre
  - UQ St Lucia Medical Centre
  - UQ Gatton Medical Centre
  - UQ Healthy Living
  - Logan Healthy Living

- South Brisbane Medicare Urgent Care Clinic
- Homelessness Service: Operating since 2011 alongside partners like Ozcare, 3rd Space, Emmanuel City Mission and Communify, this initiative provides outreach general practice care to people experiencing homelessness and substance use issues, offering a walk-in clinic on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am at the New Farm Neighbourhood Centre (967 Brunswick St, New Farm 4005).

Our global profile

UQ research in SDG 1 contributed knowledge and insights in 2025 through publications and projects addressing various socio-economic challenges globally. Each study employs diverse methodologies to uncover insights and propose solutions to these pressing issues. Research outputs from UQ researchers in 2025 included:

- a study exploring perspectives of urban and regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities on bush food, nutrition and health, co-authored by researchers from QAAFI, examined the role of social, cultural and geography factors in shaping access to traditional foods and dietary practices. The study identified barriers to nutritious food access and provides policy insights for improving wellbeing and socio-economic outcomes among Indigenous Australians.
- a systematic literature review examining assessment frameworks and indicators for food systems, co-authored by QAAFI researchers, explored the methodological basis for assessing food system performance. The research supported improved monitoring and evaluation relevant to enhancing both food security and socio-economic outcomes.
- Australia–Mongolia partnership on sustainable mining and green energy transition training. In 2024 and into 2025, 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.