The University of Queensland was founded in 1910 as the first university in the State and the fifth in the nation. A year later 83 students (including 23 women) attended the first classes in Government House, George Street, Brisbane. In 1926 our Senate accepted an offer from Dr James O'Neil Mayne and his sister, Miss Mary Emelia Mayne, to buy 114ha of riverside land for our St Lucia campus. Lack of funds then World War II delayed development; but building started in 1937 and the move from George Street was completed between 1946 and 1972. In 1990 we merged with Queensland Agricultural College (now UQ Gatton, a 1068ha campus 80km west of Brisbane) as part of a unified national system abolishing the binary system of universities and colleges of advanced education. In 1999 we opened UQ Ipswich – an ultra-modern 25ha campus just 40km west of Brisbane.

Our University, one of the largest and most prestigious of the nation's 39 universities, is one of only three Australian members of Universitas 21. Our Vice-Chancellor chairs this select group, where membership is limited to 25 research-intensive universities worldwide. We are also a founding member of Australia's elite Group of Eight.

In 2003, we employed 4865 staff and our total operating revenue was $732.27 million. Our seven faculties and 33 schools offered more than 360 programs and 5000 courses to 33,946 students. These included a record 4617 international students from 114 countries and a record 7936 postgraduates (including one of Australia's highest PhD enrolments). We awarded 8637 qualifications, bringing our total number of graduates to nearly 160,000. They include a Nobel Prize winner, an Oscar winner and leaders in government, the law, science, public service and the arts.

Continuing success at the Australian Awards for University Teaching gave us the most finalists and winners of any university since the scheme began in 1997; and high levels of government, industry and private funding for research kept us firmly among Australia’s “Big Four” (with the Universities of Melbourne, Sydney and New South Wales). Research outcomes included discoveries of global significance and first ranking in the 2003 National survey of research commercialisation for invention disclosure, patents issued worldwide, licences executed and operational start-up companies.

Our three main campuses at St Lucia, Gatton and Ipswich include Australia’s first Institute for Molecular Bioscience, the Queensland Brain Institute, a world-class Library, extensive teaching museums and collections, ultra-modern laboratories, computing, sporting and leisure facilities. The heritage-listed Customs House is our base in Brisbane’s CBD and we operate about 50 specialist teaching and research centres elsewhere in Queensland. These include medical and dental schools in Brisbane, clinical schools in rural and provincial centres, marine research stations in Moreton Bay and on the Great Barrier Reef, and our Experimental Mine just 4km from the St Lucia campus – the world’s only university-operated underground mine in a major city.