

# POSTGRAD

UQ STUDENTS

MID YEAR REPORT  
2025



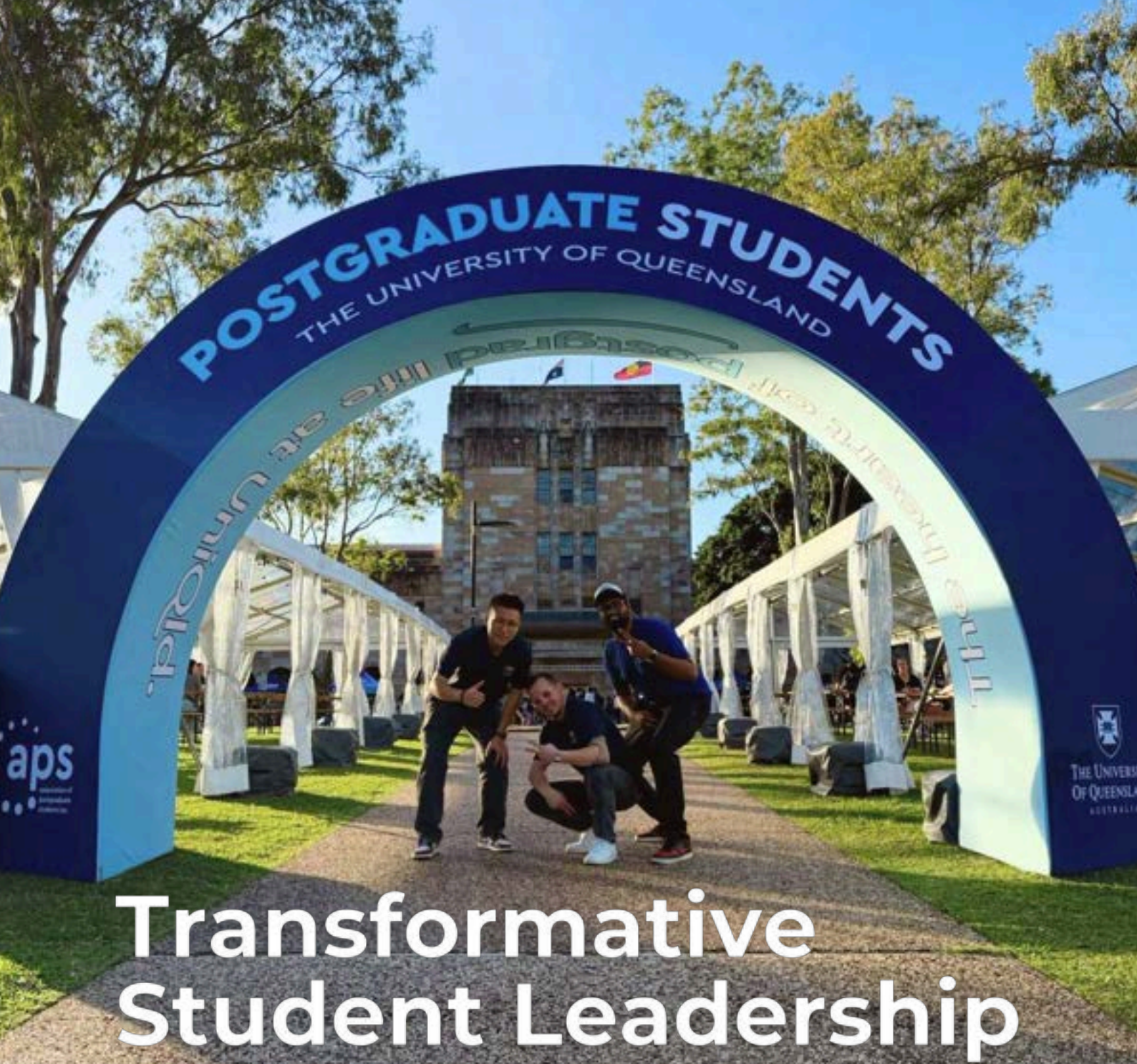




## FROM THE TEAM

---

In Semester 1, APS contributed to a vibrant and student-shaped postgraduate community at UQ. Through programmes, outreach, advocacy, and over 120 events, more than 17,000 students connected via coffee catch-ups, cultural celebrations, workshops, and wellbeing activities. From Gatton to Dutton Park, and from informal mixers to policy forums, APS initiatives created spaces where students could learn from one another, offer support, and form lasting networks. These are the building blocks of a student-led social infrastructure. Together, we are laying the groundwork for a postgraduate culture that is here to stay.



# Transformative Student Leadership

## Shaping a Culture of Change Makers

Throughout Semester 1, APS continued to deliver student-led initiatives that brought postgraduates together across campuses. These initiatives and programmes embodied the University's "Create Change" ethos by empowering students to exercise authentic leadership to enrich belonging, scholarship and advocacy at The University of Queensland. Transcending the conventional design of most student organisations, it is central to APS' organisational framework to showcase student ingenuity, and redefine what it means to learn, connect, and lead.

This means, rather than prescribing a catalogue of cookie-cutter events, APS invested in building student capability: offering opportunities for student leaders to convert their postgraduate experience and insights into impact.

This is because we do not see postgraduate students as passive vessels but active agents capable of co-constructing knowledge, contexts and their own identities through cycles of reflection, action, and adaptation.

At APS, we believe that student organisations and **student governments are grounded on the premise that students possess an intrinsic capacity to identify needs and imagine possibilities.** We honoured this through reallocating decision-making power so that our members could frame problems in their own terms and problem-solve solutions without predefined templates.

These are exemplified by several co-designed initiatives with our student leaders, treating the campus itself as a living curriculum. From puppy visits, mindfulness art and craft sessions, peer-experience sharing seminars, and vision board activities, the majority of APS' programmes emerged from collective sense-making sessions, where students mapped, brainstormed, and then enacted their unique ideas. This co-creation process aligned seamlessly with many agential learning theories' insistence that knowledge is inseparable from context and practice.

APS' design ethos resonates far beyond event attendance metrics; we wanted to ensure students who initially approached their university experience as 'passive recipients' have the opportunities to transform into 'active architects' of their postgraduate journey.

This student-led approach generated six domains for development: peer-driven belonging initiatives, wellbeing and mutual support systems, cultural practice and exchange programs, learning and academic communities, campus-connected experiences, and equity advocacy efforts. Each domain emerged organically from student needs and was only made possible by student commitment.

As we look toward the remainder of 2025, APS remains committed to cementing a student-centric design into our enrichment programmes at UQ. By scaling successful projects, learning from practices, and forging partnerships with the broader university community, APS intends to continue our commitment in empowering postgraduate leaders from 'students who attend' to 'practitioners who transform'. We look forward to enriching a postgraduate ecosystem where students can all become decisive agents of positive transformation.

- Richard Lee  
Chair, APS Board



CURIOSITY-LED STRATEGIC THINKING

# KEVIN



MASTER OF BUSINESS

CLASS OF 2025 (S2)

# KEVIN'S

## POSTGRAD JOURNEY

We often like to think of growth as a straight line. You work hard, you move forward. You put in the effort, you see the results. But anyone who's actually led - really led - knows it's never that simple. Leadership is not about clear skies and easy roads. It's about charting a course through resistance, through ambiguity, through the tangled web of human interests and expectations.

Now take Kevin, for example. During his time with APS, he didn't run from that complexity. He embraced it.

He's a postgrad majoring in Business Information Systems. **"What drew me to this field,"** he says, **"is the unique combination of business strategy and technology."** That's a good reason. A strong reason.

Kevin has a mind built for order. But instead of hiding behind screens and spreadsheets, he found himself drawn to something less predictable: people. Community. APS.

**"Through all the events that APS held last year,"** Kevin first encountered the organisation that would help reshape his uni experience. What started as attendance became inspiration. He put it plainly: **"I feel I could influence others by myself, and I wished I could do more for our postgrad students."**

That kind of thinking is the beginning of service. And in 2025, Kevin stepped up.

He helped coordinate the Dragon Boat Festival, a celebration full of tradition, colour, and, as one might expect, a fair bit of chaos.

**"We prepare a lot,"** he says. **"Everything starts from scratch. We design, we work, and we talk."** At one point, he even clashed with UQU about the choice of workshops. That happens. Disagreements are part of the process. No real leader escapes it. **"There was lots of drama,"** he says. **"But it is still good."**

**"I learned how to think several steps ahead,"** he said. **"This growth has made me more confident."** And that confidence, once earned, doesn't fade. It builds.

He also came to understand the importance of reflection. Of taking stock. **"I learned to do introspection and self-examination more,"** he said. **"To know my current situation and what step I need to take next."**

He changed up his daily routine. It grounded him. **"Pushed me to do more work and more study,"** he said. **"Makes me keep getting good marks."**

That's the reality for many postgrads, not just trying to pass the course, but trying to become someone worth being. Kevin is still on that road.

So are we all.

**STUDENT LEADER  
PROFILE**



APS created consistent, student-centred opportunities for postgrads to build meaningful relationships with one another. **Speed friending sessions** (17–18 Feb) helped students break the ice during a high-transition period. Creative activities like **Paint & Vibe** (20 Feb), **Art of Aroma** (1 May) and **Weluvusomatcha** (13 May) blended creativity with social interaction. **Penny University coffee catch-ups** (held regularly all year) offered an informal space for HDR students to exchange insights and reduce feelings of isolation common in research pathways.

Adventure-based events helped students form strong social bonds. Trips like **Kayaking at Kangaroo Point** (29 Mar), **Dreamworld Day Trip** (16 May), **Herston to Byron Bay Trip** (26 Apr), and the **Trail & Tide Hike** and beach day on the Gold Coast (23 Apr) allowed students to explore Queensland's natural and cultural offerings. These weren't just sightseeing opportunities, they gave international and domestic students alike some relief from academic pressure. **Indoor Rock Climbing** (10 May), **Herston Ice Skating** (17 May), and **Social Badminton Competition** (8 May) offered fun physical activities. Other activities like the **Brisbane City Tour** (1 Apr) and **Spot Check Skin Cancer Checks** (17 Mar) encouraged awareness, orientation, and health. These events were especially valuable for students new to Brisbane or Australia, offering opportunities to make friends, learn about their new environment.



APS supported a range of discipline-specific initiatives in Semester 1 that helped students connect within their academic fields. These included the **Institute HDR Networking Night** (23 May), **UQCCR x Mater Students Trivia Night** (5 June), **SBMS Trivia Night**, **Geology Student Sessions** (30 May), **MAppLing Workshops** (28 March, 23 May), **IMB Student Symposium** (11 July), **SLC HDR Symposium** (13 Feb), **QAAFI's Frame the Moment competition** (31 May), the **Public Health Employability Night** (31 March), and the **School of the Environment Bribie Island Conference** (31 March). APS supported medical student engagement by providing weekly fruit and coffee supplies to the St Lucia **Medical Learning Hub**, a significant grant for the **UQMS Med Revue** - bringing together students across all four years - and **social sport subsidies** for over 300 students.

Other offerings like **Pause with Paws**, the **Pancake Sizzle** (29 May), and the **Dutton Park Sweet Serenity Honey Pot Giveaway** (1 May), **Gatton Postgrad JUMPSTART Lunch** (21 Feb) used comfort and food to draw students in and remind them they weren't alone. **Exam support stalls** and trolley runs distributed to hundreds of students chocolate bars, biscuit packs, instant noodles, and coffee to help students recharge and feel supported during the exam period. Events like the **Menstrual Cramp Simulation** (12 May) and the **Anti-Domestic Violence Workshop** (14 May) introduced heavier but vital topics, providing educational insight and emotional solidarity in safe, respectful formats. Reflective, low-key events such as the **Vision Board Crafternoon** (15 Apr), **Create to Cope** (3 Jun), and **Affirmation Day** (6 Jun) created private moments for expression and emotional processing. APS provided repeated opportunities for postgrads to feel grounded in their academic journey and connected to peers with similar challenges.



ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE WITH COMPASSION

# VAIDENI



MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

CLASS OF 2025 (S1)

# VAIDEHI'S POSTGRAD JOURNEY

Vaidehi hadn't even heard of APS until halfway through her Master of Public Health at Herston.

**"APS wasn't very visible at the Herston campus then,"** she remembers. It was only when a classmate mentioned taking on a role that something shifted in her thinking. Leadership didn't have to be about titles or formal positions. It could be about creating the changes you wanted to see.

Her medical background had already taught her how health systems shape entire communities. Public health felt like the natural next step.

**"I wanted to be part of the solution, advocate for equity, empower voices often unheard, and design initiatives that bring real, measurable change."** At APS, she found a place where those values could take concrete form.

Herston students often felt disconnected from the broader UQ experience, so Vaidehi decided to change that. The Herston Cultural Night became her signature project. What started as an idea for better campus connection became something much deeper. Students shared cultural performances, brought food from their home countries, and worked together on arts and crafts. For many, it was the first time they felt genuinely seen on campus outside the classroom.

**"I saw students who had never engaged before coming out of their shells, smile, share their stories, and connect,"** Vaidehi says. **"For many, it was the first time they felt represented on campus."**

But representation, she learned, required more than just creating events. **"True representation isn't just about giving everyone a voice. It's about making sure each voice is heard in the way it needs to be."** This understanding shaped how she approached everything from planning meetings to designing support programmes.

Her proposal for **"Free Food Fridays"** captured this philosophy perfectly. **"It's not just about the meal; it's about being cared for,"** she explains. **"Sometimes, inclusion looks like policy, but often, it looks like a warm meal shared without conditions."**

The connection between her APS work and her studies became clearer over time. **"APS reminded me that impact happens in the spaces between policy and people,"** she reflects. **"It sharpened my focus on community-led solutions."**

At an R U OK? Day APS stall, when a student quietly told her, **"I really needed this today, thank you,"** Vaidehi understood that real leadership happens in these small, human moments.

**STUDENT LEADER  
PROFILE**



# Cultural Exchange

Cultural events like **Dragon Boat Festival** (28 May), Holi: Festival of Colours (14 Mar), **Nalvaravu** (24 Feb), **UGADI Festival** (17 Apr), and **Chai Par Cha** (21 Mar) were student-led celebrations that invited others to appreciate diversity. These events deepened understanding and created safe domains for students to feel seen and celebrated. The **International Food Festival** (7 May) stood out as one of the semester's larger gatherings, drawing students for food, lights, and cultural performances. It created a moment where an equal number of international and domestic students came together. **Graduate Taiwanese Students Bowling & Timezone Day** (13 April) promoted community building. Meanwhile, English language events, including the **Global Language Workshop** (28 Apr), **English Conversation Groups** (throughout the semester), and the "Learn Aussie Slang" session (16 May), equipped international students with both skill-building and confidence-boosting in a supportive, peer-led environment. **Reconciliation Day** (30 May) at Dutton Park used simple, accessible activities like a lavender giveaway to centre First Nations perspectives and invite ongoing awareness. APS took a proactive and inclusive approach to student wellbeing, embedding care into everyday campus life. **Puppy Pawsgrad events** (17 Feb, 10 Apr, 4 Jun), **Paws and Recharge** (29 May), and **Uni Mental Health Days (St Lucia, Herston, Dutton Park)** used animal therapy to attract students who may not otherwise engage with mental health support. Programs like **Crafts & Convo** and **Suitcase Rummage** (1 & 20 May), **Red Cross Human Race Fun Run** (19 Mar) offered alternative formats for creativity engagement. And, the **NAIDOC Week Free BBQ** (9 Jul), with its high turnout, ensured that even the final weeks of the academic cycle included purpose, community, and a platform for cultural awareness.

---

As the semester wrapped up, APS ensured that student efforts and milestones didn't go unnoticed. Celebrations like the **Masquerade Party** (27 Jun), the **Herston End-of-Semester Party** (26 Jun), and the **Gatton End-of-Semester Party** (18 Jun) allowed students to celebrate achievements and leave the semester with a sense of shared accomplishment. Mixers like the **HDR BBQ** (24 Feb), the **St Lucia Postgraduate Mixer** at Lakeside (25 Feb), the **Gatton Postgraduate Mixer** (27 Feb), **HASS Postrad Mixer** (19 Feb), and the **Science Postgraduate Mixer** (20 Mar) brought together students from across disciplines, strengthening the idea of a postgraduate community beyond faculty silos.

Events such as the **Postgrad Welcome Party** (28 Feb), **Postgrad Feature Movie Night** (28 Feb), **Postgrad Chill Zone & Food Trucks** (Connect Week) added a sense of celebration. APS also ensured that students at external campuses felt included, through events like the **Herston Coffee Catch-ups** (1 Apr) and **Herston Cultural Evening** (18 Mar). These helped ensure equity of experience. The **Ambassador Thanks** (5 Apr) and **Thank You Lunch** (22 May) celebrated student leadership. Additional peer connection events - like **Postgrad Buddies sessions** (9 May, 30 May), the **Keychain-making Workshop** (21 May), a **Bubble tea workstation** (2 Jun), and an **Affirmations crafternoon** (6 Jun), and **Wombats & Koalas Encounter** (27 Feb) - offered drop-in opportunities to meet others, catering especially to students who prefer gentle, creative engagement.



COLLABORATIVE DUTTON PARK PIONEER

# WENDY



DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

FRAZER INSTITUTE

# WENDY'S POSTGRAD JOURNEY

Wendy, a PhD candidate based at Dutton Park campus, is conducting vital research on skin cancer. Alongside her academics, she has naturally stepped into a leadership role through APS, where she applies her strengths to support the emerging student community. **"Since Dutton Park is a new campus, I hadn't heard of APS until I was recommended to be a student rep here,"** Wendy explains. **"We're still in the early stages of building a campus culture, but it's been exciting to be part of shaping that from the ground up!"**

Recognising the unique opportunity to shape an emerging campus culture, Wendy initiated student-centric events, including wellbeing check-ins, reconciliation activities, free skin checks aligned closely with her research expertise, and informal coffee chats. These initiatives have received overwhelmingly positive student feedback, validating their importance. **"Many students have said they feel the student amenities fees are finally being put to good use in ways that directly support them,"** she shares.



Wendy approaches student engagement with a focus on authenticity and care. "When a team member is unresponsive or holds a different opinion, I've found that open and active communication is key," she says, noting that these experiences have deepened her understanding of leadership and shared growth.

Looking ahead, Wendy is advocating for a dedicated **"Wellbeing Hub or Coffee Buddy system specifically for the Dutton Park campus."** She explains: **"Students here really love their (PACEmaker) coffee, but sometimes it's hard to find someone to share that moment with. Having a simple way to connect with friends, colleagues, or lab members over coffee could be a great way to support wellbeing, build community, and make campus life a little more enjoyable."**

Reflecting on her APS experience, Wendy emphasises how it has expanded her view of the role collaboration plays in achieving excellence. **"It's helped me see that success isn't just about individual achievement, but about contributing to a supportive environment where everyone can thrive,"** she notes.

By bridging her research and leadership, Wendy is helping lay the foundations for a campus culture that is collaborative, student-driven, and deeply connected.

**STUDENT LEADER  
PROFILE**



# Community Development

APS has partnered with Rosterfy, a global leader in volunteer management software, to launch a dedicated volunteering app for postgrad students involved with the APS Ambassador Programme.

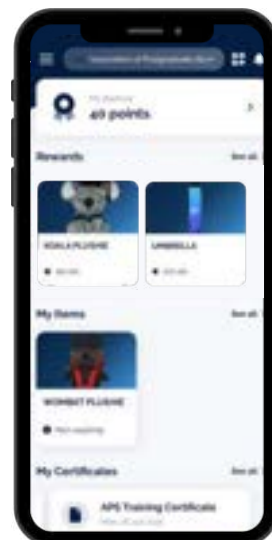
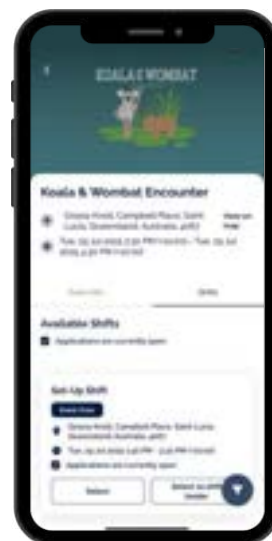
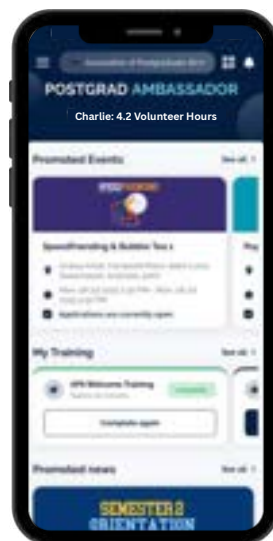


Through the portal, students can:

- View upcoming opportunities and shifts
- Complete training modules
- Receive live updates
- Track their volunteer hours
- Earn rewards
- Download certificates

Volunteer hours are recorded for easy use in the UQ Employability Award or on a resume. The app helps students volunteer flexibly, stay organised, and track their impact.

For APS, the app improves communication, ensures fairer access across campuses, and supports consistent coordination. It reflects a student-focused approach to volunteering that is flexible and easy to engage with.



# Postgraduate Bursaries

## Key Take Aways

- High approval and funding rates reflect strong demand for the programme.
- Strong international and HDR representation aligns with APS priorities.
- Broad faculty participation highlights the programme's cross-disciplinary value.
- Continued focus is needed to support students based outside St Lucia.

## Funding Summary

- \$40,773 was requested and \$25,756 was approved (63% approval).

## Approved Bursary Demographics

- 65% went to international students.
- 68% were PhD candidates.
- 79% were based at St Lucia.
- 47% supported conference attendance.

Applicants spanned a wide range of disciplines:

- Science – 17.5%
- HMBS – 24.5%
- Institutes – 17.7%
- HASS – 14.0%
- BEL – 14.0%
- EAIT – 12.3%

Students were supported to present at national and international conferences, including:

- MobiCom
- IUIS Congress
- IEEE PES General Meeting
- WWW Conference
- ACM WebConf
- ESHG Conference
- AIB Annual Meeting
- IEEE PES General Meeting
- IAMCR Conference
- EuroVis
- DOHaD World Congress
- WSV Conference
- PBM Conference
- ESOC Symposium
- WAAVP Conference
- ISB Symposium
- PACIS Conference
- ASM National Meeting
- AMSA Convention



BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH EMPATHY

# TENZIN



MASTER OF INTL ECONOMICS & FINANCE

CLASS OF 2026 (S1)

# TENZIN'S POSTGRAD JOURNEY

Her introduction to APS began casually, through campus visibility and conversations with a friend. **"I was seeing their event banners... I wanted to experience first-hand university experience at UQ,"** she recalls.

Soon, her involvement evolved into deeper engagement, driven by her desire to help fellow postgrads navigate similar challenges. **"I find it easy to relate to many of our APS ambassadors, most of whom are also navigating life far from home. This shared experience gives me a deeper understanding of the challenges they face."**

That understanding has been central to her experience with APS. Whether assisting newcomers or planning initiatives, Tenzin sees connection as something built over time. **"As someone who has had some leadership experience during my undergraduate studies, I felt equipped to take on the responsibility of guiding our ambassadors,"** she adds. Her ability to step into this role was about listening and supporting others in finding their place.

One highlight was organising a relaxed ambassador meet-up. Tenzin and her team crafted personalised thank-you notes. **"Ambassadors stayed after hours and shared how appreciated and comfortable they felt,"** she says,

**"It made me hopeful that the night helped reinforce that their role in APS is more than just volunteering, it's being part of a community that values and supports them."**

What stands out in Tenzin's journey is how much she's learned from working alongside fellow students. **"I began observing how each person worked best and adjusted my communication style accordingly,"** she says. **"I focused on finding a middle ground that respected everyone's strength."** For Tenzin, learning to recognise and work with difference has become part of her daily rhythm.

Looking ahead, she hopes to launch a **"Skill Swap Series,"** a casual initiative for students to share diverse talents in a peer-led environment. **"Many postgrad students come with diverse talents beyond academics,"** Tenzin explains. **"It encourages students to step into small leadership roles, fosters cross-cultural appreciation, and builds confidence in a low-pressure environment."**

Reflecting on her journey, Tenzin emphasises the importance of community: **"University isn't just about coursework, it's also about community, and learning how to work with people from all walks of life."**

**STUDENT LEADER  
PROFILE**

# POSTGRAD ORIENTATION SEM 2



## JULY

### O-WEEK

<b>21</b> MON	<b>BRISBANE CITY TOUR</b>	11.00 AM
	<b>POSTGRAD INFO DROP-IN</b>	12.00 PM
	<b>HASS ORIENTATION</b>	2.00 PM
	<b>HASS POSTGRAD MIXER</b>	3.00 PM

<b>22</b> TUE	<b>BRISBANE CITY TOUR</b>	11.00 AM
	<b>POSTGRAD INFO DROP-IN</b>	12.00 PM
	<b>HMBS ORIENTATION</b>	11.00 AM

<b>23</b> WED	<b>APS AT MARKET DAY</b>	10.00 AM
	Come check out APS - meet fellow postgrads, learn about our activities, & score some freebies!	

<b>24</b> THU	<b>BELFEST</b>	11.45 AM
	<b>GATTON SCIENCE EXPO</b>	12.00 PM
	<b>MPIP ORIENT. SESSION</b>	2.00 PM

<b>25</b> FRI	<b>SCIENCE/EAIT ORIENT.</b>	12.00 PM
	Get involved in opportunities tailored for Science and EAIT	

<b>26</b> SAT	<b>POSTGRAD JUMPSTART</b>	9.30 AM
	<b>MUSEUM TEA &amp; TOUR</b>	1.30 PM

<b>27</b> SUN	<b>ABSEILING CHALLENGE</b>	2.00 PM
	<b>CITY WELCOME DINNER</b>	5.00 PM

### CONNECT-WEEK

<b>28</b> MON	<b>PUPPY PAWSGRAD</b>	2.30 PM
	<b>SPEEDFRIENDING &amp; TEA</b>	2.30 PM
	<b>PIZZA NIGHT WELCOME</b>	5.00 PM

<b>29</b> TUE	<b>PHARMILY FAIR - PACE</b>	11.30 AM
	<b>SPEEDFRIENDING &amp; TEA</b>	2.30 PM
	<b>KOALA &amp; WOMBAT VISIT</b>	2.30 PM
	<b>GATTON MARKET DAY</b>	4.00 PM
	<b>UQxAPS WELCOME MIXER</b>	4.30 PM

<b>30</b> WED	<b>HERSTON WELCOME</b>	11.00 AM
	<b>PHD BBQ &amp; CHAT</b>	12.00 PM
	<b>DUTTON PARK MIXER</b>	1.00 PM
	<b>MOVIE NIGHT</b>	6.00 PM

<b>31</b> THU	<b>HDR COFFEE CATCH-UP</b>	1.00 PM
	<b>SOCIAL VOLLEYBALL</b>	3.00 PM
	<b>UQxAPS GATTON MIXER</b>	4.00 PM

<b>01</b> FRI	<b>CRAFTERNOON</b>	12.00 PM
	<b>HERSTON MIXER</b>	5.00 PM

<b>02</b> SAT	<b>RIVER KAYAK TRIP</b>	2.30 PM
	Afternoon on the Brisbane River, paddling past iconic landmarks	



The heart of postgrad life at UniQld.

FUNDED BY  
**SSAF**