



Key achievements in 2005–06

- Co-negotiated with Queensland universities and Australian Government to obtain funded health training places at Queensland universities to address critical health workforce shortages.
- Contributed significantly through participation in key alliances to major national developments vital for maintaining a quality higher education system, including a comprehensive review of national criteria and processes for establishing and reviewing institutions.
- Raised the profile of Queensland as a quality education destination and fostered internationalisation of higher education.
- Streamlined university governance arrangements for more effective and efficient governing bodies.

Key Challenges for 2006–07

- Ensuring the number of nationally funded higher education places increase in proportion to Queensland's growth rate.
- Influencing the development of the Australian Government's Research Quality Framework to ensure it recognises the unique circumstances of the state's regional universities.
- Ensuring higher education remains cost-effective for the broad spectrum of Queensland students, including the provision of support services.
- Increasing awareness in the broader community of the longer-term benefits to Queensland of the internationalisation of universities, such as deeper understanding of other cultures and enduring economic and social links to other countries.
- Maintaining or expanding the international reputation of Queensland's higher education in an increasingly competitive international context.
- Responding to the development of domestic provision in key countries such as China and India.

Objective:

To support the continuing development of a quality, accessible higher education sector that meets the needs of Queensland communities, and contributes to the state's economic, social and cultural development.

The state's higher education system comprises a diverse range of universities and non-university providers operating in communities across the state. Queensland has nine universities teaching approximately 184 000 students of which around 43 700 are international. Over 16 000 people are employed by the universities at 26 campuses. The small but growing non-university sector includes 23 institutions catering to more than 5000 students.



Higher education institutions in Queensland make a significant contribution to economic growth within the state, developing social capital and assisting the community.

Strategy

Advocate for Queensland in the national policy arena.

Advocacy within the national agenda

The Department contributes to a number of key alliances that are critical to national developments in higher education policy. These include:

- the Joint Committee for Higher Education (JCHE) – a committee of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), which provides policy advice to Australian, state and territory government Ministers and departments
- the Higher Education Recognition Officers (HEROs) network, an operational-level national network and committee for discussing higher education accreditation policy and processes

- the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), which provides quality assurance of the operations of Australian universities and state and territory accrediting agencies
- ongoing interactions with the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) on planning and policy issues.

Through these alliances, the Department's advocacy focuses on strengthening the quality of Queensland's higher education system, enhancing its diversity and strengthening its reputation in both domestic and international contexts. The views of Queensland's higher education sector inform and support the Department's position, which is advanced through these forums.

During 2005–06, the Department contributed to significant projects and initiatives including:

- the revision of the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes, which underpin the quality of Australian higher education
- discussions on Australian/State government responsibilities for higher education, particularly the statutory responsibility for universities and the basis and management of the national quality framework
- the development of a national Transnational Quality Strategy, which will help assure the quality of Australian higher education providers operating outside the country
- the development of quality audit models for higher education providers other than universities
- an independent review of AUQA conducted by an external review panel.

Outlook 2006–07

The Department will:

- assist in the development of National Guidelines for implementing the revised National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes
- contribute to national discussions on the management of the national quality framework, including a review of the Charter of the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board and investigations into the feasibility of establishing a national body for higher education approvals policy and processes.

Strategy

Pursue state objectives for higher education.

To facilitate the development of Queensland communities and meet their diverse needs, the Department has pursued a number of objectives with respect to higher education. The Department's performance is detailed below.

Ensure Queensland is positioned to meet its higher education needs

Demographic forecasts show that Queensland will grow by some 800 000 people over the next decade. These forecasts also show Queensland capturing 63% of national growth in the young adult age group (15 to 24 years).

This forecast growth will increase demand for higher education places and for skilled graduates.

To maximise access to higher education for Queenslanders, during 2005–06 the Department has:

- negotiated with the Australian Government to receive an appropriate share of funds for Queensland universities (20% of funded growth places nationally, consistent with current population share)
- facilitated the reallocation of Australian Government-funded places amongst Queensland universities reducing unmet demand for funded places and retaining these places for the future
- co-negotiated with Queensland universities and other government agencies to obtain funded health training places from the Australian Government. These places will help address critical health workforce shortages
- instigated discussions with the Australian Government on funding arrangements for regional universities to support their sustainability.



Economic growth is expected to increase demand for higher education places and skilled graduates.

Maximise post-school educational opportunities for all Queenslanders

A study of the transition of school-leavers to higher education in Queensland shows that a considerable number of students who achieve relatively high entrance rankings choose not to go to university immediately following school.⁵

To help increase the post-school tertiary education opportunities for targeted groups, the Department supports several programs including:

- pre-tertiary programs at the University of Queensland Gatton campus, providing a valuable pathway into higher education for regional people
- the Learning Network Queensland (LNQ), which provides post-school education opportunities through a network of open learning centres in regional and rural Queensland
- Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, which helps Indigenous students gain qualifications and build practical skills to be administrators, public servants and project managers in Indigenous issues.

Advocate for the development of Queensland institutions' research capacity

Queensland has the youngest university in the country, and several institutions have campuses of various sizes spread across the state. These operational factors present a challenge for Queensland universities in establishing their research profile and attracting research funds. The Australian Government is reviewing the basis of research funding through development of a Research Quality Framework (RQF). This Framework will link funding to research output and impact. The Department is monitoring the Framework's development to ensure it recognises the unique circumstances of the state's regional universities, and the contribution of their research activities to local communities.

The Department also participates in a number of national and international forums that support and foster university research and development. During 2005–06, departmental activities included:

- providing a higher education perspective on the state's Biotechnology strategies for the Senior Officer's Biotechnology Interdepartmental Committee
- identifying links and alliances between Queensland universities and other research institutions, particularly overseas, to target future internationalisation activities.

Source: *School-to-higher education transitions in Queensland* (2006) Griffith University and Queensland University of Technology

Did you know ?

Education and training export services is one of the state's top three service export industries earning approximately \$1.1 billion last year.

Outlook 2006-07

The Department will:

- support Queensland universities in their negotiations with the Australian Government over the allocation and distribution of funded places, to maximise higher education opportunities and meet workforce needs
- investigate strategies to assist regional institutions to meet the educational and research needs of their communities
- monitor the development of the RQF and its potential impact on regional institutions.

Strategy

Monitor institutional viability and higher education affordability.

Affordable and accessible higher education

In 2005-06, the Department has monitored the operation of higher education institutions and addressed relevant issues through:

- overseeing the reconstitution of the governing bodies of all public universities in Queensland in

accordance with the requirements of the Australian Government's National Governance Protocols (these reforms streamlined the governance arrangements of all public universities and will contribute to more effective and efficient governing bodies in our public institutions)

- working closely with institutions on their future discipline profiles as they respond to variations in student demand, and pressure to focus on areas of strength in teaching and research activities
- examining higher education enrolment trends and demand across the state, particularly in the regional and high population growth areas of Queensland.

The Department has also continued to monitor higher education affordability for university aspirants and participants in Queensland.

The Australian Government's *Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Student Union Fees) Act 2005* (commonly known as VSU legislation) comes into effect in 2006. The legislation prohibits compulsory student union and amenities fees for students who commence studies on or after 1 July 2006.

The Department is gathering information on the impact of the VSU legislation on the affordability of higher education and the availability of student services, to identify emerging issues and possible strategies to address them.



The Department seeks to maximise the opportunities for all Queenslanders in higher education.

The Department will:

- assist universities in revising their discipline profiles to achieve a balance between institutional viability and the state's higher education objectives
- monitor the impact on the support structures, services and infrastructure available for Queensland university students resulting from the implementation of voluntary student unionism.

Strategy

Foster the internationalisation of higher education.

Internationalising higher education

The international education sector generated an estimated 7000 jobs for Queenslanders.

International students contributed an estimated \$1.1 billion to the Queensland economy in 2005.

Through its work with universities to foster the integration of international, intercultural or global dimensions into higher education, the Department aims to foster a number of benefits that go well beyond the economic. These include a deeper understanding of other cultures and enduring economic and social links to other countries.

The State Higher Education International Initiative continues to raise the profile of Queensland as a quality education destination and foster internationalisation of the state's higher education sector. The initiative is run in cooperation with all nine Queensland universities and has delivered benefits to the sector as a whole as well as to individual universities across the state.

The success of our international activities in delivering these benefits depends very much on relationships with other governments and institutions. Some of the activities that have strengthened these international relationships include:

- a ministerial mission in late 2005 to the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Europe
- the Minister's visit to Malaysia and Singapore to promote the forthcoming Australian Universities International Alumni Convention to be held in Brisbane in 2006

Making a difference ... the International Students Tertiary EXPO

Held in July 2005, the International Students Tertiary Expo (ISTE) was a collaborative event involving nine Queensland universities, 22 private education training institutions, Education Queensland International, Independent Schools Queensland and TAFE Queensland.

Through ISTE, Institutional Representatives are able to meet prospective students face to face and provide first-hand information about study pathways and career options. Attendees were also provided advice regarding successful adjustment of onshore international students to post-school life in Queensland. ISTE 2005 attracted approximately 600 students from government and private high schools and English language institutions.



The International Students Tertiary Expo 2005

- an ambassadors' tour to Hessen, Germany, involving representatives of all nine Queensland universities, to visit partner institutions and explore ways to broaden collaboration and engagement between institutions in both countries
- the inaugural Shanghai Cup Chinese Language Competition for students from Queensland schools and universities
- visits to Queensland by Ministries of Education from China, Sarawak, Singapore, Turkey, Vietnam, Brazil and Oman.

Did you know ?

Queensland universities enrolled around 43 700 students from more than 140 countries in 2005–06.

Quality at the forefront

The regulatory framework for maintaining higher education quality in Queensland is provided by the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2003*, supported by operational guidelines. The Minister is the approving authority for higher education approval processes under the Act. For more information on higher education approval activities, see Appendix 6.

Outlook 2006–07

The Department will:

- develop legislation to implement the revised National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Process
- continue to respond to the recommendations from the AUQA audit.

Making a difference ... through quality control

In 2005, the Department's higher education approval processes were audited by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA).

The audit report commends the Department's proactive support for innovation in higher education, and its focus on improving outcomes. The report also commends the Department's firm dealings with so-called "Diploma Mills" and sub-standard providers. This means the Queensland community and students from other states and countries can be confident in the quality of higher education offered in Queensland.

The full report can be found online. [WWW](#)