



UQ-Link 2009-2010 Information for school staff

What is UQ-Link?

We know that students facing on-going financial problems may not perform to their full academic potential in years 11 and 12 and may therefore be disadvantaged when competing for University places.

The UQ-Link program provides equitable access to and support for higher education for school-leavers who have experienced educational disadvantage as a result of financial hardship. The program offers an extensive range of support, from special entry to scholarship support and transitional services. The UQ-Link Special Entry Scheme enables the University to consider eligible students for special admission on the basis of the information provided in their UQ-Link application if they do not reach the OP/Entry Rank required for their preferred program.

Eligible UQ-Link applicants, who receive a place at UQ, are also considered for a UQ-Link Scholarship. The UQ-Link Scholarships are valued at \$3000 per year for up to four years. No separate application form is required.

Once enrolled, UQ-Link students automatically receive a start-up bursary of \$500 to help fund up-front education costs (such as text books), and have access to an extensive range of support services including transition advice and ongoing support from [Student Services](#).

Students who are confident that they will achieve the OP/Entry Rank required for admission to their preferred program should still be encouraged to apply for UQ-Link if they have experienced financial hardship, so that they can access the additional support available as well as the UQ-Link Scholarships.

Timelines

30 October 2009	UQ-Link applications due at The University of Queensland. UQ Admissions will check applicants' eligibility for UQ-Link and that all the necessary documentation has been provided.
27 November 2009	Students receive notification of eligibility for UQ-Link from UQ Admissions. A letter will also be sent to ineligible applicants, outlining the reasons for their ineligibility
19 December 2009	Queensland Year 12 results available – students should advise UQ of any changes of preferences after this date UQ-Link applications referred to faculties for individual consideration

It is essential that each student provides accurate contact details for the school holidays to QTAC and UQ.

6 January 2010	Last day to change QTAC preferences for inclusion in the QTAC January offer round.
14 January 2010	QTAC January round offers released (after 1.00am)
4 February 2010	QTAC February round offers released (after 1:00 am)
22-26 February 2010	UQ Orientation Week
1 March 2010	Semester 1 classes commence

Who can apply for UQ-Link?

To be eligible for the UQ-Link entry scheme students must be:

1. Australian citizens or Australian Permanent Residents (including holders of Permanent Humanitarian Visas)
2. Currently completing one of the following in the year of application:
 - Year 12 (or seeking entry using combined mode)
 - Full-time Senior External Examinations
 - Full-time Certificate IV in Adult Tertiary Preparation
3. Able to demonstrate and provide documentary evidence of financial hardship
4. Nominated by the school and have the school's support.

Other Special Entry Schemes

People of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent

Students who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander may apply for alternative entry to UQ. The Alternative Entry Scheme provides applicants with an avenue to seek entry to UQ should they not reach the OP/Entry Rank required for their preferred program.

The selection process requires applicants to demonstrate their interest in and capacity to pursue particular areas of study. Students must apply through QTAC as usual, identify as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander on the application form, and ensure that at least one UQ program has been listed as a preference.

The details from the QTAC application are forwarded to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at UQ who will contact the student and request a portfolio containing a completed application form, personal resume including evidence of achievements or experience if required, confirmation of Aboriginality and a brief statement outlining reasons for wanting to study the chosen program.

If a student does not wish to be considered for entry under the specific provisions for Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, they may apply for the UQ-Link program.

For further information please contact:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit
Phone: (07) 3365 6794
Fax: (07) 3365 6855
Web: www.uq.edu.au/ATSIS/

Special Consideration of Educational Disadvantage through QTAC

Students who have experienced a situation which has adversely affected their school or academic results should consider applying for Special Consideration of Educational Disadvantage (SCED) on their QTAC application.

Educational disadvantage refers to circumstances beyond the student's control that have affected previously satisfactory results.

SCED applications are assessed by QTAC and the applications assessed as the most severe cases of disadvantage are referred to UQ for special consideration. Applicants approved for special admission by UQ receive notification of an offer in the normal QTAC offer rounds.

Detailed information on application procedures can be obtained from QTAC:

QTAC
Phone: 1300 GO QTAC
Website: www.qtac.edu.au/Applying-CurrentYr12/SpecialConsideration.html

How is financial hardship determined?

Students in receipt of a means-tested Commonwealth-income support payment such as Youth Allowance, Austudy, ABSTUDY, or other support pensions are considered to have met the financial hardship criteria.

For students not in receipt of a Centrelink benefit, assessment of financial hardship will be based on their combined family income as evidenced by the previous year's Australian Taxation Office assessment notice(s), and any other documentation that they provide to support their application.

Please note: A Low Income Health Care Card on its own is insufficient to demonstrate financial disadvantage; additional evidence must be provided.

How to apply for UQ-Link

Students considered for UQ-Link special entry must be nominated by their school and complete a special UQ-Link Application form. Supporting documentation must be provided by both the school and the student. All students nominated for the UQ-Link program must still apply through QTAC for a place at The University of Queensland.

Application Form

Application forms are available from the University's website. Go to www.uq.edu.au/study/uqlink-entry and follow the link to download the form. Alternatively, contact Admissions to be sent an application form.

The UQ-Link application forms include Parts 1-3 and the declarations checklist in Parts 5 & 6, to be completed by the student, and Part 4 to be completed by the school Principal, Guidance Officer or Career Advisor.

Please note that all information provided is treated with the strictest confidence and is used by Admissions and faculty staff at UQ to assist in determining eligibility for this scheme and in student selection for special entry.

Parts 1-3 & 5-6: Student Information

It is important that information on family income is provided **with certified supporting documentation** (e.g. Centrelink Income Statement, Tax Assessment Notice, etc). If an applicant does not wish school staff to view family income information, documentation may be enclosed with the application in a sealed envelope marked for the attention of the Admissions Manager. Please note that ATO Tax Assessment notices will be securely destroyed after eligibility has been determined.

Part 4: School Report

The support of the school in the application form is vital. Schools are requested to provide supporting information on why individual students have been recommended for special entry. A general statement on the feeder area of the school could be included in addition to a comment on the nature of disadvantage experienced by the student concerned. It is also important to outline what special consideration, if any, has been given by the school.

UQ-Link nomination materials (the completed application form and any supporting documentation) must be forwarded directly to Admissions, at The University of Queensland (not to QTAC) by **Friday 30 October, 2009**.

QTAC Application

The QTAC process for UQ-Link applicants proceeds as normal. If a student's OP/Entry Rank is sufficient for entry they will be admitted on the basis of their own merit through the usual QTAC offer process. However, if the student's OP/Entry Rank is insufficient their application will be sent to the relevant faculty/school at UQ for special entry consideration.

Subject prerequisites are required for all UQ programs, and these apply to UQ-Link applicants. **Prerequisites will not be waived in the special entry process.**

What happens next?

Admissions processing

UQ-Link applications will be assessed by UQ Admissions and the UQ Undergraduate Scholarships Office to ensure that all applicants meet the eligibility requirements, particularly in relation to financial hardship. In some cases, nominations for UQ-Link will be rejected by the University and students will be advised accordingly.

Students are contacted by letter to outline the special entry process and to ensure that the correct contact details have been provided.

In the event that an applicant seeking special entry has not provided all the required information in their application, including their supporting documentation, UQ and QUT may obtain this information from each other. However, to ensure that the process works smoothly, the application must be submitted to each institution separately, with a copy of all the relevant documentation.

Selection Process for the UQ-Link Special Entry Scheme

Technically, UQ does not assign bonus OPs or Entry Ranks, as all applicants are considered on an individual basis. If an applicant's OP/Entry Rank is sufficient for entry they are admitted on the basis of their own merit through the usual QTAC offer process. For those identified with an insufficient OP/Entry Rank their UQ-Link application is sent to the relevant faculties or schools for special consideration.

Faculty Executive Deans or Heads of Schools have discretionary power to determine an appropriate pool of special entry candidates for their respective programs and therefore the degree of variation on the minimum OP/Entry Rank required will fluctuate. This allows academic heads considerable flexibility in the awarding of special entry places.

QTAC preferences

Students can be assured that applying for special entry through UQ-Link can only advantage their QTAC application and cannot have any negative impact. Regardless of where in a student's preference list the UQ programs are ordered, those seeking UQ-Link special entry are considered for a place.

A student recommended for special entry who fails to gain a place in their first preference are automatically considered for their lower preferences. If the student still wishes to be considered for higher preferences they should conditionally respond to any offer, to indicate that they still wish to be considered for an offer in their higher preferences in later offer rounds.

There is no guarantee with the special entry facility that students can get into programs with an OP/Entry Rank lower than the published cut-off. However, students should not feel that they need to change their preferences because they do have an OP equal to the previous year's cut-off.

Students recommended for UQ-Link who are unsuccessful in gaining special entry have a number of options. They may choose to take up the offer made in the major round, if one was made, and enrol in that program of study. Alternatively, they may wait for further QTAC offers at later rounds, without any further UQ-Link intervention.

Change of Preferences

It is critical that applicants advise UQ of any changes in their preferences after the Year 12 results are released to ensure that their UQ-Link application is considered for all their current preferences. While UQ will make all reasonable effort to consider all preferences, UQ cannot guarantee late changes of preference will be considered in time for the major offer round.

Deferment

UQ-Link students are able to seek deferment of their offer through the standard deferment processes, i.e. by responding to the QTAC offer with the deferment offer response option.

If you require any further information about the UQ-Link program please contact:

UQ Admissions

Tel: 07 3365 2203

Fax: 07 3365 2061

Email: uq.link@admin.uq.edu.au

Website: www.uq.edu.au/study/uqlink-entry/