Student Employability
Strategy Update 2020

Contents

Student-Staff Partnerships Networking Semester 1, 2019

Overview

Employability has always been a critical issue for higher education: a good university education not only develops discipline specific knowledge, but also the ability to learn from and continue to develop expertise as new knowledge is created and applied in constantly changing futures.

Discourse around employability has become more focussed recently as a consequence of global political priorities and resulting increased participation in higher education. Students now expect a demonstrable and tangible return on their investment, with government funding for universities focusing on the same superficial measures. At the same time, the changing world of work means that employees increasingly need agile, critical, creative, innovative and entrepreneurial mindsets.

In 2015, The University of Queensland (UQ) articulated a Student Employability Strategy that proactively engaged with this changing landscape, and that focused on experiential learning, self-reflection and value creation, transfer and articulation. This strategy made clear that employability is:

1. a process through which students reflect on and learn from their engagement with a range of experiences;
2. an understanding of personal employability and the positive contribution that this can make to society;
3. based on an ethos of lifelong learning and ongoing personal and professional growth.

Goals

The goals of this strategy remain as follows:

Goal 1

Foster an employability culture at UQ

Goal 2

Identify and grow opportunities for students to develop their employability

Goal 3

Optimise UQ's institutional approach to student employability development through an experiential learning framework

Goal 4

Support the transition of UQ graduates into the workplace

UQ Lakes, St Lucia campus

Approach

Since 2015, UQ has implemented a multi-faceted, holistic, and embedded approach to employability that works with stakeholders from industry, funding bodies, students, academics and professional staff, as well as other education providers. The focus of this strategy is to ensure that students are able to learn from a range of experiences, identify the value of this learning through reflective practice, and apply that learning in new and shifting contexts. Critically, this process can be used across all experiences and life stages to unlock potential and increase personal effectiveness, adding value to the discipline specific knowledge provided by high quality teaching and learning across UQ.

The strategy cuts across all aspects of student experience at UQ through an embedded collaborative approach that recognises the importance of discipline specific and context relevant experiential learning opportunities in curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular spaces.

The articulation of this strategy can be seen in a range of university strategic documents, summarised in **Appendix A**.

UQ Employability Framework

Employability is a set of capabilities and personal attributes that empower graduates to perform effectively in the workplace, generate opportunities and create positive social and economic impact. At UQ, we empower students to enhance their employability by developing the mindsets and capabilities to succeed in any path they choose.

The UQ Employability Framework provides a four stage process by which students can develop their employability throughout their UQ student experience.

Awareness + Experiences + Learning + Transfer

Employability is more than just getting a job.

Your degree and UQ experiences provide a foundation to develop the discipline knowledge, capabilities and mindsets that will enable you to perform effectively in work contexts across your career.

Your experiences enhance your employability.

Participating in diverse experiences develops professional and personal capabilities that employers value. We will provide a range of experiences across your degree and the support you need to get involved.

Having an experience is not enough to develop your employability.

We will show you how to reflect on your experiences to understand the capabilities and mindsets you have developed and how you can apply these to create value.

Communicating your employability effectively is critical to securing employment.

We will equip you to articulate your value proposition to employers and make a positive contribution through work.

Principles

As articulated in the **Student Life Plan** these principles signal what matters about student life at UQ; they have helped focus and shape not only the Student Life Plan, but also this document. Into 2021, these principles will continue to be an important touchstone to guide implementation of the *Student Employability Strategy*.

PRINCIPLE	APPLICATION
1 Co-create	Students and staff will work together to implement, refine, evaluate and optimise the Plan to ensure benefits flow to students (and related UQ strategic aims).
2 Reach into student life	Aspects of life can help or hinder students accessing the academic learning experience. While the core mission of the University remains one of academic endeavour, the Plan will assist with some common aspects of life that are associated with being a university student.
3 Value diversity and inclusion	Student life is different for each individual. UQ may not always be able to meet the exact needs of each individual, but will seek to redesign key parts of its non-academic experience to be more student-focused and flexible for individuals.
4 Engage in partnerships	A range of partners – including students, industry, community and alumni – will enrich the student experience.
5 Improve continually	The Plan will be a living document and amended throughout its implementation phase to refine and improve its impact.

Purpose

Our purpose is to empower students to develop the mindset and capabilities that will make them effective in any path they choose: to create change by learning from experiences and unlocking their value.

We will fulfill our purpose by:

1. Providing a holistic approach to employability that is simple yet sophisticated, applicable in curricular, co-curricular contexts, that can be tailored to discipline specific contexts.
2. Empowering students to use and articulate their capabilities, perform effectively in the workplace, and generate opportunities.
3. Collaborating with academic and professional staff to support student employability development.
4. Networking with industry and alumni to maintain currency and awareness of workplace expectations, and co-develop learning opportunities.

We provide students with opportunities to identify and define their own version of achievement, enhance their employability, and prepare for lifelong success.

Activities update

The **Student Employability Strategy** articulates the ongoing process of enhancing student employability through experiential learning, self-reflection and value creation, transfer and articulation. The following pages outline the four goals with correlative actions. A number of these actions were instigated between 2015 and 2019 and will form business as usual (BAU) from 2020.

GOAL	ACTIONS		INITIATED	UPDATE
Goal 1 Foster an employability culture at UQ	1.1	Integrate employability into UQ strategic intents and initiatives.	2014	**Complete** See appendix reference to employability in strategic documentation.
	1.2	Share good practice in employability across UQ through Communities of Practice and Knowledge Networks.	2017	**Ongoing** Employability, WIL and Student Placement COPs established. Formal reporting structure to be developed in 2020.
	1.3	Recognise and celebrate practices that contribute to student employability development.		**Focus for 2020–2021**
	1.4	Continue to build UQ's reputation nationally and internationally as a sector leader in student employability.	2016	**Ongoing** Research and best-practice examples delivered at national and international conferences.
Goal 2 Identify and grow opportunities for students to develop their employability	2.1	Increase access to student employability experiences in curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular spaces.	2015	**Ongoing** In 2019 alone, 16,108 students engaged in work integrated learning within their program. In the extra-curricular space, 563 students were involved in research programs; 728 on partnership projects and representation activities; 1,804 in global experiences; and many more in mentoring, volunteering and leadership programs.
	2.2	Work in partnerships with students and industry to co-create opportunities for employability development.	2015	**Ongoing** Development of industry relationships to support student employability within and outside the curriculum. In 2019, 176 partnership projects provided 506 students to develop their employability through partnership engagement.
	2.3	Increase access to careers and course advice earlier in the student journey.		**Focus for 2020-2021** Online delivery options to be developed, including journey making supports. Peer support delivery options being piloted in 2020.
	2.4	Increase number and range of global and domestic opportunities available to students, including provision of funding to support access.	2018	**Ongoing** In 2019, 1,804 students engaged in global experiences and over $2.13m was administered in Global Mobility Grants; 75 students participated in domestic internships. Over $230,000 in Employability Grants were allocated.
	2.5	Increase students' access to entrepreneurial education (curricular) and entrepreneurship activities (extra-curricular)	2018	**Ongoing** Collaboration with UQ Ventures to promote entrepreneurial opportunities, and with ITaLI to leverage the synergies between entrepreneurial education and employability.
	2.6	Expand employability opportunities for postgraduate and higher degree by research (HDR) students.		**Focus for 2020–2021**
	2.7	Implement initiatives to link current students to on-campus work experience or employment opportunities.		**Focus for 2020–2021**

GOAL	ACTIONS		INITIATED	UPDATE
Goal 3 Optimise the UQ institutional approach to student employability development through an experiential learning framework	3.1	Integrate the UQ Student Employability Framework into the curriculum design process.		**Focus for 2020–2021**
	3.2	Integrate the UQ Student Employability Framework into co and extra-curricular activities.	2015	**Ongoing** In 2019, 4,949 students accessed one-on-one employability appointments; 1,043 employability workshops and information sessions were offered with 8,409 students participating in these sessions.
	3.3	Establish a collaborative, embedded careers and employability service delivery model across UQ.	2018	**Ongoing** Establishment and maintenance of Collaborative Agreements between faculties and SEC to describe and define operationalisation of the model.
	3.4	Continue to build staff capacity to maximise student employability development across the UQ experience.	2016	**Ongoing** Continued delivery of student employability focussed professional learning sessions for staff. Foundation resources developed.
	3.5	Empower students to reflect on and learn from their experiences.	2015	**Ongoing** Continued integration of SEAL method of self-reflection in courses, extra and co-curricular activities.
	3.6	Identify, develop and facilitate institution-wide adoption of appropriate systems to support student employability development.	2017	**Focus for 2020-2021** Increased use of enterprise systems for capturing student employability data. Development of Employability Dashboard.
Goal 4 Support the transition of UQ graduates into the workplace.	4.1	Provide embedded discipline specific Career Development Learning (CDL) in courses and programs.	2016	**Ongoing** Expansion of delivery of Career Development Learning within the curriculum.
	4.2	Connect students with employers through provision of networking and recruitment events.	2015	**Ongoing** In 2019, over 7,000 students engaged in major employability and industry events. Creation and delivery of Employability Week in 2020.
	4.3	Analyse and disseminate national labour market information to assist students' career planning and new course and program development.		**Focus for 2020–2021**
	4.4	Utilise relevant technologies to prepare students for recruitment processes.		**Focus for 2020–2021**

A full 2015–2019 progress report is available by emailing employability@uq.edu.au

Glossary of terms

Employability

Employability is an authentic experiential learning process that develops a set of capabilities and personal attributes that empower individuals to perform effectively in the workplace, generate opportunities, and create positive social and economic impact.

Co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities

Opportunities for students to extend and enhance their learning through activities both within and outside of their curriculum. These activities provide enrichment above and beyond traditional credit bearing on campus academic courses, and often link to industry, other universities, or the community. Such activities may be centrally managed or embedded within schools and faculties. Examples include, but are not limited to: short term study, exchange, volunteering, debating, and engagement with clubs and societies. Where these activities and opportunities intersect with academic or discipline related studies, or otherwise articulate with the degree that a student is undertaking, then they are considered co-curricular: where there is no direct academic link, they are considered extra-curricular.

Partnership and co-creation

Faculties, schools, institutes, and central divisions working together, and adopting a student lens to create a 'one UQ' approach to enhancing the student experience. That lens is reinforced by co-creating through UQ student-staff partnerships – a process of student engagement whereby students and staff collaborate to shape meaningful aspects of the student experience. Based on the principles of mutual respect, reciprocity and shared responsibility, students as partners is a mindset that permeates the UQ community, building a culture of engaged students and staff. Eliciting and valuing the student voice through committees or focus groups also provides a valuable foundation for authentic partnerships (students as change agents).

Student experience

Everything that takes place to enhance the lives of people studying at the University. This includes academic progression of a student as well as interactions, engagements and touch points that students have as members of the wider UQ community, both within and beyond the 'assessed' curriculum. The UQ student experience embraces both the academic (e.g. learning, teaching and research experience) and the non-academic (e.g. personal and extra-curricular) aspects of being a UQ student as an integral part of the UQ community.
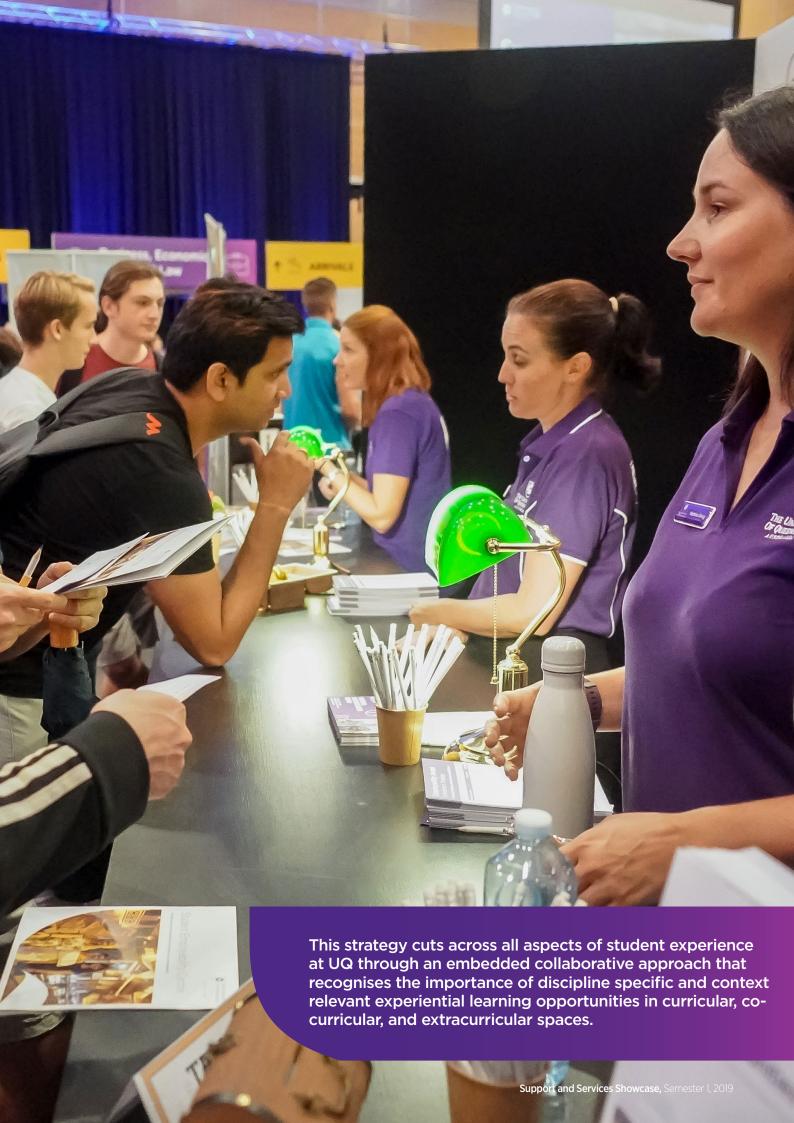
Work integrated learning (WIL)

Learning experiences that explicitly integrate theory with practice within a purposefully designed curriculum to foreground employability. At UQ, many degree programs have extensive WIL components which may come in the form of: clinical placements for medical and health science-related studies; consultancy projects such as business or environmental science to provide solutions for industry, and projects which engage students in their local communities by making a social or educational contribution; internships with the placement of students in a work environment to undertake authentic study-related work tasks; exposure to work practices through fieldwork, study tours and work shadowing, and activities in simulated workplace settings such as mock clinical wards or courts of law.

Experiential learning

The process of making meaning from an experience, with self-reflection being a crucial part of the process. The learner must reflect on their experience in order to understand the new ideas or knowledge gained and how this new knowledge can be put to use.

Career development learning (CDL)

Learning which focuses on equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge and self-awareness to manage their careers throughout their lifetime. CDL includes: understanding motivations, values, and capabilities as they pertain to work; knowing how to look for, create, or secure or create opportunities; management of career based decision-making.

This strategy cuts across all aspects of student experience at UQ through an embedded collaborative approach that recognises the importance of discipline specific and context relevant experiential learning opportunities in curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular spaces.

Appendix A
Strategy articulation

Strategy Document: **UQ Strategic Plan 2018–2021**

LONG TERM OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1 Transforming students into game-changing graduates who make outstanding contributions and address complex issues with a global perspective
 	
3 Developing a diverse community of knowledge seekers and leaders who embody a One UQ culture and use collaborative partnerships to connect and share
	1 Transforming our student experience through a flexible, integrated and partnered learning environment
	
	• Expand opportunities for students to develop their employability. This will include:
	  – increasing the availability of work integrated learning
	  – increasing opportunities for students to participate in personal development experiences (e.g. global experiences, volunteering, internships, employability courses and research experience)
	  – providing additional support for entrepreneurship and startups
	• Strengthen partnerships between students, researchers, industry and alumni to create a more collaborative approach to teaching and learning. This will include:
	  – developing students as partners and creating more work-integrated learning and research partnership opportunities for our students
		• An improvement in **graduate employment outcomes**
		• An increase in **global engagement** among our students
		• A student **satisfaction rating** that is within the Top 5 nationally
		• An increase in s**tudent engagement** with external partners

Strategy Document: **UQ Student Strategy 2016–2020**

GOAL		INITIATIVE	
1	**Game changing graduates**	**1**	**Work Integrated Learning** and student employability program expansion
		5	**Global extension** experiences

Strategy Document: Student Retention and Success Strategy 2019–2021

GOAL		PRIORITIES	
3.1	Embed a **student employability framework**	3.1.1	Adopt a framework with opportunities and services within and outside curriculum (UQ Employability Strategy)
3.2	Increase access to **careers and course advice** earlier in the student journey	3.2.1	Include UQ professional careers advisers in prospective student event and recruitment activities
		3.2.2	Introduce a colaborative, embedded careers and employability service model across UQ
		3.2.3	Enhance our provision of course program and advice, assisting students to align studies with their career and personal aspirations.
3.3	Increase access to student **employability experiences**	3.3.1	Work in partnership with industry to increase the number of work integrated learning (curricular) and work experience (extra-curricular) opportunities (UQ Student Strategy)
		3.3.2	Increase the number and range of global opportunities available to students, including provision of funding to support access
		3.3.3	Increase access to entrepreneurial education (curricular) and entrepreneurship activities (extra-curricular) for students

Strategy Document: Student Life Plan 2018–2021

GOAL		PRIORITIES	
1.6	Seek for the UQ student experience to be affordable	1.6.4	Introduce a **job shop** for part-time employment opportunities on or near campus
		1.6.5	Broaden the **UQ Temps** pool to include students
		1.6.6	Implement an online platform for **part-time employment** external to UQ
5.1	Guide students to reflect on their employability	5.1.1	Implement a student employability **strategy and framework** to increase awareness, experiences, learning (reflection) and transfer to workplace
5.2	Update our service model to assist student needs	5.2.1	Adopt a **model** of our employability teams sharing resources and outputs
		5.2.2	Facilitate **work integrated learning** experiences that are multi semester and representative of workforce habits, by using UQ/Faculty-wide course codes
		5.2.3	Expand opportunities for out **Higher Degree by Research** students
5.3	Offer more employability experiences	5.3.1	Provide more opportunities for industry placements **internships** and other practical work-based experiences
		5.3.2	Provide more **short-term global** opportunities
		5.3.3	Increase entrepreneurship, **enterprise** and innovation opportunities

Strategy Document: **Teaching and Learning Plan 2018–2021**

GOAL		PRIORITIES	
Goal 1: Flexibile, inclusive, globally-relevant and co–created curriculum			
1.1	Ensure the shape of our programs and courses are flexible to support broad education opportunities and diverse pathways for students	**1.1.1**	Conceptualise the components of the 'UQ **Signature Learning Experience**' (e.g. work-integrated learning; digital literacy; research-based; enterprise and entrepreneurship; global mobility) and embed these across programs and courses
		1.1.2	Implement a suite of institution-wide **flagship** 'create change' courses/resources that focus on 21st century knowledge, skills and experiences
1.2	Strengthen partnerships with our students, researchers, industry and alumni to create more collaborative, relevant and authentic currciula	**1.2.1**	Monitor consultation and engagement processes across all programs to ensure regular industry, community and alumni **involvement in curriculum development** and review
		1.2.2	Explore opportunities for academics to engage in industry to strengthen industry-UQ partnerships, ensure curriculum relevance, and enhance teaching practices grounded in **authentic work contexts**.
Goal 2: Collaborative, connected and active pedagogies			
2.3	Create more experiential learning opportunities focused on employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship in the assessed curriculum	**2.3.1**	Encourage and promote **work-integrated learning**, enterprise and entrepreneurship for-credit opportunities in all disciplines across UQ and monitor these
		2.3.2	Create more for-credit global, **work-based enterprise** and entrepreneurship opportunities
Goal 4: Recognise, reward and enable teaching and learning excellence			
4.3	Prioritise the continued development of formal and informal learning spaces (both physical and virtual) to foster collaborative, connected learning at UQ	**4.3.4**	Extend the use of the **ePortfolio** and utilise a work placement management system.

Strategy Document: **Entrepreneurship Strategy 2018–2022**

GOAL	PRIORITIES	
Goal 2: Build and entrepreneurial mindset		
Develop the curriculum	**2.1**	Offer a **flagship entrepreneurship course** for credit that is available to all students
	2.2	Bring multidisciplinary teams together in courses that focus on **real-world challenges** and problem solving to develop entrepreneurial mindsets and skills
	2.3	Establish a flexible course for students to undertake **start up internships**, intrapreneurship and placement experiences with credit where possible

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