

Maximising the student experience: The UQ Advantage Award

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For many students, some of the most memorable and formative university experiences occur outside of the lecture theatres. Co-curricular activities, such as internships, volunteering, mentoring programs, research projects and studying abroad, play a vital role in assisting students to develop global networks, leadership skills, and inclusive perspectives. Moreover, these activities, which complement a student's academic studies, can significantly enhance their student experience and employability post-graduation.

Last year, The University of Queensland introduced a new program - the UQ Advantage Award - to encourage and recognise student participation in a wide range of co-curricular activities. The program, which is available to undergraduate students from all discipline areas, combines participation in experiential learning activities, with a tailored symposium series, designed to deepen students' understanding of key career development topics and stimulate greater interaction between students, alumni, and industry contacts. Students who complete program requirements receive an official statement of attainment that attests to their enriched communication skills, leadership potential, interpersonal skills and transferable skill set.

This paper will provide details of the design and structure of the new program and will discuss the benefits and challenges associated with its implementation. It will also outline how the new co-curricular program is supporting the achievement of key institutional priorities, including the internationalisation of the student experience, alumni and industry engagement, and enhancing the employability of graduates.

Key Words

student engagement, student experience, global citizenship, career development