I do hope that you will have time to take a look at the UQ Graduate School Year in Review for 2017. The success of graduate research education across the University arises from the contribution of PhD and MPhil candidates, their supervisors, and the academic and professional staff who support the Program. PhD education is undergoing considerable scrutiny at present, particularly in its purpose in an age of ‘Impact and Engagement’. The Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) Report provided insights into the state of PhD education in Australia and made a number of recommendations and observations. An implementation plan by the Commonwealth Government was released on December 22, 2017 (education.gov.au/review-australia-s-research-training-system). The activities and initiatives described in the Year in Review give me confidence that at UQ we are well-placed to address expectations and future challenges.

“The success of graduate research education across the University arises from the contribution of PhD and MPhil candidates, their supervisors and academic and professional staff who support the Program.”

Professor Alastair McEwan
Dean, UQ Graduate School
The 2016 Australian Graduate Survey Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire showed HDR students at UQ have a high level of overall satisfaction with 89% being satisfied with their experience at UQ. This was the highest percentage of all of the Group of Eight universities.

760 HDR completions in 2017.

4,241 HDR candidates as at December 2017.

96% satisfaction rating for Career Development Framework sessions.
Key statistics

This year saw significant evolution in Graduate Research Education at UQ. A range of policy changes were driven by external factors including the ACOLA and Watt reviews. In addition, the need to increase future employment options for graduate researchers has underpinned changes in the Graduate School to support career development and planning.

2013
1022 commencements
4361 enrolments
753 completions

2014
1046 commencements
4447 enrolments
829 completions

2015
1084 commencements
4540 enrolments
748 completions

2016
1033 commencements
4573 enrolments
822 completions

2017
953 commencements
4397 enrolments
760 completions

UQ’s HDR candidates come from 94 different countries

831 HDR candidates completed the research integrity module in 2017. That’s 76%
Dean’s Awards for Outstanding HDR Thesis

The Dean’s Awards for Outstanding Higher Degree by Research Thesis gives formal recognition to outstanding PhD and MPhil graduates who have been commended by their thesis examiners. All examiners are given the opportunity to nominate a candidate for the Dean’s award if they feel the standard of the thesis is exceptional and makes an outstanding contribution to the field of research.

Awards for Excellence in HDR Supervision

The Awards for Excellence in Higher Degree by Research Supervision were developed in 2000 following a proposal by the Student Union and the success of the Awards for Excellence in Teaching. In addition to the remunerated Awards, the Selection Committee can award commendations and recognise excellence in advising for emerging academic staff.

2017 winners

Professor Tom Baldock - Civil Engineering
Professor Elizabeth Ward - Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Professor Sara Dolnicar - Business
Professor Stuart Phinn - Earth and Environmental Sciences

2017 Early Career Advisor Award winners

Dr Fiona Barlow - Psychology
Associate Professor Jonathan Rhodes - Earth and Environmental Sciences
International engagement

International partnerships and agreements are becoming increasingly important as HDR candidates seek a global experience and help UQ deepen its research relationship with key partners.

Agreements signed in 2017

UQ has current HDR agreements with the eight institutions below. Three more are pending.

Collaborative PhD
- Southern University of Science & Technology (China)

Joint PhD
- Exeter (UK)*
- Copenhagen (Denmark)
- Tianjin University (China)
- Universidade Federal de Vicosa (Brazil)

Research exchange
- Emory (USA)
- Technical University of Munich (TUM) (Germany)
- University of Vienna (Austria)

*The first five UQ-based candidates in the UQ-Exeter Joint PhD Program have been selected and will commence in 2018. They are from Portugal (2) New Zealand (1), Fiji (1), and the UK (1).

Research exchange

In 2017 five students undertook research exchange at UQ. They were from Birmingham, Emory, TUM and University of Vienna. Outgoing research exchange numbers. Eight UQ students visited partner institutions including Exeter (4), TUM (2), Washington University in St Louis (1) and Nanyang Technological University (1).

Candidate Travel Award

The Candidate Travel Award (CTA) supports UQ HDR candidates to undertake approved research exchange programs at specific overseas partner institutions. Six CTAs have been awarded (three to Exeter, and one each to TUM, Washington University in St Louis and Nanyang Technological University).

Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI)

The Future Research Leaders Program is a result of the strategic aim of developing research collaboration between UQ and LIPI, Indonesia’s premier national research agency. It addresses the professional development needs of LIPI researchers enrolled in graduate programs at UQ.
What is the Global Change Scholars Program?

The Global Change Scholars Program is an initiative designed to produce research leaders. Graduates of the program will possess deep understanding of global trends, the challenges and opportunities they present, and an awareness of how to drive the changes necessary for us to build sustainable futures.

The Global Change Scholars Program provides a unique cohort experience for PhD students from across the University’s faculties and institutes. Through intensive, seminar-style lectures, a four-day retreat and an internship undertaken alongside students’ PhD studies, Global Change Scholars have the opportunity to explore the broader relevance of their own research in the context of global change.

Learning side-by-side with students from other disciplines, Global Change Scholars are exposed to the latest thinking on global change from internationally renowned academics as well as captains of industry, and political and societal leaders. Scholars regularly engage with well-recognised leaders in their fields who are passionate about global change issues.

In addition, scholars profile their research through public engagement, networking opportunities and through the media, including a dedicated scholars’ program on ABC Radio National’s Science Show with Robyn Williams.

Program overview

- Program duration: 18 months
- Program runs April to November (following year)
- Award: $5000 upon completion
- Time commitment: 2 - 3 hours / week on average
- Expressions of interest in February of each year.

Current program participants

There are 25 Global Change Scholars in the 2017 intake of the program. The Scholars are drawn from academic areas that include architecture, robotics, policy development, genomics, medicine and biomedical science.

View current program participants’ profiles: gci.uq.edu.au/gci-scholars-2017
Scholarships

A range of scholarships is available to assist Higher Degree by Research students offset the cost of study. Funded by government, industry, philanthropy or not-for-profit, scholarships are awarded following a competitive process.

Research Training Program and Scholarship rounds

The UQ Graduate School awards scholarships to domestic and international students - either an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship or a UQ funded scholarship. These provide a living allowance and a tuition fee offset. For international applicants, an allowance for single overseas student health cover is also included.

In the most recently completed scholarship round (round 1, 2017), out of 260 domestic nominations, 196 were successful. There were 235 international nominations with 134 successful. In comparison with round 1, 2016, domestic scholarship numbers remained the same. There has been a 21% increase in international scholarships awarded in round.

Strategic scholarships

In 2017 UQ Graduate School implemented a new strategic scheme for HDR scholarships, aiming to attract the best candidates and support UQ research initiatives. A new responsive mode approach targets exceptional domestic or international applicants who, for whatever reason, may have been unable to apply in the major scholarship rounds. This flexible approach allows UQ to continue to attract the best and brightest PhD candidates.

Using responsive mode the Graduate School has been able to offer support to staff awarded a category 1 research grant. Projects linked to the grants are advertised to prospective domestic HDR students, allowing application at any time of year.

The Graduate School also continues to work closely with external parties such as Westpac, Boeing and the Queensland Government on prestigious scholarship programs. This year saw another two candidates start under the UQ-Boeing PhD alliance, with a further two projects negotiated for 2018. Westpac future leaders have again recruited excellent UQ candidates, and four UQ students were awarded Advance Queensland PhD Stipends.

Philanthropic scholarships

Each year, philanthropic scholarships provide support for UQ’s best HDR students. In 2017, 30 philanthropic scholarships were awarded. Nineteen of these funded HDRs to undertake research-related travel, and the remaining 11 provided living scholarships.
The Graduate School works with 1,515 principal advisors and 39 Postgraduate Co-ordinators across UQ’s enrolling schools, institutes and faculties.

Supporting advisors and postgraduate co-ordinators

Support for HDR advising

In 2017, the Graduate School held a number of professional development sessions for advisors. Catering for the needs of beginning and experienced advisors, these sessions covered a broad range of topics including:

• Introduction to HDR advising at UQ;
• Research integrity in HDR training;
• Mental health strategies to support HDR candidates;
• Research advisor masterclass;
• Indigenous cultural awareness for HDR advisors; and
• Strategies for advising international candidates.

The Graduate School also supports Postgraduate Coordinators to attend the annual Go8 DDOGS Postgraduate Coordinator Workshop.

Postgraduate Coordinator Forums in 2017

Four PGC forums were held, each with a different focus.

Forum 1
• Admissions and scholarships
• International agreements, exchanges and joint degrees

Forum 2
• Career Development Scholarship Extension
• Individual Development Plan needs analysis

Forum 3
• HDR Candidate Charter
• Focus on candidate development

Forum 4
• Grievances and misconduct
• Managing difficult students

180 advisors completed the Supervising Doctoral Studies module in 2017
Career Development Framework

This year, in consultation with the HDR cohort, the CDF was reviewed, reworked and relaunched. With a new structure and a new website, the CDF continues to set the national benchmark for HDR development.

New approaches improve CDF

UQ aims to develop well-rounded and capable HDR graduates who understand their personal strengths and have gained the graduate attributes that link to building a career and contributing to society. UQ’s CDF provides candidates with a range of sessions and workshops, funding for career development activities, and career advice. A number of initiatives have been undertaken to improve the CDF this year.

The CDF is now mapped across the stages of candidature (early, mid, late) as well as the three main skills groups (professional, transferable, research), making it easier for candidates to access the sessions and workshops that are most relevant to their needs and interests at any point in time. The new CDF website reflects this structure, ensuring a consistent seamless user experience. The Graduate School has now also employed a dedicated HDR Careers Advisor.

New sessions in 2017

Eleven new sessions were added to the framework in 2017. The new sessions covered teaching and academia, publishing, communicating research and developing resilience.

Career Development Scholarship Extension

The introduction of the Career Development Scholarship Extension (CDSE) has encouraged participation in career development activities while removing the barrier of time constraints.

96% satisfaction rating for CDF sessions in 2017
Candidate Development Award
The Candidate Development Award (CDA) supports HDR students to develop their transferable, cross-disciplinary, and professional skills. A total of 105 CDAs were awarded, 65 in round 1 and 40 in round 2.

Session attendance
With over 60 sessions across 12 themes, candidates had plenty of choice when deciding which sessions to attend. Using the redesigned framework, candidates align sessions with candidature to best address training requirements. The Career Development Framework connects with other related activities across UQ and includes partnerships with UQ Library, student services, iLab, Idea Hub, and UniQuest.

Professional skills
Themes: Career planning, Entrepreneurship & commercialisation, Impact & influence, Publishing & authorship, University teaching

Sessions with highest attendance
1. Strategic networking (new in 2017)
2. Career control (online)
3. Introduction to getting published

Transferable skills
Themes: Candidature management, Communication, Working with others, Writing skills

Sessions with highest attendance
1. Cohesion, linking & flow
2. Turbocharge your writing
3. Academic writing course (8 weeks)

Research skills
Themes: Integrity & ethics, Research & analysis, Your thesis

Sessions with highest attendance
1. Writing a confirmation document
2. Qualitative Research Methods lecture - Professor David Silverman
3. Basic statistical ideas for researchers

Experiences
The CDF provides a wide range of experiences for HDR candidates. In some instances, funding is available to support participation.

Placements
The Graduate School has organised placements for 31 candidates in 2017. Placements were offered through partnerships with government, industry and the not-for-profit sector including:
- Department of Education (QLD)
- YMCA (QLD)
- VAXXAS (QLD)
- Tinder (USA)
- World Health Organisation (Fiji & Switzerland)
- Yarra Valley Water (Vic)
- National Parks & Wildlife (NSW)
- AstraZeneca (Sweden)

Wonder of Science
Wonder of Science is an outreach program that promotes a STEM culture in Queensland schools. In 2017, 53 HDR candidates became Young Science Ambassadors.
The reach of the 3MT competition continued to increase in 2017 with 600 institutions in 62 countries holding an event. The biggest growth has been in Africa where institutions in seven countries now participate.

The UQ 3MT Competition

While 3MT participation grows around the world, our own competition at UQ is also going strong. This year we worked with the Association of Postgraduate Students to run a concurrent event at the St Lucia campus. This event was well-attended and allowed the UQ 3MT Final to be enjoyed by a much larger group of people.

- In 2017, 253 students participated. This is an 18% increase since 2012.
- Science had the highest number of participants of any faculty.
- The school with the highest number of participants was SAFS, and the institute with the most competitors was IMB. Additionally, IMB has topped the institute list for the last 5 years.

The 2017 UQ 3MT Winner was Edwin Davis (pictured right) from the School of ITEE in the EAIT Faculty.

The Asia-Pacific Competition

The 2017 Asia-Pacific Competition was bigger this year than ever before with 55 universities participating. We were honoured to have Australia’s Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel, as a member of our judging panel at the final.

At the final, Dr Elizabeth Finkel announced that Cosmos magazine would prepare a story on each of the ten finalists plus an additional 15 competitors from the semi-finals. This exposure has been enthusiastically welcomed by the 25 recipients.

The 2017 winner of the Asia-Pacific 3MT Competition was Ashwin Charles Benedict from Universiti Malaysia Pahang. Ashwin also took out the People’s Choice award.

In 2017, 600 institutions in 62 countries held a 3MT competition.

3MT Globally

The seven African counties with institutions holding a 3MT are Algeria, Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. 3MT is best represented in USA where 189 institutions hold a competition. In the United Kingdom, 80 institutions participated.
Dr Alan Finkel, Australia’s Chief Scientist, judged the 2017 Asia-Pacific 3MT Competition.
Since its launch in January 2017, the my.UQ request portal has replaced paper forms and signatures for nearly all functions relating to progression of candidature.

When the my.UQ request portal went live in January, requests were progressed manually. Requests were moved from advisor to PGC, and then to the Graduate School for processing. In the following months, these processes were automated and the system began to run much more smoothly. At this point, turnaround time for handling of requests decreased dramatically. We thank staff and students across the university for their support during the roll out of this system.

The my.UQ candidature portal has been live for ten months. In that time, 8,500 requests have been initiated.

Attainment and extension of milestone are the most frequently requested functions. Processing time for these has decreased by 86% with handling time now averaging just two days.

The portal had a student satisfaction rating of 83% in July - before many of the current improvements were made.
Student partnerships

The Graduate School has worked with student groups including the UQUUnion Association of Postgraduate Students (UQU APS) to provide a number of events and activities over the year. The Graduate School is committed to working with students as partners in 2018 and beyond.

Science PhD Industry Networking Evening

Working with a group of HDR candidates led by AIBN’s Nick Hong Seng Lee, the Graduate School supported the Science PhD Industry Networking Evening. It was attended by HDR and postgraduate students from schools across UQ.

Student leaders forums

During the year, the Graduate School held two forums where student leaders from each enrolling unit came together to share ideas and provide feedback.

PhD Movie 1 & 2

The Graduate School supported UQUAPS to screen both PhD Movies, 1 and 2. These were both well attended and in addition to watching the movies, students were able to listen to guest speakers and network with colleagues from different research areas.

3MT event

Running alongside the UQ 3MT Final held at Customs House, the UQU APS 3MT event allowed a much larger number of students to be members of the audience and participate in voting for the People’s Choice winner. A carnival-like atmosphere was created and students enjoyed hot dogs, a donut stand, snow cones and drinks.

UQ Postgraduate Ball

With its sea-faring venue and pirate theme, the inaugural UQ Postgraduate Ball was bound to be a success. Attended by a large cohort of postgraduate coursework students, 50 HDR candidates and representatives from the Graduate School also attended.

2018

In the new year, the Graduate School hopes to continue its engagement with student groups, with particular focus on student-led research conferences and student leader forums.
UQ Graduate School

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