

Learning and Teaching Plan 2007-2011

Sponsor: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Context

Changes in the strategic context within which QUT operates have given impetus to a renewed focus on quality and outcomes from learning and teaching. QUT aspires to and recognises that excellent learning outcomes will be highly dependent on a student-centred approach, building a capable teaching workforce, supportive learning environments and real-world emphasis. This requires measures to be developed to determine the quality of learning outcomes, teaching performance, and course performance, in parallel with developments at the national level.

Aim

QUT aims to provide outstanding learning environments and programs that lead to excellent outcomes for graduates, enabling them to work in, and guide, a world characterised by increasing change.

Over the life of the Plan (but with particular emphasis from 2006/2007 onwards) QUT's major emphasis in learning and teaching will be on:

- examining and responding more systematically and strategically to evaluations from our students;
- refining course offerings to reflect student demand, projected demographic trends, and anticipated workforce needs (*University KPI 2a, 2d*);
- strengthening the First Year Experience Program to support students in their transition to University;
- providing opportunities for work-integrated learning that facilitate student transition to professional practice;
- building the capability of our academic teaching staff, including sessional staff, through a range of development and extension programs;
- exploring ways to internationalise students' learning experiences and give effect to QUT's intentions under the Reconciliation Statement in respect of Indigenous issues
- reviewing and integrating emerging technologies which can most effectively support student learning, and creating physical environments to complement those learning experiences;
- fostering the critical relationship between teaching and research; and
- strengthening our physical and virtual learning environments.

Objective 1 The student experience and the learning and teaching feedback loop

QUT will promote critical reflection and responsiveness to the teaching and learning environment, performance, outcomes, and feedback.

Strategies

- 1.1 Strengthen QUT's enrolment profile by increasing the proportion of high achieving students as measured by (*P&C Plan 2.1*):
 - Entry of Year 12 applicants from the top OP ranks (OP1-OP2) (*University KPI 2e*);
 - Dean's Scholars programs; and
 - Increase in the number of high achieving international students.
- 1.2 Ensure that feedback provided from a range of sources is used to maintain standards and to improve performance in the pursuit of excellent learning outcomes and that this action is communicated back to the source, by:
 - Embedding universal evaluation of teaching quality;
 - Providing a platform that provides information on who is teaching first year units and evaluation of the quality of the teaching;
 - Making evaluation results available to the individual, their supervisor and relevant managers to form part of the PPrAS process;
 - Reporting on the outcomes of feedback to students through various media and to the University through course performance reports; and
 - Consolidating the University's student feedback data sets; analysing these effectively and using them to inform planned improvements.
- 1.3 Strengthen the First Year Experience Program to address the needs of all students in transition to university and manage student expectations at this critical period. This will be measured by:
 - First-year attrition rates; and
 - Student satisfaction, measured at key points using University-approved instruments.
- 1.4 Develop final year programs to assist students' seamless transition to professional practice measured by:
 - Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) results. (*University KPI 2j*)
- 1.5 Extend the honours programs with a view to supporting and increasing transition to higher degree research measured by:
 - Number of honours students progressing to higher degree by research (HDR) programs, both within QUT and at other institutions.

Objective 2 Courses and quality

QUT will support a strategic framework for the provision and development of courses with successful outcomes (as articulated in the Course Provision Strategy) and quality assurance processes relating to teaching, courses, and curriculum.

Strategies

- 2.1 Develop new courses and refresh existing courses to meet local, state, and national priorities and skill shortages; reflect the evolving nature of business, industry, and the professions; and parallel and support research developments e.g. sustainability, the health workforce, infrastructure, and power. This will be measured by:
 - New strategic course developments, with a particular focus on cross-faculty, jointly-designed and delivered degrees, part of the impetus for which may be seeded in research combinations in Institutes;
 - Increased combined-degree offerings (*University KPI 3a*); and
 - Cross-faculty teaching (*University KPI 3b*).
- 2.2 Implement criterion-referenced assessment in a manner that ensures learning experiences, assessment, and learning outcomes are clearly aligned. This will be measured by:
 - Evidence of a range of authentic learning experiences and assessment tools that are student-centred, engage students, and foster enquiry and critical thinking;
- 2.3 Integrate cross-cultural and international dimensions into curricula and learning experiences by encouraging an inclusive, dialogic teaching and learning environment for the development of students' understanding of the cultural, Indigenous, and international contexts; and develop courses that meet domestic and international demand and needs in these areas. This will include:
 - Incorporating specific reference to contemporary international and local content and context at both the unit and course level;
 - Implementing the outcomes of the "Internationalising the Curriculum" project *mutatis mutandis* across the University;
 - International visiting scholars to QUT;
 - Auditing and evaluating current curricula for appropriate Indigenous knowledge, content and pedagogy; and
 - Developing quality assurance indicators that relate to embedding Indigenous perspectives and knowledge in at least three (3) key courses.
- 2.4 Monitor and improve QUT's relative position in successful outcomes related to the quality of its courses. This will be measured by:
 - Improvements in CEQ and GDS outcomes (over the life of the Plan and from 2008 onwards in particular); (*University KPI 2j,2k*)
 - QUT's relative performance in national schemes over the life of the Plan, including the Learning and Teaching Development Performance Fund; and
 - Student retention rates (refer to P&C Plan Strategy 2.3). (*University KPI 2f*)

Objective 3 High quality learning environments including physical and virtual environments

QUT will provide high quality learning environments and experiences to foster and support effective student learning to be at the forefront of developments in new teaching technology and pedagogy.

Strategies

- 3.1 To strengthen the real-world experiences of students and facilitate student transition to professional practice by: making work-integrated and community-integrated learning a key component of undergraduate curricula at QUT; developing and consolidating active partnerships and collaborations within and beyond the University (including engaging with professionals in the relevant disciplines and across schools, faculties, and research domains); offering practice-based and authentic learning experiences; and developing customised courses in response to demand. This will be measured by:
 - Implementation of a new policy articulating a broader definition of authentic learning experiences, including work-integrated and community-integrated learning;
 - Number of students involved in work-integrated and community-integrated learning;
 - Number of students involved in overseas international and/or service learning experiences; and
 - Evidence of improved articulation and credit transfer in continuing professional education offerings.
- 3.2 Ensure the learning experiences, curriculum, and assessment of all courses are consistent with, and strengthen, QUT graduate capabilities and foster critical thinking including by complete implementation of:
 - the student ePortfolio tools (to emphasise development of graduate capabilities);
 - Graduate Capabilities Framework; and
 - Postgraduate Capabilities Framework.
- 3.3 Facilitate optimal student learning outcomes by seeking out and capitalising on emerging technologies and integrating information and communications technology into our teaching. This will be measured by:
 - Student satisfaction with IT services, including the range of and access to virtual resources: library databases and online course materials;
 - Benchmarking of technologies usage in teaching; and
 - Implementation and uptake of the Learning Management System to support on-line teaching.
- 3.4 Assist staff to recognise and utilise effectively a range of technologies (including the virtual, campus based, and work-integrated) in order to achieve an holistic approach to course delivery.
- 3.5 Provide optimum learning spaces that are appropriate to the nature of the class and the teaching strategy to be employed.

Objective 4 Staff capabilities

QUT's academic teaching staff will have the knowledge and capabilities to facilitate effective student learning and support, and will constitute a dynamic community of scholarly teachers.

Strategies

- 4.1 Build an intellectual community of international repute that informs teaching and learning practice and contributes to learning outcomes for students. Measured by:
 - QUT's relative national position for the number of Grants, Awards, and Fellowships awarded by the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education
- 4.2 Ensure QUT's academic structures, staffing profile, academic workload, and promotion arrangements support the advancement and sustainability of its scholarship, its teaching and research productivity, and its quality learning environments. Measured by:
 - Improving student:staff ratios over the lifetime of this Plan following establishment of benchmark base data (*University KPI 2i*);
 - Academic staffing profile, workload, and promotion data comparisons with national and competitor universities; and
 - Achieving an appropriate balance of the teaching contribution made by sessional academic staff.
- 4.3 Strengthen staff development programs in teaching for all staff, with particular emphasis on sessional staff and all new teaching staff, measured by:
 - Universal evaluation of teaching and reflective consideration in PPrAS for all teachers;
 - Development and delivery of a range of development options for staff who require additional support to enhance teaching quality;
 - Mandatory attendance for new sessional staff at tailored staff development programs;
 - Number of HDR students employed as academic interns/ sessional teachers; and number of sessional staff enrolled in postgraduate/HDR courses.
- 4.4 Provide programs to develop and strengthen defined teaching capabilities for early career and mid-career academics and for those academics moving to leadership roles. A specific target will be:
 - All new academic staff undertaking a developmental review of their teaching capabilities by the completion of their second year.
- 4.5 Ensure that our research strengths inform and enhance teaching and learning at all levels by strengthening the nexus between teaching and research/ scholarship. This will involve staff using their own research and other research developments in the field to inform their teaching and will include:
 - Requiring that academic staff at all levels, including the professoriate, disseminate the results of research in appropriate ways to students by participating in the teaching program;
 - Undertaking research into teaching and learning practices;

- Conducting effective and innovative teaching and learning practice which is informed by pedagogic research about successful teaching and learning strategies and new developments.

4.6 Reward and recognise excellence in teaching by encouraging staff whose teaching practice is outstanding and is informed by research and scholarship. This will involve: defining and acknowledging the roles and responsibilities of those in learning and teaching related leadership positions across the University (including Assistant Deans and course and unit coordinators); and establishment of the Vice-Chancellor's Performance Fund. This will be measured by:

- The number of staff recognised for their performance and leadership in teaching and the amount of funds awarded in recognition of excellence in teaching; and
- Carrick Institute nominations, awards, grants, and fellowships.