

Upgrading her career with postgrad study

A chat with Kelly Rae, who hails from the Baranbinja tribe of northern NSW, about going back to study to advance her career and enhance her practice.

Kelly completed her Master of Business Psychology at the end of 2025. And she's already seeing the impact of her learnings in her day-to-day work as a transformation specialist – a role she stepped into right after graduating.

With new strategies and boosted confidence, she's helping people in her organisation and community more effectively.

Plus, by branching out from pure psychology into business psychology, she's discovering career opportunities beyond the classic clinical settings.

We asked Kelly to shed some light on what it's like to return to study, including why she chose The University of Queensland (UQ) and her advice for future postgrads.

"There were quite a few subjects that had great a-ha moments during the semester because they filled a gap in something I had already applied. I felt like this was exactly the finesse I'd been looking for."

What inspired you to become a business psychology postgraduate?

Kelly: I enrolled in psychology with an interest to better understand people – and myself. I hadn't intended for it to be a career choice, but psychology content is applicable in so many ways that it permeated the lens I was using in the workplace without me even realising it until years later.

I was motivated to continue to postgrad study because I was working in organisational development and wanted to be 'technically' better at what I was delivering to really make impactful change.

What was your path to studying the Master of Business Psychology?

Kelly: Partway through my dual Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Science, I found I was really good at the psychology subjects over the science subjects. So, I wrapped up an extended major in psychology. I did this part time over a number of years around work and life. I continued on to complete an honours degree in psychology, as I worked in change management and organisational development.

"It was then a natural progression to complete a master's degree. As I'm already working in the field, I was pleased that choosing the Master of Business Psychology meant I could reduce my studies by a semester (no thesis) and obtain the technical knowledge I was seeking."



Kelly is a Master of Business Psychology graduate who hails from the Baranbinja tribe of northern NSW.

Why did you choose UQ for your master's degree?

Kelly: I completed my undergrad studies at UQ, it's a great campus, there are great lecturers who are really specialist in what they do, and UQ has a great reputation in the field of psychology.

How has the Master of Business Psychology helped you achieve your career goals and find success in your field?

Kelly: I loved that at the end of a semester, having learnt new skills, I could take those skills into my workplace and apply them. I feel this really helped embed some of the learning. It's been rewarding for me to be in a role where I get to work across a breadth of organisational development topics and projects.

What did your average day look like as a business psychology postgraduate student?

Kelly: I worked full time, so a day at the office, readings or group meetings, assignments on the weekends. Thankfully, this program offered some subjects in condensed form (i.e. a whole

For many students like Kelly, postgraduate study means thriving and advancing further in their current career. For others, it leads to transitioning into a new line of work.

Either way, UQ postgraduates experience an average pay rise of 33% within 3 years of graduating.

*Based on median salaries reported by domestic postgraduate coursework graduates employed full time and surveyed between 2023 and 2025 in the Graduate Outcomes Survey-Longitudinal by Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT).

day of lectures every 3 weeks), so some semesters were spaced out like that rather than a weekly evening lecture. It changed every semester depending on subject choice and class availability time.

And what does your average workday look like now?

Kelly: Gosh, I'm not sure there's such a thing as an average day! Teamwork, bouncing ideas, stakeholder engagement, research and design, balancing risks and cost...

"I'm a really curious person, so what I find most interesting is working on each new challenge like a puzzle that has pieces that go together and we work to get a good fit."

What advice would you give someone considering postgraduate study in business psychology?

Kelly: Know enough about yourself so you know what you need to balance life, work, study and social commitments – then put the things in place that you need to support yourself. I see many students over-commit and do themselves a disservice trying to keep everything going. Otherwise, just do it! If it's in your heart, the reward is already there.

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