

# From Surviving to Thriving: Navigating Postgraduate Studies in the School of Public Health





Scan the QR code to access an online copy of this handbook.

Alternatively, you can also access the handbook here:  
<https://public-health.uq.edu.au/current-students/orientation-guides>

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## Acknowledgement of Country

The School of Public Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which UQ operates. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and their descendants, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country. We recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society.

## How can I successfully navigate my first few weeks at university?



Congratulations on your decision to study as a postgraduate student at The University of Queensland's School of Public Health. We are delighted to welcome you!

As a postgraduate student, you have successfully navigated tertiary study in the past, however, this time your life might have changed significantly since you were an undergraduate student. Therefore, we hope this guide serves as a timely reminder of the things we know from our experience and the voluminous literature that contribute to the knowledge about how to successfully study at university. These practices and knowledge will ensure that you not only survive your postgraduate study – but you thrive!

To be successful, you need to consider your whole self (e.g. a holistic approach to success!). And remember – it's a marathon – not a sprint! [Appendix A](#) provides a useful checklist for navigating your first semester of study.

Use the first few weeks of university to get organised and settle into university life. Two events that are great to attend in your first week are **orientation** and **market day**.

### Orientation

The **School of Public Health Postgraduate Orientation** is held in O-week and will go over important information that you need in your first few weeks. This includes information about your program, how to access support services such as counselling, and academic services. You will also learn about student associations you can join as a postgraduate student.

For information about a whole range of **other excellent UQ orientation events and resources**, check out [this webpage](#). In particular, the [UQ Orientation Checklist](#) will let you know what you need before and during the O-week. We also highly recommend the ['Getting Started' workshops](#) to help you make a smooth transition to campus life.

### Market Day

Market Day is one of the most popular dates on the UQ calendar. Held on the Great Court at St Lucia in O-Week, there are over 200 stalls at Market Day where you can receive lots of free items, learn about and join loads of clubs, societies and sporting teams.

Attending Market Day and joining a club or society is one of the best ways to meet fellow students who share similar interests to you. It can also enhance your professional skills while completing your postgraduate studies – giving you an edge in your career!



## How can I feel more socially connected at university?

Feeling socially connected and having a sense of belonging at university are important ways to keep yourself engaged, motivated and connected during your studies at UQ. Fortunately, we have a whole range of events, experiences and programs to help you do just this!

### Opportunities for social connection across UQ

- **Check out the [UQ Life website](#)** to find out about a whole range of events happening around our campuses throughout the year.
- Learn about all the different ways you can **[Get Involved at UQ](#) through mentoring, volunteering or student representative opportunities**. These opportunities can be a great way for you to further develop your professional skills as you prepare for (or progress) your career in public health.
- **Join one or more UQ student clubs or societies**. Here at UQ we're proud to be home to 200+ affiliated clubs and societies, with over 35,000 students taking advantage of the chance to learn new skills and hang out with like-minded people. Attend Market Day at St Lucia during O-Week to learn more about the different clubs and societies, or you can [peruse and join online!](#) One society we highly recommend (for obvious reasons!), is the [UQ Public Health Association](#) (or PHA-UQ).

### Opportunities for social connection in the School of Public Health

Stay in the loop with what is going on in the School of Public Health (SPH), there are plenty of opportunities for you as an INTERNAL or EXTERNAL student.

- As highlighted on the previous page, the **School of Public Health Postgraduate Orientation event** (held during O-Week) is a great chance for you to meet your fellow students, Program Director, some of your course coordinators and key support personnel.
- Keep an eye on the **Public Health Postgraduate Student Community** page, found under 'My Organisations' in Blackboard. Here you'll find updates on upcoming events in the School of Public Health (both in person and online), as well as other important information.
- Each semester in Week 6, the **School of Public Health Postgraduate Student Check-In event** is held at the Herston campus. This is an informal morning or afternoon tea event, providing you with an opportunity to touch base with your peers and chat to key SPH staff involved in the delivery of your postgraduate studies.



### Tips for external students

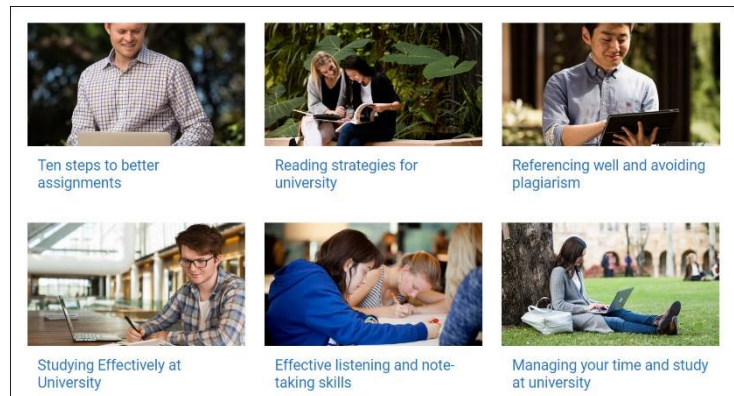
Feeling socially connected takes a little more effort when you are enrolled externally. Here are some tips for external students to be more involved in university life.

- The Public Health Postgraduate Student Community Blackboard page will update you on upcoming events in SPH both in person and online. **Online events** often give you access to industry professionals, academic staff and your fellow students to interact in real-time, so don't be shy, get involved!
- [UQ life online](#) is a fantastic resource for all things social, especially for external students. **Virtual Villages and Study Bubbles**, as well as access to social media connection opportunities.
- Don't hesitate to reach out to your program or course co-ordinator to arrange a phone or zoom meeting if you have specific questions or support needs you'd like to address one on one. The academic staff welcome you to connect in this way and enjoy the opportunity to engage with you.
- *If you are enrolled externally but live locally:* Feel free to attend any on-campus lectures or tutorials that are held for your current courses, even if it is just a one-off opportunity for you. The academic staff welcome you to connect in this way and enjoy seeing their external students pop in from time to time.

## Where can I go for more academic support?

### Student workshops

Student Services provide a range of workshops and sessions aimed at improving your academic skills. We highly recommend attending some (or all) of the excellent workshops early in the semester, to help you develop useful study skills that you can apply throughout your courses. You can find out more about study skills workshops (and many other types of workshops) [here](#).



### Learning Advisers

Learning advisers can help you develop the study skills you need for university. They can guide you to understand assessments and how to study effectively. Appointments work best one on one, but if you have a group assessment and want to discuss it together, you can bring your group to the appointment. **Important note:** Learning advisers are very popular! Make sure you book in very early to get an appointment. You can book an appointment with a learning adviser [here](#).

### Consider whether you require a Student Access Plan

Our Student Advisers assist students with a disability, mental health or medical condition, illness, injury or exceptional circumstances. If a condition or circumstance is impacting your ability to study, [make an appointment with an adviser](#) to create a plan and discuss the support available to you.

### Online training modules

The library offers a range of online modules that help students learn new skills. These self-paced modules are **especially useful for external students** who need flexibility. We highly recommend you take a look at the training modules available [here](#) – in particular, we strongly suggest you complete (at least) the **Digital Essentials, Advanced Literature Searching** and **EndNote** modules.

### Guide to literature reviews

[This guide](#) has been developed by a UQ Librarian and is a resource every student should look at for guidance on writing a literature review – even if you have completed one in the past!

### Access the Course Toolbox in your Learn.UQ Blackboard site



Within each of your courses on Blackboard, there is a folder called 'Course Toolbox' within your 'Learning Resources' folder. In this toolbox, you will find links to a range of additional resources that can support you to develop your academic skills – too many resources for us to fit on this page!



### Ask your course coordinator for help

If you need help, please don't hesitate to reach out to your Course Coordinators (or if relevant, the Program Director). They are here to support you. For internal students, that might mean staying back for a chat after class or making an appointment. If you are an external student, you might like to schedule a zoom meeting with the relevant person.

## What do I do if I need an assessment extension?

To apply for an extension to the due date for a piece of progressive assessment (eg assignments, oral presentations and computer based assignments) you should complete [this online request](#).

Information regarding deferral of mid-semester exams and end-of-semester exams is available [here](#).

If requesting an extension on medical grounds, a medical certificate must be provided. The extension will be approved for the number of days included in the medical certificate that the student was not fit to study or work, eg if the medical certificate is for 3 days, an extension will be approved for 3 days maximum regardless of the student's request.

If requesting an extension using a **Student Access Plan for Disability (SAPD)** as evidence, a maximum of 7-day extension will be approved in the first instance. Updated medical documentation, as well as a copy of the SAPD, is required if requesting an extension for more than 7 days.

You should read both the information in your [my.UQ](#) and read the SPH guidelines (below) **before submitting a request for an extension**. The SPH Guidelines apply to all courses offered by the School of Public Health unless the ECP explicitly states otherwise.



### SPH Guidelines for late submission of progressive assessment

*(NOTE: These guidelines do not relate to courses offered by other Schools. Always check your ECP for further guidance regarding extensions)*

The following would generally be considered acceptable grounds to approve an extension:

1. illness or a serious health problem (including immediate family);
2. serious personal or emotional trauma;
3. a sporting or cultural commitment at state, national or international representative level;
4. in very exceptional circumstances, an important planned family or social commitment or unavoidable work commitment (such as deployment as a member of the Australian Defence Force).

The following would generally be considered unacceptable grounds to approve an extension:

5. holiday arrangements, including for overseas travel;
6. misreading the course timetable;
7. social and leisure events, including sporting or cultural commitments (unless at state, national or international level);
8. carrying an overload of subjects;
9. work commitments

**All applications should be lodged at least 24 hours prior to the due date for the assessment.**

### What to do if you have not heard back about your extension?

If you would like to ask about the status of your extension, please email the Faculty of Medicine: [med.enquiries@uq.edu.au](mailto:med.enquiries@uq.edu.au)



## How can I make changes to my enrolment?

Enrolling is the process of registering the courses you intend to study for a semester. It is your responsibility to choose suitable courses and to enrol each semester.

With regard to enrolment, there are four important dates to be aware of:

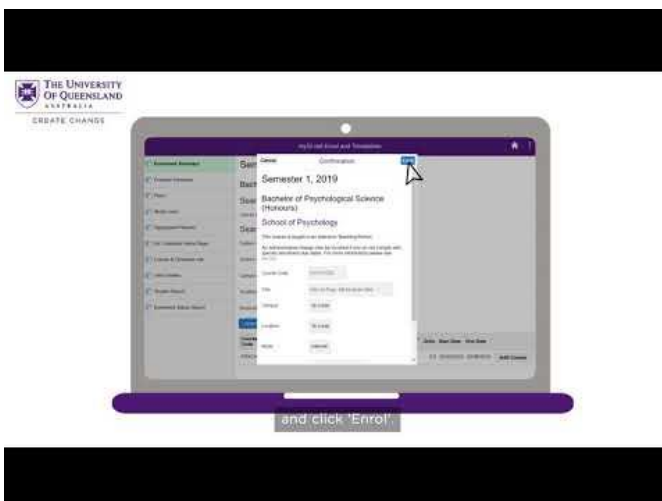
1. **Due date to enrol.** It is your responsibility to enrol in at least one course by this date. For Semester 1 and 2 there are different due dates to enrol for domestic and international students, so make sure you know the date that applies to you.
2. **Final date for addition or courses or alteration of enrolment.** This is at the end of Week 2 each semester.
3. **Census Date.** Course fees are non-refundable and you can't enrol in courses after Census Date, unless there are extraordinary or exceptional circumstances. It's also the last date you can apply for a HECS-HELP or FEE-HELP loan.
4. **Last date to withdraw from courses without academic penalty.** This is the last day you can withdraw from your studies with a grade of 'W' – Course cancelled without academic penalty. A 'W' won't affect your grade point average. If there are extraordinary or exceptional circumstances after this date, you may still be eligible to withdraw without academic penalty.

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE:** For guidance on **withdrawing from a course or program**, we highly recommend [accessing this website](#). This important information provides specific guidance to both domestic and international students.

**All changes to your enrolment can be made on mySI-net.**

To add or drop a course:

- 1) Login [my.UQ Dashboard](#) and then select 'mySI-net' from the side menu.
- 2) Click on enrolment
- 3) On the enrolment page, you can click on add or remove a course



Watch this brief video for a demonstration of how to manage your enrolments in mySI-net.

For more information on managing enrolments, please refer to [UQ's enrolment policy](#) or contact your Program Director.

## How can I balance study, work and life?

It can be challenging to balance study, work and life commitments. The following are some strategies that might help you in managing all your commitments:

### Tip #1: Plan your tasks and manage your time

During your studies, you'll have many competing priorities. Finding time to fit in study, assignments, work and personal time can take some juggling. Setting goals, planning your time, managing your assignments and overcoming procrastination can help you to get the most out of your day. [Check out this resource](#) for lots of excellent planning templates and tips on how to:

- plan your time effectively
- set goals
- manage your assignments, and
- overcome procrastination.

### Tip #2: Connect with the Postgraduate community

You are not alone. There are many postgraduate students who work full-time or part-time alongside studying. Connect with these students to share and reflect on strategies that help in balancing work, life and study. You could connect with students in your courses, or you can virtually connect with students by joining the [SPH LinkedIn page](#), or the [UQ Public Health Student Association](#).

### Tip #3: Build healthy habits

Ensure that you practice self-care strategies including:

- Going for short walks
- Practice mindfulness. UQ offers free mindfulness sessions, you can know more about the mindfulness sessions by clicking [here](#)
- Join an art for wellbeing session. This group provides a safe space in which to improve coping skills and promote well-being through the use of art. All materials are provided free of charge.
- Ensure that you are drinking enough water and eating multiple meals during the day. You can [learn more here](#) about tips for **healthy eating on a budget**.

### Tip #4: Set boundaries and work hours

You would want to set clear boundaries and expectations at the beginning of the semester. Let your employer know that you are studying and that you will be able to work certain hours during the week.

### Tip #5: Reflect on your journey

Reflecting weekly will help you gain a deeper understanding of how you are feeling and thinking. Keep a journal where you write your reflections. Have a de-brief with a close friend or a family member about your reflections.

### Tip #6: Ask for help when you need it

If life is getting stressful, seek help. Have a chat with your employer to reduce workload during assessments time. You could also arrange a meeting with the course coordinator to talk about concepts or discuss components of the course you are stressed about. Get in touch with your course coordinator and email them to arrange an online or face to face meeting.

If you feel stress is impacting your life, then you might need to arrange an appointment with your GP to discuss things further. You can book an appointment with the GPs at UQ St Lucia campus by clicking [here](#).

## Where can I go if I am experiencing a crisis or need support?

UQ offers a range of crisis support services for students.

**If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis, you can get help at any time of day or night.**

If you think you might harm yourself or someone else, seek help immediately. Don't try to manage on your own. It's important to find support as soon as possible. You can call:

- [Triple Zero \(000\)](#) off campus
- [Campus Security \(3365 3333\)](#) on campus
- [UQ Counselling and Crisis Line \(1300 851 998\)](#) (after hours) or TEXT (0488 884 115)

If you call 1300 851 998 outside business hours (before 8.30am and after 4.30pm Monday to Friday) or any time on the weekend or a public holiday, a trained counsellor will answer the phone and provide support.

**To make an urgent appointment with a UQ counsellor, call 1300 275 870 during Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm and ask for a crisis appointment.** Our trained concierge staff will answer the phone during business hours and assist you to connect to the right support.



## UQ offers a wide range of wellbeing and crisis support services:

### Access student counselling services

We offer a range of different counselling sessions to suit your needs, including one-on-one appointments, group sessions and online support. All current UQ students can access **10 free counselling sessions** each year. Our counsellors will listen without judgement, offer new perspectives and work with you on strategies that are right for you. This is a confidential service, which means anything that you say or do will be kept private and will not be shared with anyone. [Find out more information here](#) about counselling services and how to book an appointment.

### Make an appointment with a Student Adviser

Our team of Student Advisers can assist you with a wide range of professional and confidential services. Visit the [Student Advice and Welfare page](#) for further (confidential) information relating to matters such as:

- International Student Support
- Diversity, Disability and Inclusion support
- Financial Support
- Emergency Accommodation

### Access a whole range of health and wellbeing services

UQ provides a [range of programs and counseling services](#) to help improve your confidence and overall physical and mental wellbeing. We also have [numerous medical centres and clinics](#) across our campuses.

## How can I best prepare for my career in public health?

At UQ, we are committed to **enhancing your employability** in public health by helping you to develop the capabilities that will make you effective in whatever work you choose to do.

There are a range of experiences available at UQ to enrich your studies and develop your employability. Give yourself the edge for your future career by making the most of the opportunities available to you! These include:

### Apply for a UQ Employability Award



The [UQ Employability Award](#) is a structured program that recognises the personal and professional development you can gain from your involvement in activities above and beyond your academic studies. It is essentially a learning program that will guide you through a range of experiences and reflections to unlock your potential.

### Check out the UQ StudentHub



[UQ StudentHub](#) is an online employment service for local and international UQ students, employers and alumni who may be looking for training or job opportunities while studying at UQ. You will also be able to find information on upcoming events such as presentations by employers, training workshops, career fairs, career planning workshops and other career resources.

### Participate in a Student-Staff Partnership



The Student-Staff Partnership (SSP) program seeks to empower students and staff to collaborate as equal partners and mutual learners. Check out the different SSP projects advertised via the Student Hub and sign up to collaborate on a meaningful project and contribute to the continuous improvement of the UQ student experience.

### Consider undertaking a Research Experience Program



The summer and winter [Research Experience Programs](#) provide an opportunity for motivated UQ students to engage in an educational research experience. During the program, students will team up with some of the University's leading academics and researchers to participate in research-related activities for a selected project. In doing so, you will have the opportunity to progress and apply your degree-specific knowledge, whilst developing valuable research and professional capabilities to boost your employability.

### Contribute to your community through volunteering



Volunteering is an ideal way to build your skills and extend your professional and personal network while contributing to a worthy cause. UQ can assist you to [find volunteering opportunities](#) at UQ and link you with external organisations both within Australia and worldwide.

### Join a relevant Professional Association



Begin to develop your professional networks and to engage with your chosen field by joining a professional association, such as the [Public Health Association of Australia](#). Professional associations have heavily discounted membership fees for students and are a great source of information regarding employment and internship opportunities.

### Sign up to the UQ School of Public Health LinkedIn page



LinkedIn is a great platform for staying professionally connected. By signing up to the [UQ School of Public Health LinkedIn page](#), you will be inspired by stories of our graduates, hear about the latest job opportunities and read about new cutting-edge research in the health sciences.

## Appendix A: Checklist for navigating your first semester

### ON YOUR MARKS!

*From your Offer to Orientation Week.*

- Accept your offer
- Plan your study
- Enrol in your classes
- Log on to your student email
- Plan your Orientation
- Check your fees
- Get your student I.D.

### GET SET!

*Orientation Week*

- Attend orientation – make connections - meet other students – find your tribe!
- Join a social club
- Parking & Security
- Copying & Printing
- Get Connected (to Blackboard and the Wireless network)
- Organise any course materials e.g. Textbook purchase if required

### GO!

*Week 1*

- Important Dates – check the Electronic Course Profile on Blackboard for assessment dates and types
- Attend to your Academic Writing and referencing if required.
- Check your student email – and link to your personal email if it means that you will check it more regularly
- Understand Student Policies – e.g. Applying for assessment extensions/reasonable adjustments for disabilities
- Complete Academic Integrity module/s

### FIND YOUR RHYTHM!

*Weeks 2-10*

- Regularly attend lectures/tutorials/workshops - keeping up is one of the main keys to success!
- After weeks 4-6 you should receive feedback on your first assessment task - attend to academic referencing and writing if required. Consider taking an Endnote workshop.
- Attend networking events – find out where your degree can lead you!
- Exercise/eat well – look after your physical health
- Establish your work/life/study balance
- Look out for Census Week 6 – last chance to withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty**

### FINISH STRONG!

*Weeks 10 to 13*

- Final preparation for assessments (perhaps all due at the same time...)
- Mental preparation for final assessments/exams
- Seek out stress management tips
- Know how to defer exams or assignments if required

### CROSSING THE FINISH LINE!









*End of semester assessment and celebrations.*

- Exam results
- Career health check – still enrolled in the right degree?
- Leave from study
- Get some well-earned R&R. You deserve it!!



# HOW TO USE THE SEMESTER PLANNER

1. Make a note of any public holidays and when the mid-semester break occurs. Note that the mid-semester break is not given a teaching week number.
2. Note the due dates of assignments, tests and exams. Use these dates to “backwards plan” and decide when tasks need to be started and spread the workload out.
3. Get in touch with the Learning Advisers to upskill your assignment writing, reading and researching at [my.uq.edu.au/contact/student-life/how-learning-adviser-can-help](http://my.uq.edu.au/contact/student-life/how-learning-adviser-can-help).

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
WEEK 1							
WEEK 2							
WEEK 3							
WEEK 4							
WEEK 5							
WEEK 6							
WEEK 7							
WEEK 8							
WEEK 9							
WEEK 10							
WEEK 11							
WEEK 12							
WEEK 13							
SWOTVAC							
EXAM PERIOD							

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