

Strategic direction



2005-2009 Strategic Plan

The mission of The University of Queensland is to create a community dedicated to achieving national and international levels of excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, one that makes significant contributions to the intellectual, cultural, social and economic life of the State of Queensland and the Australian nation.

Strategic aims, aspirations and commitments

Throughout its history of almost a century, The University of Queensland has shared with the world's great universities the enduring values of creating and transmitting knowledge, the passionate and disinterested pursuit of truth, the maintenance of the highest standards of teaching, research and scholarship and the enhancement of society's core values.

As Queensland's first and pre-eminent university, The University of Queensland is one of only three Australian foundation members of the multi-national *Universitas 21* group of world-class, research-intensive universities. It offers programs across a wide range of disciplines and is committed to benchmarking its operations against appropriate international standards of best practice and to maintaining a diverse and principled scholarly community of outstandingly able and ethical staff and students.

In a situation of competition, uncertainty and change, The University of Queensland seeks to identify and develop new and appropriate strategic priorities in teaching and research, in the development, management and diversification of our resource base and in the use of new technologies to provide leading-edge infrastructure. The University's Strategic Initiatives Fund plays a crucial role in helping achieve new priorities across a wide range of activities by leveraging significant sources of new funding.

New, world-class research institutes and centres, the continuing development of innovative programs, courses and pedagogies and an abiding commitment to enhanced levels of quality assurance and accountability reflect some of the ways in which The University of Queensland seeks to honour its responsibilities both to its own community and to the wider communities.

Key operational priorities

All actions will be influenced by the pressing need to attract substantially greater amounts of income from sources apart from the base Commonwealth Grant, in order to overcome prospective funding difficulties, provide adequate remuneration to staff, and remain dynamic and responsive to changing opportunities and demands into the future.

The University's long-term strategic objectives and immediate operational priorities for each of its key areas of activity are set out in full in later sections. However, the University Senate has determined that the most critical operational priorities for the immediate future are to:

1. attract and retain the most able students, with the aim of achieving equity and diversity in the student population;
2. enhance students' learning experience with attention to improving student:staff ratios;
3. support a research-based teaching and learning culture and practice;
4. achieve a graduate student proportion of 25 percent, with increasing emphasis on research students;
5. internationalise all facets of the University's endeavours;
6. improve research productivity and quality, focusing on areas of strategic priority;
7. maintain leadership in the transfer and commercialisation of intellectual property;
8. increase and diversify the University's income base;
9. implement best practice in managing people, resources and systems, ensuring equality of opportunity for all staff regardless of their backgrounds; and
10. enhance the physical environment and facilities of the University, particularly teaching and learning facilities.

Relationship to Queensland Government social and fiscal objectives

The Queensland Government has identified a set of social and fiscal objectives to guide the planning of the State's statutory authorities.

A major focus of the University's activities involves support for the community outcome *Building Queensland's economy*. The University contributes strongly to the priorities for this outcome, particularly *Realising the Smart State through education, skills and innovation* and *Growing a diverse economy and creating jobs* and is a leading contributor helping to fulfil the strategy to encourage world-class research that builds on Queensland's unique resources.

Through the direct contribution of its diverse teaching and research activities, as well as through the leadership provided by its expert staff in community debate and policy development, the University also contributes strongly to priorities under the other outcomes identified by the Government – *Strengthening Queensland communities* and *Protecting Queensland's environment*.

Teaching and learning

Strategic objectives

As the preferred university of the majority of Queensland's most highly qualified students, whether school leavers, mature-age students or graduates returning for higher-level studies, as well as of outstanding international students, the University of Queensland is committed to excellence of learning experiences and outcomes and will:

- > provide rewarding educational experiences that develop in graduates capacities for independence and creativity, critical judgement, effective communication and ethical and social understanding as well as in-depth knowledge of a field of study;
- > deliver an enhanced and flexible approach to learning that meets curricula and pedagogic objectives by actively engaging students and providing the benefits of small group interactions;
- > ensure effective, structured evaluation of teaching and learning quality and outcomes, enlightened by feedback from students, scholars, professions, industry and community;
- > recognise the relationship between excellence in teaching and learning and research and reinforce a commitment to the distinctiveness of a research-based culture for teaching and learning;
- > support ways to build effective learning communities that encourage independent learning and peer interactions;
- > support measures to reduce class sizes, particularly in first-year courses, and measures that will lead to an improvement in the student experience;
- > review and enhance postgraduate coursework programs to renew and increase the postgraduate profile to assist in achieving a student body of which 25 percent is at postgraduate level;
- > support improved access by students from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- > deliver an international focus through curricula and through exposure of students to educational and cultural experiences at this University and overseas;

Projected student load profile

The University aims to achieve the student load targets for 2009 set out in the following table:

Student load 2003-2009	RECORDED		PROJECTED					% INCREASE 2004-2009	% SHARE IN 2009
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009		
BY PROGRAM TYPE									
Higher degree research	2660	2731	2800	2875	2950	3025	3100	14%	9.6%
Postgraduate coursework	3267	3537	3675	3825	4000	4175	4350	23%	13.5%
Undergraduate and non-award	23464	23061	23545	23950	24220	24555	24885	8%	77.0%
Total	29391	29329	30020	30650	31170	31755	32335	11%	
BY FUNDING SOURCE									
HECS-based, RTS and other	22568	22059	22525	22750	22850	22950	23025	5%	71.2%
Domestic fee paying	2227	2319	2425	2650	2850	3050	3200	38%	9.9%
International fee paying	4596	4950	5070	5250	5470	5755	6110	24%	18.9%

The table shows actual student load for the full year in Equivalent Full-time Student Units (EFTSU). Strategic Plan targets include all recorded load at Mt Eliza Business College, but not at offshore partner campuses. "Other" funding source load includes extended enrolment domestic research load.

- > recruit, develop and retain staff who provide high-quality teaching and learning; and
- > enhance the teaching and learning environment, particularly in relation to provision of high-quality infrastructure for flexible learning.

Operational priorities

- > Increase the use of flexible learning approaches and the appropriate use of information and communications technologies in educational programs, particularly postgraduate.
- > Gather and use information about the quality of teaching and learning and monitor the provision of curriculum and assessment that encourages and reinforces improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.
- > Build opportunities for students to engage with the University's research environment through learning communities that provide the culture and experiences of research.
- > Provide programs, including the recruitment of additional staff, to improve the learning experience of first-year students in particular.
- > Support a system of curriculum review and development that provides a strong focus to innovative and effective curriculum design.
- > Improve guidance and advice to students about program and course selection and maintain ways to seek and respond to student feedback about the teaching and learning environment.
- > Develop strategies to improve access and participation of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- > Develop strategies to support internationalisation of programs, courses and the student experience.
- > Seek opportunities for enhanced collaboration and strategic partnerships in teaching and learning with other institutions in Australia and overseas.
- > Ensure that the teaching quality assurance program, the staff promotion process and other incentives, reward and promote school and individual achievement in teaching and learning excellence.
- > Provide staff development to support best practice approaches to teaching and learning and to encourage teaching and learning staff to be innovative, effective and reflective.
- > Develop a program to enhance infrastructure to support flexible teaching and learning practices and to extend the development and use of collaborative teaching and learning spaces.

Research and research training

Strategic objectives

The University of Queensland is one of Australia's premier, broad-based research-intensive universities. The University aims to achieve international excellence in all types of research and research training, from fundamental, curiosity-driven work that adds to the stock of knowledge through to applied research resulting in commercial innovation. The University considers that excellence in research underpins both excellence in teaching and the ability to develop depth in its community partnerships. Its commitment to quality research

PhD student Andrew Blake (left) and senior lecturer in casting technology Associate Professor Carlos Cáceres... investigating the hardening and softening mechanisms in magnesium as part of research which may lead to new alloys for use in industries such as automobile manufacture. ▶



is underpinned by a growing portfolio of world-class infrastructure. The University of Queensland Graduate School has positioned UQ as a graduate destination of the highest standard.

In seeking to develop its international reputation for research excellence the University will:

- > promote the importance and benefits of research to the wider community and champion the leadership role that the University plays in research and research training activities;
- > achieve international distinction across a significant number of strategically-prioritised areas of research;
- > develop major research collaborations with government agencies, industry and the international community;
- > increase research funding from all state, national and international sources; and
- > enhance the University's role as one of Australia's major providers of research training by providing innovative and flexible programs at honours, masters and doctoral levels.

Operational priorities

- > Improve the University's research performance by international and national standards.
- > Critically assess the amount and quality of research performed by faculties, schools and centres against relevant comparators.
- > Identify and create critical mass in strategically-important areas of research.
- > Identify and direct support to areas of strength.
- > Recognise and reward the very best performance in research and in research supervision.
- > Provide opportunities and encouragement for all staff to develop their research strategies and enhance their performance and supervisory skills, with targeted support for early career researchers.
- > Encourage all new staff to develop an active, externally-focused research profile and to improve their supervision skills.
- > Attract, retain, educate and graduate a growing cohort of higher degree research students.
- > Provide appropriate support structures and facilities to foster outstanding performance at both higher degree and postdoctoral levels.
- > Improve the training and broaden the educational experiences of all higher degree research students.
- > Develop and maintain an excellent research infrastructure capability to meet the needs of researchers and research students.
- > Maximise research collaboration with industry.
- > Identify and support potential opportunities for the commercialisation of University-owned intellectual property through research contracts, licence agreements and spin-off companies.

Community partnerships

Strategic objectives

Recognising that its activities and resources represent a remarkable state and national resource, the University will:

- > develop closer and more numerous links with the wider community of which it is a part;
- > establish strategic partnerships and identify priorities that mutually serve the interests of the University and its stakeholders;
- > collaborate in strategic activities for community benefit with industry, business and professional groups and with instrumentalities at city, state, national and international levels;
- > champion the role of education and research in underpinning the economic health and social wellbeing of local, state, national and international communities;
- > provide staff with the opportunity to contribute to the community while achieving educational and personal development outcomes;
- > build on the University's strengths in the services it is able to offer the community, helping to find and promote innovative and sustainable solutions to community challenges; and
- > maintain the University's role as a provider of specialist services to the community through its libraries, museums, clinics, collections and other specialised scientific, cultural and public performance facilities.

Operational priorities

- > Play a leading role in stimulating intellectual debate within the community on cultural, economic and social issues, for the advancement of Queensland.
- > Increase recognition within Queensland and the wider national and international communities of the excellence of the University's educational programs and research through a comprehensive community information program.
- > Ensure that the University's graduates are well-informed on the activities, aims, aspirations and commitments of the University as a basis for establishing and maintaining enduring long-term relationships between the University and its alumni.
- > In partnership with communities, business, government and non-profit organisations, identify community needs which the University is well placed to service.
- > Facilitate community involvement in University decisions affecting the community.
- > Expand the professional contributions of staff in their specialised fields to the needs of government, business, health, rural and community organisations.



▲ FEAST-ing at UQ Gatton... high school students enjoy this year's Future Experiences in Agriculture, Science and Technology (FEAST) residential school at UQ Gatton.

- > Maintain and extend activities in continuing professional education, as part of the mainstream teaching responsibilities of the University, by offering post-tertiary courses which reflect the latest developments in their fields and, wherever possible, are articulated to award courses.
- > Enhance relationships with the University's alumni through the development of a domestic and international alumni strategy.

Management and resources

Strategic objectives

The University of Queensland will:

- > ensure that its academic aims and aspirations are supported by effective management structures, policies, practices and systems and that all aspects

of the University are administered in a professional and client-focused manner;

- > ensure that the faculties and other principal organisational groups take responsibility for implementing the strategic objectives and operational priorities in this plan;
- > devolve the management of resources to the most effective level;
- > seek to enhance levels of funding from all sources, particularly sources independent of the base Commonwealth Operating Grant;
- > develop, maintain and implement effective policies and procedures for the recruitment, retention and development of high-quality staff;
- > assist managers to lead and manage their staff more effectively and to support the effective implementation of change across the University;

- > provide an appropriate physical environment and maintain it to high aesthetic, functional and safety standards;
- > provide high-quality learning and teaching facilities, with particular attention to the changing needs of students, and improve utilisation by better management;
- > deliver customer-focused innovative information services integrated with the University's teaching, learning, research and community service activities and provide the information infrastructure necessary for leading-edge research activity;
- > deliver leading-edge information technology support services and infrastructure;
- > ensure that the capital budget framework supports sound strategic management of, and planning for, the University's capital assets; and
- > build and strengthen its profile and relationships with prospective students and staff, business, government, the professions, its alumni and the community at large through coordinated University-wide marketing, communication and development programs and activities.

Operational priorities

- > Implement modern systems in support of teaching, learning and administration and provide access to these systems in flexible user-friendly ways, particularly to connect students and staff with their learning environments and to provide timely management information for institutional performance measurement and quality assurance and control.
- > Ensure that faculties, central services and the central administration develop and maintain five-year operational plans.
- > Ensure that faculties, central services and the central administration demonstrate their management effectiveness by operational benchmarking.
- > Rationalise activities to allow support to be provided for growth and development of strategic strengths and to ensure that the University's resources are used as effectively as possible in support of its Strategic Objectives.
- > Ensure that faculties prepare business plans for all new major academic activities, particularly those associated with the internationalisation of teaching and research endeavours, to demonstrate projected financial returns and resource commitments.
- > Encourage and support all parts of the University in efforts to attract an increasing proportion of funding from non-government sources.
- > Secure development funds from external sources of at least \$100 million in the period 2005-2009 for projects based on sound business plans and

associated with the University's strategic objectives.

- > By 2009 increase revenue from sources additional to core Commonwealth funding (Commonwealth Grant Scheme [CGS], Research Training Scheme [RTS] and Institutional Grant Scheme [IGS] amounts) by at least 45 percent above the 2003 level of \$497 million.
- > Provide development and training opportunities to assist staff in their professional development and to improve the University's organisational efficiency and effectiveness.
- > Promote equality of opportunity through a proactive equity and diversity program.
- > Review the ongoing appropriateness of the current budget framework for the management of the University's capital assets and for the maintenance of its infrastructure.
- > Develop, implement and maintain a comprehensive development plan for the University.
- > Develop, implement and maintain a comprehensive marketing and communications plan.

Dr Peter Erskine, research fellow in our School of Integrative Biology (front), works with Vietnamese researchers on developing a forest restoration plan for Yok Dom National Park in Vietnam (picture courtesy Dr Erskine). ▼

