

# University of Southern Queensland EDUCATION PLAN 2022-2025

## OUR ASPIRATIONS

### VISION

The University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) will be renowned for excellence in the student experience, an innovative program portfolio, and creative approaches to learning and teaching.

### MISSION

Building on our strengths as Australia's leading regional university, we will provide flexible, culturally capable, high quality learning opportunities that support our strategic vision of transforming lives and communities through education and supporting the needs of our regions.

## OUR PERFORMANCE AREAS

In conjunction with the Research Plan 2021-2025 and First Nations Blueprint 2022-2025, the Education Plan is designed to deliver against the Strategic Plan key performance areas of:

- Growing our student population and broadening participation in higher education
- Being the university of choice across our regions
- Delivering an outstanding student experience and outcomes
- Growing the quality and quantity of research outcomes
- Contributing to the sustainable development of our communities
- Maintaining our capacity for investment into our future

## OUR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waterways upon which the University of Southern Queensland is located.

Our University provides learning and education opportunities through its programs and courses offered from three physical locations – Toowoomba, Springfield and Ipswich – and through our virtual campus. In collaboration with national and international providers our education offerings are available in hubs across Australia and internationally.

The Education Plan 2022-2025 is aligned with the education goals and priorities set out in the First Nations Blueprint and supports the UniSQ Strategic Plan in empowering First Nations peoples to take their rightful place and reach their full potential at UniSQ. Our vision for the next three years is aspirational, and looking out to 2030, we aim to be a sector leader in First Nations Education.

We are committed to providing a comprehensive suite of high-quality programs and innovative learning opportunities in a flexible and supportive environment that emphasises excellence in education and the student experience. Our programs will embed First Nations perspectives and knowledges across the curriculum, reflect our flagship areas of agriculture, health, space and defence and regional development, and will support regional and national priorities for a tertiary educated workforce to meet industry needs.

We will exceed the expectations of our students, communities, and industry. We will design and tailor pedagogies, educational offerings, learning environments and student experiences that increase access and success. Our graduates will be leaders in their chosen fields and active, culturally capable citizens in a rapidly changing global environment.

The Education Plan is focussed on strengthening the University's reputation as a high-quality education provider. Education Plan initiatives reflect and connect with strategies in the Engagement Plan 2022-2025 focussed on increasing our student population in a hyper-competitive sector, while remaining true to the communities we serve.

By 2030, the University will be the destination of choice for students in our region and beyond. We will be known for our distinctively flexible and creative approach to learning, teaching and the student experience and for our commitment that our graduates will help solve the problems that matter.

This Plan builds on its predecessor Academic Plan 2019-2022 and remains designed to guide investment and focus resources on initiatives that enhance program quality, innovative learning and teaching, and strengthening the student experience.

## OUR THREE CORE STRATEGIES:

### 1. CREATE A SUSTAINABLE AND STRATEGIC PROGRAM PORTFOLIO

- Quality and excellence in our program portfolio
- Intentionally designed programs
- A sustainable program portfolio
- Innovative offerings that engage learners in learning
- Structured pathways

### 2. EMBRACE INNOVATIVE LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICES

- Robust virtual learning environment and pedagogies
- Physical environments for formal and informal learning and teaching
- Assessment design and feedback
- Creative teaching practices
- Active dissemination of good practice

### 3. PROVIDE INTENTIONALLY DESIGNED FLEXIBLE STUDENT EXPERIENCES

- Partner with our students
- A university-wide approach to student success advising
- Integrating and embedding support for learning
- Culturally inclusive experiences

## ACHIEVEMENT OF THE CORE STRATEGIES AND THEIR KEY INITIATIVES IS SUPPORTED BY THREE FOUNDATIONAL AND ENABLING STRATEGIES:

4. Establish a holistic staff support system that develops, nurtures, recognises and rewards staff in pursuit of quality, excellence, and innovation in university education.

5. Optimise our virtual and physical environments for learning and teaching and the student experience.

6. Implement a comprehensive infrastructure that supports staff to participate in efficient and effective planning, decision making and operational processes (data, systems, technology, policies, and practices).

## OUR PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each strategy will be achieved through specific initiatives. Education Plan initiatives will have key performance indicators and targets aligned with the Strategic Plan indicators and targets which are:

- To be a University of 30,000 students (4.5% Indigenous Australians, 46% students from a regional or remote background, 15% school leavers, and 14% international students) – comprising 17,000 EFTSL
- To be in the top 10 rankings for student experience, employment outcomes, and teaching quality; and in the top three for graduate employment
- To improve the nine-year cohort completion rate for undergraduate students to 60%
- To improve the six-year cohort completion rate for postgraduate coursework students to 70%
- To improve student retention to 85% and undergraduate progression rates to 88%



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## 1. Create a sustainable and strategic program portfolio

to provide relevant education offerings for domestic and international students in our regions and beyond.

Students experience learning through the curriculum. A quality assured, innovative, well-managed and organised portfolio of traditional and contemporary curriculum offerings that meet student, industry and community needs will reinforce UniSQ's reputation as a high-quality higher education provider.

UniSQ will design and offer contemporary award programs, micro-credentials and non-award courses that enable our graduates to be active, culturally capable, and productive citizens in a challenging and changing world. Our program offerings will be sensitive to our students' developing and changing educational needs, their careers, and national and international demands for qualified well-rounded professional staff who have social, enterprise and professional skills. Our programs embed First Nations perspectives and knowledges in curriculum, will be aligned with our flagship areas, industry and community needs, and will be responsive to student learning and their patterns of engagement. Our programs will be streamlined in structure, innovative in design and pedagogy, and offered in a variety of modalities that optimise learning opportunities and successful outcomes for diverse learners.

Our programs will be intentionally designed to:

- Manage the cycles of student transition at all stages of their learning
  - Scaffolded design from first to final years
  - Credit recognition
  - Pathways and nested awards
- Create highly employable graduates with transferable knowledge, skills, and capabilities
  - Cultural capabilities
  - Employability, enterprise and social skills
  - Work integrated and career development learning
  - Mental health and wellbeing
- Contribute to the overall program portfolio
  - Embed First Nations knowledges and perspectives
  - Reflect research strengths, community priorities and industry needs
  - Efficiently structured
  - Integrate industry experiences and practice

Our key program portfolio initiatives are:

- 1.1 Manage quality and excellence in our program portfolio through our Academic Quality Framework
- 1.2 Intentionally designed programs to meet student, First Nations and community needs, and industry demands
- 1.3 Ensure a sustainable program portfolio by reviewing, renewing, and retiring offerings
- 1.4 Provide innovative offerings that engage learners in learning and prepare them for future success
- 1.5 Create structured pathways for students to achieve their learning goals

## 2. Embrace innovative learning and teaching practices

to maximise learning opportunities and support students to become active citizens in a rapidly changing world.

High quality learning and teaching, creativity, relevance, flexibility, and learning focussed assessment and feedback are associated with enhanced student success, evidenced by improved grade outcomes and student progression and completion rates, and higher levels of overall student satisfaction with various aspects of their learning environment. Effective teaching is quality assured and supported by academic professional development for educators and distributed leadership.

UniSQ will embrace innovative approaches to learning and teaching that enhance student learning outcomes. Learning and teaching will be informed by discipline and higher education research and scholarly practice, evaluated to identify pedagogies of choice, and fit for purpose. Excellence in learning and teaching will be enabled by seamless, contemporary virtual and physical social learning environments, recognised through a range of reward programs and supported through opportunities for professional development and training. Academic and professional educators will use, produce and disseminate discipline and practice knowledge as leaders in their fields.

Our learning and teaching practices will:

- Focus on engaging students in learning and in their chosen discipline
  - Use assessment processes as a scaffold for future learning
  - Tailor approaches to learning and teaching to embrace First Nations ways of knowing, being and doing
  - Integrate discipline knowledge with industry and professional expertise
  - Actively support student progression at all stages of their program
- Ensure our teaching is focussed on supporting achievement of graduate learning outcomes
  - Cultural competency
  - Digital fluency
  - Work integrated and career development learning
  - Mental health and wellbeing

Our key learning and teaching initiatives are:

- 2.1 Establish a robust virtual learning environment and adopt relevant pedagogies to provide choice, accessibility and learning opportunities for all learners
- 2.2 Enhance our physical environments for formal and informal learning and teaching
- 2.3 Strengthen assessment design and feedback processes
- 2.4 Develop creative teaching practices through embedding existing and emerging technologies while providing opportunities for exploration and experimentation
- 2.5 Active dissemination of good practice, and develop, support, recognise and reward innovation and excellence in learning and teaching

## 3. Provide intentionally designed flexible student experiences

that are positive, productive, and rewarding, including diverse curricular and co-curricular, on-campus and online opportunities that enhance and extend learning and professional development opportunities for all students.

Students have one thing in common; they come to university to learn and ultimately obtain a formal higher education qualification. This goal offers the prospect of a new or different career path, increased financial security, self-determination, and personal and professional enrichment. The experiences students have while achieving their goals will influence future success, help manage challenges, and shape futures.

There is no single student experience, and no one student has a uniform experience. However, fostering a sense of belonging, supporting emotional wellbeing and self-efficacy, and ensuring timely access to support are essential for all students.

The innovation and quality of UniSQ's program portfolio, creative learning and teaching practices and the quality of the learning environment underpin the quality of the student experience and the reputation of UniSQ. A range of initiatives are essential for increasing student engagement, retention and success and strengthening the quality of their experiences.

Our student services and support for learning will be:

- Proactive, timely and highly personalised
  - Data driven and people rich
  - Evidence based activities that improve student outcomes
  - Sensitive to the realities of our students' lives
- Informed by evidence arising from higher education research, internal data, and scholarly practice
  - Mindful of the student voice
  - Formally recognise learning and service contributions
- Seamlessly provided and focussed on supporting student progression and learning outcomes
  - Reduce administrative burden on students
  - Focus on large-scale, high-impact interventions

Our key student success initiatives are:

- 3.1 Partner with our students in co-creating their learning environment
- 3.2 Implement a university-wide approach to student success advising
- 3.3 Focus on integrating and embedding support for learning in discipline content
- 3.4 Create culturally inclusive experiences for First Nations students, international students, and equity cohorts