



Finding your pathway to UQ

Empowered to thrive

A student's journey through UQ College's Tertiary Preparation Program

When Shieda Ballangarry, a proud Goreng Goreng and Gumbaynggirr woman, commenced the Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP) at UQ College, she was ready to take charge of her future.

And that she did. From the outset, Shieda was proactive in setting herself up for success. She made connections within UQ College and The University of Queensland's (UQ) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (ATSIS) Unit straight away, to tap into all the support available to her.

Shieda has now completed her TPP and has started a Bachelor of Arts at UQ. She hopes that her journey – which took a few twists and turns but ultimately led her to where she wants to be – inspires others considering their pathway options to university.

The spark that ignited an exciting future

"I've always been hands-on and creative," Shieda says.

"In high school, I chose subjects like sport, dance, and building – areas where I could shine through practical learning."

At the time, the traditional academic writing skills needed for university felt out of reach for Shieda.

But she wanted to explore all her options for life after high school.

A visit to UQ's Open Day sparked a turning point for her future.

"My mum encouraged me to go, just to explore options," she says.

"We met the amazing team at UQ College, and they introduced me to the TPP.

"They explained how the program would support me in developing academic writing and study skills.

"I signed up that day."

From the start, Shieda approached the program with an enthusiasm to learn.

"I was nervous, but also really excited," she says.

"I knew this was my chance to grow."

Making the most of opportunities

Shieda embraced every opportunity for support and growth. She worked closely with teachers, accessed one-on-one consultations and engaged with student advisers for referencing and assessment guidance. She also sought assistance from UQ College's Student Wellness Advisers to create a Student Access Plan, ensuring she had the right tools to succeed.

"I feel very confident going into university now," Shieda says.

"UQ College helped me build the foundation I needed, not just academically, but personally too.

"It was life changing and I really enjoyed studying there."

The ATSIS Unit also had a big positive impact on Shieda's study experience.

She benefitted from additional tutoring through the unit's Indigenous Tutorial Assistance and Retention (ITAR) program and culturally safe support services.

But the ATSIS Unit provided more than learning assistance to Shieda – they also gave her a welcoming connection to mob.

"Since I started at the university, I have met wonderful students through the ATSIS Unit," she says.

"It's a place where I feel safe, welcomed and where I belong."

Advice for Indigenous students considering pathways to university

"I would 100 per cent recommend the TPP – It's one of the best things I've done," Shieda says.

When it was time to move from the TPP to undergraduate study at UQ, the ATSIS Unit team were there to help ensure the transition was smooth.

"My experience with the ATSIS Unit has also been wonderful.

"All the staff were lovely, very friendly and supportive – they were always ready to give me a helping hand with my inquiries, applying for tutoring and the transition from UQ College to the university."

Shieda's story is a celebration of growth, self-belief, and the power of supportive education. Through UQ College's Tertiary Preparation Program and the dedicated support offered by the ATSIS Unit, Shieda has unlocked her potential and is now confidently shaping her future as she hits the ground running in her undergraduate studies.



Shieda Ballangarry at her UQ College graduation.

UQ College pathway options

Prepare for entry to university and achieve your study goals with UQ College's range of pathways programs.

Tertiary Preparation Program

This full-time (20-25 hours a week) 10-month pathway program empowers you to achieve a QTAC selection rank and meet subject prerequisites to help you get into university. It's taught at UQ's St Lucia campus and the next program start date is 16 February 2026.

Bridging Courses

Study a range of bridging courses face-to-face or online to meet subject prerequisites and fulfil the entry requirements for your university degree of choice.

We offer 4-week intensive face-to-face bridging courses in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematical Methods or Physics. These courses are taught at UQ's St Lucia campus from 24 November to 19 December.

Our online bridging courses allow you to meet a prerequisite for General Mathematics or Pure Mathematics (Mathematical Methods) from home. Study at your own pace and access support, including weekly check-ins with your teacher and optional consultations with UQ College Learning Advisers.

Scholarships

Scholarships and bursaries are available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Secure full funding or 50% reduction to fees for your bridging studies.

Explore our pathway programs at uqcollege.uq.edu.au/study-options



Your first step

Start your journey to UQ with UQ College.

Making the decision to go to university can be an emotional process. You may feel excited but nervous, especially if you need to take an alternate pathway to get there.

At UQ College, we have several study options to support you to achieve your dreams – whether it be our Tertiary Preparation Program to gain a selection rank or a bridging course to meet subject prerequisites.

As a UQ College student, you will already feel like you belong at UQ. Most of our courses are taught at the UQ St Lucia campus where you will always be connected to mob and culture with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit.

Find out more about UQ College at uqcollege.uq.edu.au