

ACCESSS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2020

CQUniversity Australia (Central Queensland University)



EQUITY OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES

CQUniversity recognises its status as a regional university with a significant percentage of students from disadvantaged and traditionally underrepresented backgrounds, including higher-than-average participation of students from remote, regional, Indigenous, Low Socioeconomic Status (LSES) and first in family groups. “Access and participation” is not an add-on at CQUniversity; it is the University’s core business.

CQUniversity’s vision is to be Australia’s most accessible, supportive and engaged university, recognised globally for innovative teaching and research excellence. To support the university’s vision, CQUni HEPPP’s strategic goals are to:

- Invest in and enhance our commitment to access, equity, inclusion and retention
- Deliver holistic student support that addresses the unique needs and overall wellbeing of our students
- Ensure our workforce embodies the richness of culture and diversity in our communities
- Readily recruit our students and graduates into appropriate employment opportunities across the University
- Collaborate with Australia’s First Nations People to strengthen our relationships with the custodians of the lands hosting the communities we serve
- Optimize and expand our presence and impact through partnerships with our communities

Overarching outcomes sought by CQUniversity include improved participation, retention, success and completion rates, for domestic higher education students from LSES and other equity categories.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

To achieve our goals, CQUni HEPPP will continue to build strong strategic partnerships and embrace new opportunities to increase program quality and relevance for students and communities. These partnerships include but are not limited to:

- CQUniversity - administrative services, faculties, and schools, TAFE and between HEPPP programs and initiatives
- Indigenous leaders and communities throughout Regional Queensland
- Identified low-SES primary and secondary schools, including alternative education providers throughout Queensland
- Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC)
- Territory Education Institutions
- EPHEA – Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia
- Queensland Department of Education
- AIME (Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience)
- Government Agencies (local, state and Commonwealth)
- Community organisations

EVALUATION

CQUniversity has a multi-pronged approach to evaluating the impact and effectiveness of its access and participation programs.

In 2019, CQUniversity commissioned the Nous Group to continue the independent evaluation of HEPPP strategies across the entire student lifecycle. The programs and initiatives endorsed for 2020 are the result of the evaluation outcomes and the implantation of a “top down approach” (nomination for programs based on their alignment to strategic objectives).

CQUniversity’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance) oversees the strategic direction and coordination of CQUni HEPPP in conjunction with a dedicated Progress Group which includes CQUniversity’s Provost, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Finance and Planning), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement), and the Director of Student Experience.

Additionally, CQUni HEPPP Program Management and HEPPP Data Analysis program are HEPPP funded to support Program and Initiative Coordinators with the necessary advice, training, tools, and resources required to deliver on agreed program/initiative outcomes, on- time and within their allocated budget. CQUniversity also uses a variety of evaluation data for continuous program improvement that include: Qualitative data; Quantitative data; and, focus groups and survey feedback

KEY ACTIVITIES



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CQUni Youth Stem Academy (CYSA) aims to increase undergraduate enrolments and success in STEM courses throughout regional Queensland. The Academy cultivates aspirations and support for tertiary education through its community of STEM leaders comprising of Ambassadors (year-nine students of LSES background), School Liaison Officers (undergraduates of LSES background), Academics and associates.

CQUni Connect is an aspiration-building and career-focused program built upon a research-informed practice model that combines the SODI Career Planning Development Model, theories of human-social development and social learning theory into a long-term Learner Progression Framework (LPF). The integrated model emphasises characteristics of successful outreach interventions that support student aspirations early in their educational journey are progressive, people-rich and sustained over time. This results in young people who are able to make informed choices and are equipped with effective navigational skills.

Indigenous Pathways is a program aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from low SES backgrounds to ensure knowledge and information regarding study pathways is shared, literacy and numeracy skills are developed, and encourages those who may have withdrawn or not completed their studies to pursue their educational journey. The program targets these prospective students by sharing knowledge and information regarding study pathways, preparing prospective students for pathways to higher education through literacy and numeracy skills development, and assisting past students who may have withdrawn or not completed their studies to pursue their educational journey.

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LSES Application Fee Wavier initiative supports the aspirations of secondary and prospective students from low SES backgrounds by removing barriers that may impact upon an individual deciding to apply for university studies through QTAC.

LSES STEPS Online Support initiative provides a supportive learning environment in which an LSES STEPS Online Coordinator will monitor student progress and provide study support for STEPS students studying online who are from a low SES background. The Coordinator arranges interventions from other specific CQUni support staff when problems arise that may negatively affect an individual student's ability to continue their study. Course guidance and emotional support is provided to assist students to prioritise their study, strengthen their self-management skills and address any factors that may, without intervention, result in a withdrawal from study.

Smoothing Assessment Transitions for VET Students (SATVS) initiative works to address the needs of low SES students transitioning from VET to High Education at CQUniversity in relation to understanding how best to address the challenges that they experience with respect to curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.

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Embedding LSES Undergraduate Literacy program aims to improve learning outcomes and success of first year low SES undergraduate students by embedding support for academic literacy skills within core units. Through provision of relevant and easily accessible assistance to Advisers and access to online study resources, low SES students have the opportunity to improve fundamental academic literacy skills, preparedness to meet the requirements of higher education and develop positive behaviours and attitudes towards seeking information and feedback. This will in turn increase students' confidence in their approach to study.

Peer to Peer (P2P) Advice and Triage program provides the opportunity for LSES students to receive peer-based advice and support from other LSES students. The Student Peer Advisers are also responsible for providing continuous personalised communication via phone and email to all new and current LSES students. The employment opportunities offered within the P2P program elevates a sense of purpose and association with CQUniversity while also being able to offer financial support to LSES students.

Removing Financial Barriers to Student Success program delivers scholarships and financial assistance to domestic undergraduate students from low SES backgrounds.

Academic Liaison Team assists domestic undergraduate students from low SES backgrounds to be better prepared and to succeed in their studies. Liaising with the Academic Progression Officer, the team identifies the LSES students from their School who at risk and/or in need of support. It is responsibility of the Academic Liaison Officer to provide a personal follow up with the students and guide them to the services they need to help them to succeed.

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Mindwaves is a proactive and tailored program built upon a Mental Health Framework to prevent, address, and reduce risk factors that impact LSES students.