

USQ Guidelines for Good Teaching

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Approach

USQ is committed to quality teaching to facilitate high quality outcomes for students. The USQ Guidelines for Teaching are designed to synthesise expectations about what good teaching means at USQ and they accord with USQ policies and procedures, with which compliance is expected. They also reflect the expectations in USQ's Learning and teaching action kit <http://www.usq.edu.au/extrfiles/ltsu/LTActionKit/index.html> and professional development resources. The guidelines have been benchmarked nationally and they are aligned with the (emergent) USQ Benchmarking framework.

The guidelines will facilitate the realisation of the USQ 2020 mission to be recognised as a world leader in open and flexible higher education and USQ's statement of its competitive business advantage, which is to provide the highest quality educational experiences to students irrespective of their location or lifestyle.

The guidelines are aligned with those elements of the USQ mission statement which refer to learning and teaching, namely that USQ:

- offers quality professional education opportunities that are accessible, flexible and borderless;
- creates fulfilling experiences for all students based on the commitment of skilled and caring staff; and
- develops graduates who are positioned to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

The guidelines focus on the responsibility of academic units and teaching staff and may be interpreted and customised to suit disciplines and contexts of learning. However, the guidelines identified in this document express common principles underlying staff creativity to develop learning activities that enable students to realise their academic and career aspirations.

They are predicated on the assumptions that students learn best when actively engaged in learning processes and that all students, regardless of their background or mode of learning, have an **equivalent** opportunity to access interesting and contemporary learning resources that will facilitate the development of the following graduate qualities and skills.

Graduate qualities

- Discipline expertise
- Professionalism
- Global citizenship
- Scholarship
- Lifelong learning

Graduate skills

- Ethical research and enquiry
- Problem solving
- Academic and professional literacy
- Written and oral communication
- Interpersonal skills
- Teamwork
- Cultural literacy
- Management, planning and organisational skills
- Creativity, initiative and enterprise

Deployment

The USQ guidelines will be used to:

- disseminate good practice to USQ staff;
- induct new staff to good teaching at USQ;
- inform professional development activities;
- populate the USQ learning and teaching website with clear guidelines for good teaching;
- guide the development of learning activities, courses and programs;
- inform course and program review;
- help guide USQ individual performance reviews with respect to teaching;
- inform promotion criteria based on teaching; and
- improve learning and teaching policies through gap analyses and alignment of guidelines and policies.

Results

The USQ Guidelines for Good Teaching serve as a leading indicator that drives future performance (McKinnon, Walker & Davis 2000) because it:

- suggests or points to a future state or outcome and it leads to actions;
- echoes organisational goals;
- provides context; and
- creates meaning at all organisational levels.

Outcomes will be determined in terms of KPIs associated with retention, progression and overall rates of student satisfaction with teaching at USQ in the annual course experience questionnaire as well as staff engagement measures.

Improvement

Improvements and/or changes to the USQ Guidelines for Good Teaching will occur through recommendations made through USQ's review processes which include:

- Faculty Annual Reviews;
- Learning and Teaching Five-yearly Reviews; and
- LTSU five-yearly Review.

The Guidelines

Teaching and Learning strategies

Good teaching at USQ means that teaching and learning strategies:

- utilise a range of pedagogies that actively engage students in the learning process;
- draw on the experiences strengths and needs of students and staff;
- include flexible learning opportunities to accommodate the diverse needs of all students regardless of location, campus, or mode;
- conform with quality assurance and quality improvement principles.

Program Design

Good teaching at USQ means that program design:

- is evidence-based and appropriately benchmarked;
- is coherent and integrated;
- is structured so that students progress through concepts with increasing levels of complexity;
- embeds USQ and professional qualities and skills through the process of customization, mapping and alignment of skills with course learning objectives and assessment at program or major level;
- embeds academic skills;
- fosters the relationship between research, scholarship and teaching;
- is situated in a global context, refers to relevant professional matters and contemporary issues identified in the University's strategic plan and is culturally sensitive;
- uses USQ program evaluation processes to inform subsequent program design and implementation; and
- provides flexible modes of program delivery, both on and off-campus and incorporates, as appropriate, a range of flexible pathways into and through higher education.

Course Design

Good teaching at USQ means that course design:

- is reflected in the course specification;
- aligns learning objectives, activities and assessment;
- includes academic skills development;
- identifies a USQ approved referencing system;
- includes content that reflects contemporary and relevant academic and professional issues as appropriate to context; and
- uses USQ program evaluation processes to inform subsequent course design and implementation.

Assessment

Good teaching at USQ means that assessment:

- is an integral part of the teaching and learning process;
- is designed to guide students' learning and provide opportunities for personal development planning and the documentation of students' achievements through e-portfolios;
- addresses the diversity of students' backgrounds, experiences and learning styles;

- is fair and equitable;
- informs students of progress through timely, constructive feedback that enhances learning;
- adopts a criterion-referenced approach;
- demonstrates alignment between learning objectives, learning activities and assessment tasks;
- assesses identified USQ graduate qualities and skills, along with disciplinary and professional knowledge;
- includes clear assessment criteria linked to learning objectives and provided to students at the same time as assessment tasks;
- is moderated in accordance with USQ policy and, where relevant, contractual arrangements with institutional partners;
- is designed to take into consideration students' overall workload; and
- is manageable from a staff workload perspective

Technology Enhanced Learning

Good teaching at USQ means that use of learning technologies:

- is based on sound educational research and examples of good practice;
- is embedded within the pedagogical framework of a course;
- reflects an understanding of learners' characteristics and needs as appropriate within different disciplines and contexts;
- is supported by responsive and coordinated student support mechanisms; and
- minimizes barriers to ensure fair and equitable access to technologies for students.

Course and Program management

Good teaching at USQ is facilitated by a context which expects that:

- learning materials are prepared and updated regularly;
- the moderator approves all course specifications, assessment schemes, tasks and grades;
- the Board of Examiners moderates outcomes in a consistent manner and in accordance with policy;
- courses and programs are benchmarked and evaluated in accordance with USQ policy;
- all teaching staff, including sessional staff, are appropriately inducted into teaching and learning at USQ;
- student attainment of skills are recorded in e-Portfolios as appropriate;
- staff and student workload policies and procedures are applied;
- equitable arrangements are made for staff and students with special needs;
- organizational structures are in place for the dissemination of strategic information from Deans, through Associate Deans to program leaders and Campus Associate Directors;
- the program team works strategically with the faculty support team (LTSU, DAIS) to engage with all stages of course and program design.;
- the program team works strategically with LTSU and the Careers Advisory service to ensure that students are fully supported in the development of academic learning and employability skills;
- the program team liaises with the Library to ensure that the library collection is commensurate with program needs; and
- appropriate physical and virtual learning spaces are provided to meet staff and students' needs.