

Faculty of Science

Strategic Priorities 2026–2029



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE

Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Queensland (UQ) acknowledges the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which we operate.

We pay our respects to their Ancestors and their descendants, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country.

We recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society.

A Guidance Through Time by Quandamooka artists Casey Coolwell and Kyra Mancktelow.



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Image (front cover):
Tauaraia Howard (left) with
Ern Huang at Gatton Farm
Image (below):
Science MBRS Shore Research





Image (above):
Professor Melissa Brown
Executive Dean, Faculty of Science

As we enter the next phase of strategic planning for the Faculty of Science, we have the opportunity to reflect on our progress and set a clear direction for the years ahead.

Executive foreword

Science has been part of the University of Queensland since its establishment in 1910, when Science, Arts and Engineering were constituted as the University's three founding faculties. It continues to play a central role, building on this legacy to educate students and to respond to contemporary challenges and emerging opportunities.

Over recent planning cycles, the Faculty of Science has strengthened its core activities and capabilities, supporting the success of our students and staff and contributing to outcomes at local, national and global levels.

This document has been developed within the context of the **The University of Queensland Strategic Plan 2026–2029**. It reflects a shared commitment to delivering for the public good and positions the Faculty to contribute directly to the University's broader ambitions.

Through our breadth of disciplines and strong connection to real-world challenges, we prepare graduates who are capable, adaptable and ready to lead, while generating new knowledge to address the complex issues facing our communities.

Our priorities align with the University's strategic focus across teaching and learning, research and innovation, and delivering impact, supported by our people and operations. This ensures our approach is grounded in disciplinary strengths while contributing to the University's long-term direction.

This plan reflects both continuity and change. Core priorities such as student access and success, research excellence, partnerships and staff development remain central, while advances in digital technologies and new opportunities for collaboration and partnership require us to adapt and position ourselves for the future.

A key focus is the translation of strategy into action. Annual planning documents will provide a clear and practical framework to support Schools and teams in aligning their activities with Faculty and University priorities.

This strategy has been informed by our Faculty community. Consultation has reinforced the importance of strengthening the student experience, supporting research collaboration and impact, improving workplace culture, and ensuring that infrastructure and systems enable our core activities.

As we move forward, our success will be driven by our people. The capability, commitment and professionalism of our staff underpin everything we do.

We enter this planning period with a clear sense of direction and purpose. Together, we will continue to build a Faculty of Science that delivers meaningful outcomes for our students, partners and communities.

Professor Melissa Brown
Executive Dean, Faculty of Science

Who we are

Our academic units

Our five schools and UQ Skills lead teaching and research across a broad range of disciplines and provide the leadership that underpin the Faculty's strategic priorities.



AGFS – School of Agriculture and Food Sustainability

Brings together expertise in agriculture, agribusiness, plant and crop science, animal science, soil science and food systems to address global challenges including climate change, food and water security, and biosecurity.



SCMB – School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences

Delivers teaching and research across chemistry and the molecular life sciences, using molecular approaches to drive discovery, translation and advance scientific understanding across areas including materials science, infectious disease and biotechnology.



SENV – School of the Environment

Advances research and education across the biological, earth, geographical and social sciences to address global challenges in climate change, environmental management and ecosystem resilience in land and marine systems.



SMP – School of Mathematics and Physics

Delivers teaching and research in mathematics, statistics and physics, providing the foundations for understanding the natural world and enabling innovation, with impact ranging from fundamental discovery research through to applied and translational outcomes, benefiting industry, government and our broader society.



SVS – School of Veterinary Science

Delivering benefit to animals and communities through outstanding veterinary education, research and clinical veterinary practice that advances animal, human and environmental health and wellbeing.



UQ Skills

UQ Skills is a Registered Training Organisation that provides vocational education and training to UQ students, UQ staff, high school students, industry and our communities. Programs span a wide range of disciplines and skills and include customized short courses through to nationally accredited diplomas and certificates.

Our virtual centres

Our virtual research centres bring together complementary expertise from across the Faculty, the University and our partners to address complex local and global challenges.

They enable interdisciplinary collaboration, support research translation, and drive impact aligned to the Faculty's strategic priorities.

- Australia Centre for Ecogenomics
- Australian Infectious Diseases Research Centre
- Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Science
- Centre for Geoanalytical Mass Spectrometry
- Centre for Marine Science
- Centre for Organic Photonics and Electronics
- Earth Observation Research Centre
- Queensland Centre for Population Research

Our externally funded centres, networks and alliances

- ARC Centre of Excellence for Engineered Quantum Systems*
- ARC Centre of Excellence in Quantum Biotechnology*
- ARC Centre of Excellence for Plant Success in Nature and Agriculture*
- UQ-DETSI Reef Catchments Alliance*
- Global Bioeconomy Alliance*
- Agrifood Innovation Alliance*
- Analytics for the Australian Grain Industry*
- Australian Companion Animal Registry Cancer*
- Australian Plant Phenomics Network
- Queensland Emory Vaccine Centre
- ARC Centre of Excellence for Gravitational Wave Discovery
- Food and Beverage Accelerator Trailblazer
- CRC Solving Antimicrobial Resistance in Agribusiness, Food and Environments
- SmartSat CRC
- Blue Economy CRC
- CRC Marine Bioproducts
- Multiple ARC Industrial Transformation Training Centres and ARC Industrial Transformation Research Hubs
- And more...

*Faculty of Science led or co-led

Faculty of Science

Facts and figures



Faculty comprised of:

5 schools
3 research stations



75,000+

engaged global alumni
across 157 countries

Staff and students



1,000+

continuing, fixed-term and casual
academic and professional staff



8,000+

undergraduate and postgraduate
coursework student EFTSL



\$31m+

philanthropic funds
raised since 2021



**7 national awards
and citations**

from the Australian Awards
for University Teaching

Leadership and significant presence at Gatton Campus



269

staff



1870

coursework
student EFTSL



168

HDR students
(incl. QAAFI)

Research



31

externally funded fellowship
holders with funding from the ARC,
NHMRC and QLD government



\$82m+

average research income per year



Image:
UQ St Lucia campus



19

**Fellows of the
Academy of Science**

2

**Fellows of the Australian
Academy of Technological
Sciences and Engineering**

52

**Fellows of the
Higher Education Academy**

11

Academics recognised on the Clarivate
Highly Cited Research List (2025)

696

Average HDR student EFTSL (2020–2024)

Multiple subject rankings in the top 34 worldwide



Agriculture

#6 in the world

2025 NTU Performance Ranking of
Scientific Papers for World Universities



Ecology

#6 in the world

2025 Shanghai Rankings Global Ranking of
Academic Subjects



Life and Earth Sciences

**#1 in Australia
#13 in the world**

2025 CWTS Leiden Ranking



Environmental Sciences

**#1 in Australia
#18 in the world**

QS World University Rankings 2026



Agriculture and Forestry

**#1 in Australia
#26 in the world**

QS World University Rankings 2026



Veterinary Science

#34 in the world

QS World University Rankings 2026

Progress against our 2022–2025 Strategic Priorities

Over the 2022–2025 Strategic Priorities period, the Faculty of Science strengthened its performance across key strategic areas, building capability in education, research, partnerships and organisational delivery.

These outcomes reflect both progress against identified priorities and contributions to broader University initiatives.

Learning and student experience

- Expanded and diversified the student offering through new programs and pathways, including the Bachelor of Mathematics/Master Data Science vertical dual, Sustainable Agriculture major and science communication minor in the Bachelor of Science
- Expanded teaching capability through growth in the learning designer workforce, enabling scalable, high-quality delivery
- Increased participation in global mobility programs, including New Colombo Plan activity
- Expanded the Science Leaders Academy to strengthen student leadership and development

Research and innovation

- Strengthened research capacity and impact through major partnerships and success in large funding programs (including collaborations with DETSI, CNRS, FaBA and multiple ARC Centres of Excellence)
- Diversified funding through engagement with industry, government, foundations and donors. Appointed a Business Development Manager
- Attracted significant investment in priority areas, including quantum research and animal science infrastructure
- Supported research and researchers through multiple enabling schemes and an EMCR program including BIRRTS (Building Industry Research Relationships in Science and Translation), PROpel (early and mid-career research professional development support fund), Travel Assist (HDR industry placement support scheme), and the ScienceLink mentoring program
- UQ vaccine technology underpinned a US\$1.6 billion global deal, demonstrating the translation of fundamental research into life-saving solutions at scale

People and culture

- Improved the staff experience by strengthening Faculty culture, reflected in improved Pulse survey results and targeted cultural initiatives, e.g. Stronger management of unacceptable behaviour and development of the SVS Culture Charter
- Increased Indigenous representation through targeted roles
- Significantly increased the proportion of female academics at Level E and in the School of Mathematics and Physics
- Faculty restructure to enable new collaborations in teaching and research and fairer distribution of workload, through the establishment of the School of the Environment and the School of Agriculture and Food Sustainability

Engagement

- Established an international engagement portfolio in the Faculty of Science. Expanded international articulation pathways, student cohorts and teaching partnerships
- Strengthened partnerships with indigenous communities. Developed a strategy for indigenising the curriculum. Appointed a Senior Manager Indigenous Engagement and confirmed the establishment of an Associate Dean Indigenous Engagement role
- Expanded our international development opportunities through capacity building and research, in partnership with the Australian government (e.g. Australia awards)
- Developed cases for support in Marine science and Conservation and Biodiversity, and a new scholarships and award schemes (e.g. Molecular Maverick)
- Commended the development of strategies to expand teaching and research opportunities on the Gatton campus

Consultation on our Priorities

The Faculty of Science Strategic Priorities 2026–2029 was informed through a structured consultation process.



Initial input was sought at the Faculty of Science All Staff Forum in November 2025, where feedback highlighted key areas of focus:

- teaching and learning, including evolving student needs
- research performance and infrastructure
- the impact of artificial intelligence
- staff workload and wellbeing
- the future development of the Gatton campus

These themes were refined at the Faculty of Science Executive Retreat in February 2026, where Faculty leadership, Heads of School, Director of T&L, Research, Research supervision, School Managers and Faculty portfolio leads defined priorities for the 2026–2029 period. The retreat focused on:

- reflecting on progress under the 2022–2025 Strategic Priorities
- identifying priorities for the next planning period
- ensuring alignment with the University's Strategic Plan

Following the retreat, the draft Science Strategic Priorities were drafted and circulated to all staff in the Faculty of Science for feedback.

Across all stages, there was strong alignment on the need for a focused, practical strategy aligned to the University's direction. Consistent themes included:

- strengthening the student experience
- supporting research excellence and impact
- improving staff leadership capability, workload and culture
- advocating for improved infrastructure and system constraints

The Strategic Priorities reflect this input and sets a clear direction for the Faculty over the period 2026 to 2029.

Image (left):
Science student working in Chemistry Lab

The University of Queensland

Strategic Plan 2026–2029

Purpose

Deliver for the public good through excellence in education, research and engagement.

Vision

Knowledge leadership for a better world.

Strategic focus

UQ's Strategic Plan 2026–2029 is structured around three core domains:

- Delivering for the public good
- Teaching and learning
- Research and innovation

These domains are enabled by:

- Our people and sustainable operations

Positioning

UQ is recognised as a leading research-intensive university, delivering education, research and engagement that contribute to social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes in Queensland, Australia and globally.

Through this Plan, the University builds on its strengths to:

- prepare graduates who are ready to succeed in the workforce
- advance research that addresses complex global challenges
- strengthen partnerships with industry, government and communities
- deliver impact through education, research and innovation



Delivering for the public good

At the centre of the Plan is a renewed focus on delivering for the public good as the University's defining purpose. This includes:

- advancing The Queensland Commitment to expand access to education
- strengthening community and industry partnerships
- contributing to a fair, inclusive and sustainable society
- delivering impact across local, national and global communities

Strategic direction to 2032

The Strategic Plan sets the pathway towards UQ's long-term ambitions, including:

- expanding access and participation in higher education
- strengthening global partnerships and engagement
- advancing research translation and innovation
- supporting a high-performing, inclusive and sustainable university

Context for the Faculty of Science

The Faculty of Science plays a central role in delivering the University's Strategic Plan.

Through its teaching, research and partnerships, the Faculty contributes directly to:

- educating graduates for future workforce and societal needs
- advancing discovery and translating research into impact
- supporting industry, government and community engagement
- delivering outcomes aligned to UQ's commitment to the public good

The Faculty Strategic Priorities 2026–2029 has been developed in direct alignment with this framework.

Our shared vision for 2029

By 2029, the Faculty of Science will demonstrate:



Improved student experience and success, supported by high-quality, future-focused education



Stronger research performance and impact, including diversification of funding, broader collaborations and visible impact



A clear and measurable contribution to the public good, including equitable access through the UQ Queensland Commitment, community engagement and Indigenous partnerships



Growth in local, national and global partnerships and engagement, strengthening opportunity, capability, reputation and outcomes



An engaged and supported workforce, with improved staff experience and support that aligns with staff, student and university priorities



A more resilient and sustainable Faculty, underpinned by effective operations and fit-for-purpose infrastructure

Faculty of Science

Strategic Priorities 2026-2029

Teaching and Learning

1. Uplift assessment and teaching and learning practices

Use technologies and design principles to enable consistent, efficient and effective innovations in assessment, curriculum and course delivery that improves both the student learning and staff teaching experience.

2. Expand opportunities for research-informed teaching

Expand course-embedded delivery models that provide groups of students the opportunity to have a research cohort experience, for example, in a practical or field-based teaching environment. Ensure that these models enhance the student experience and reduce the supervisory load in individual research groups.

3. Provide developmental extracurricular opportunities for students

Expand opportunities for students to have distinctive and enabling extracurricular experiences through industry placements, field trips, the UQ Science Leaders Program and a range of global mobility opportunities (e.g. via New Colombo Plan). Incorporate elements of these into the classroom to motivate student attendance and learning.

4. Support students in their transition to UQ

Enable students to make a smooth transition to UQ, regardless of their background and experience, through scalable, accessible approaches to supporting a diverse student cohort. This should include enhancing programs to help students to adjust to university learning, providing support to students in need, and ensuring that our first-year curriculum and learning experiences support a broad range of student backgrounds and skills.

5. Develop our T&L leaders

Enhance the leadership capabilities of our School Directors of Teaching and Learning, Program convenors, and coordinators of large courses. Focus on the changing landscape of university teaching and the development of practices that effectively engage the 2026-2029 student cohort. Establish a distributed leadership model to ensure that all teaching staff are able to develop these capabilities.

What does success look like

- ✓ Improved retention rates and course completion outcomes across undergraduate programs
- ✓ Improved student satisfaction outcomes, with stronger relative national performance in Teaching Quality and Overall Educational Experience
- ✓ Increase in the proportion of graduates with research, industry, global or student-staff project experience



Research and Innovation

1. Attract and retain outstanding researchers

Leverage UQ and external schemes to attract and retain outstanding researchers, who will lead research programs that significantly advance fundamental knowledge, as well as addressing pressing local and global societal challenges.

2. Value and enable discovery research

Celebrate the value and enable a broad range of impacts of discovery research, through the establishment of research collaborations and networks across UQ. These should comprise appropriate combinations of discovery and applied researchers and a span of disciplines consistent with UQ research strengths and discipline norms. Leverage this to attract programmatic funding.

3. Develop science research infrastructure

Develop the capability, sustainability and attractiveness of our research infrastructure to enable research undertaken by UQ researchers and our external partners.

4. Build broader and deeper research partnerships

Deepen our partnerships with industry, government, universities, and not-for-profit organizations. Enable the success of these partnerships through co-design and co-development of translational research projects, with a focus on tangible outcomes.

5. Support HDR students and EMCRs through development, mentoring and industry engagement activities

Develop the leadership of our HDR students and early-mid career researchers (EMCRs) through an engaging program. Continue to strengthen and expand existing mentoring and industry engagement programs, and industry collaboration schemes for EMCRs. Actively communicate and celebrate the outcomes of EMCRs.

What does success look like

- ✓ Success across a diverse range of national and international funding schemes
- ✓ Expanded interdisciplinary research programs across the breadth of UQ
- ✓ Demonstrate the impact of our research across a range of indicators
- ✓ Maintain or improve research excellence indicators
- ✓ Increase in HDR and EMCR engagement with industry and partners

Delivering for the Public Good

1. Enable, attract and support a diverse student cohort

Work towards establishing a rural, remote, low socioeconomic status and Indigenous student profile in the Faculty of Science that reflects the profile in Queensland. Explore potential pathway opportunities that support students from diverse backgrounds to access, participate in and be successful in our programs. Take a strategic approach to the delivery of outreach programs that is consistent with the above aspiration.

2. Expand our impactful work in 'international development'

Expand and celebrate the work of the School of Agriculture and Food Sustainability and the School of the Environment in developing capacity, economic prosperity and well-being in the Indo-Pacific, South-east Asia and Africa. Priorities should continue to include developing long-term programmatic, capacity building partnerships with a focus on developing trust, in-country capabilities and impact.

3. Develop globally significant teaching and research partnerships

Develop teaching and research partnerships with the best universities in the world to enable unique and empowering opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students, higher-degree research students and staff. Leverage these to access new funding opportunities (e.g. Horizon Europe) and solutions to local, national and global challenges.

4. Expand and strengthen our commitment to Indigenous engagement

Strengthen our respectful and empowering engagement with Indigenous communities. Through this engagement, expand co-designed and co-developed research that is culturally significant and benefits Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Progress indigenisation of our course curricula to enhance the cultural awareness and capabilities of all our students.

5. Effectively communicate the value of our work to our communities

Champion 'Science for Good' by sharing evidenced-based research and teaching outcomes with our alumni and communities, focussing on demonstrating the societal, economic and environment benefit to a lay audience. Develop cases for support that mobilise and enable donors to contribute to solving societal problems.

What does success look like

- ✓ Increase in participation and success of students from low SES, regional and Indigenous communities
- ✓ Increased number of long-term impactful international development programs
- ✓ Expand international partnerships in teaching and research
- ✓ Increased Indigenous engagement, co-designed research and indigenised curriculum

Image:

Veterinary students practical exam



Our People and Sustainable Operations

1. Expand opportunities for staff development with a focus on leadership

Encourage academics and professional staff across the Faculty of Science to engage with existing UQ leadership programs. Consider options for a tailored and cascading induction program for new staff in the Faculty of Science.

2. Ensure that our schools have sufficient support to enable the academic mission

Advocate for fit-for-purpose professional support for academics in our schools, to ensure that they can focus and deliver on the academic mission of the university.

3. Develop a strategy to inform academic recruitment priorities

Develop a shared vision for academic workforce planning and management in schools, that is informed by student-staff ratios, workload model data, research strengths, institutional capabilities and future priorities.

4. Pursue opportunities to develop fit-for-purpose infrastructure

Advocate for the development of fit-for-purpose spaces for practical teaching and for hosting industry and not-for-profit partners. These spaces should provide students with an inspiring and memorable science learning experience, and facilitate impactful, partnered research collaboration.

5. Enhance Science teaching and research capabilities and diversity on the Gatton Campus

Contribute to the development of externally-funded, facilities on the Gatton campus that enable excellence and impact in research and teaching. Develop reasonable and effective cost recovery models that enable the sustainability and enhance the quality of farm-based academic services. Consider opportunities to diversify and support students from the local region and beyond to study at the Gatton campus.

What does success look like

- ✓ Improved staff satisfaction through career development and leadership opportunities
- ✓ Improve alignment of academic workforce planning with workload, student demand and research priorities
- ✓ Increased utilisation of the Gatton Campus for teaching and research

Principles of the Faculty of Science priorities

Very conscious of workload pressures on staff, limited resources, and current student:staff ratios.

Intent is to reduce or replace workload, not to add more work.

Goals should be achievable across our current workforce and resources. If not, we may need to consider what we stop doing so that our priorities are consistent with the University's 2026–2029 Strategic Plan.

Living and breathing UQ values

The University's values support the delivery of its Strategic Plan and the Faculty of Science Strategic Priorities, lead and collaborate across all areas of activity.

What we strive for

Excellence

We strive for excellence in everything we do. We apply the highest standards to our work to achieve the greatest impact for the benefit of communities everywhere.

Creativity

We apply our creativity as a way of seeking progress. We value new ideas, seek fresh perspectives and pursue game-changing innovations and opportunities.

Central to what we do

Truth

Truth is central to all that we do as a university. We seek truth through our focus on the advancement and dissemination of knowledge, and our deep commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression.

How we work together

Integrity

We always act with integrity. As stewards of the University's resources and reputation, we are honest, ethical and principled.

Courage

We are courageous in our decision making. We are ambitious, bold and agile. We demonstrate moral courage so that we are always guided by a sense of what is right.

Respect and inclusivity

We provide a caring, inclusive and empowering environment for all. We engage respectfully with one another and promote the value that our diversity brings to our whole community.

Values in practice

Together, these values shape a culture that:

- supports excellence in teaching, research and engagement
- encourages innovation and continuous improvement
- fosters respectful, inclusive and collaborative behaviours
- enables strong partnerships across disciplines and communities
- underpins the University's ability to deliver meaningful impact
- ensures that the workload implications of new priorities is balanced by efficiencies or changes in existing activities

Living these values is central to achieving the ambitions of the University and sustaining a high-performing and values-led organisation.

Delivering on the strategy

The Faculty of Science Strategic Priorities 2026–2029 is supported by a clear and structured approach to delivery, ensuring that priorities are translated into coordinated and achievable actions across Schools and portfolios.

Annual Faculty and School Plans on a Page will provide a framework for implementation, ensuring a consistent and transparent approach to planning, delivery and reporting. This supports a shared understanding of direction while allowing flexibility in how priorities are delivered across different disciplinary contexts.

Delivery of the strategy will be supported through established Faculty governance structures, including the Science Executive Committee and our biannual Faculty Enterprise Planning sessions. These forums will oversee progress, ensure alignment with the University's Strategic Plan and provide a mechanism to identify and respond to emerging priorities and risks.

Measuring success

Success will be assessed through a combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators aligned to the Faculty's strategic priorities.

This will include consideration of:

- progress against Faculty and School-level priorities
- outcomes in student experience, success and engagement
- research performance, collaboration and impact
- development of staff capability and improvements in workplace culture
- growth and effectiveness of partnerships and external engagement

The focus will be on demonstrating meaningful progress and tangible outcomes, rather than measuring activity alone.

Where appropriate, Faculty measures will align with University-level indicators to support consistency, benchmarking and reporting at an institutional level.

Monitoring and evaluation

A structured approach to monitoring and evaluation will support delivery of the strategy over the 2026–2029 period.

This will include:

- regular reporting through Faculty governance and leadership forums
- alignment of School planning and reporting with Faculty priorities
- periodic review of progress to identify risks, gaps and emerging opportunities
- use of data, evidence and feedback to inform decision-making and prioritisation

This approach will support:

- clear visibility of progress across the Faculty
- timely identification of areas requiring adjustment or additional support
- continuous improvement in the delivery of priorities

Together, these processes ensure that the strategy remains responsive to changes in the internal and external environment, while maintaining a clear focus on agreed priorities.

Principles for delivery

Implementation of the strategy will be guided by a small number of consistent principles:

- **Focus and prioritisation**
Activities will be aligned to agreed priorities and delivered within available resources
- **Alignment and coordination**
Faculty, School and team-level activities will work together to support shared outcomes
- **Evidence-based decision-making**
Planning and delivery will be informed by data, performance insights and feedback
- **Collaboration**
Delivery will be supported through collaboration across disciplines, Schools and external partners
- **Sustainability and impact**
Activities will be designed to deliver meaningful and enduring outcomes for the Faculty and its communities



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