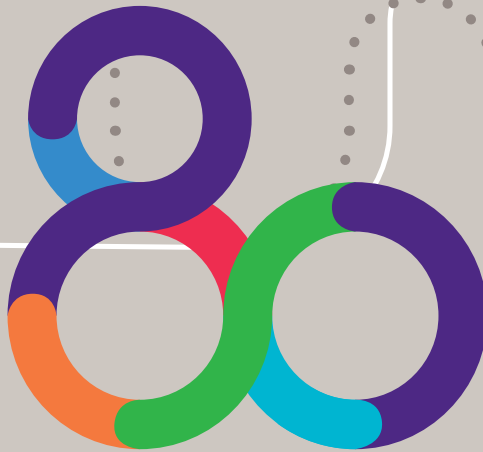




THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE



**Bridging past and future
Celebrating 80 years of
innovation and impact at
the School of Education**



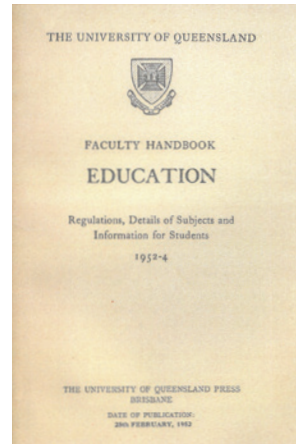
Source: Fryer Library University of Queensland Photograph Collection.

For 8 decades, UQ's School of Education has stood as a beacon of educational excellence, transforming lives and shaping Queensland's educational landscape through groundbreaking research, innovative teaching programs, and unwavering commitment to inclusive education.

Education was first introduced to UQ in 1937, with students studying in Old Government House in George Street, Brisbane. In 1945, the Department of Education was established at UQ. Today, the School stands as a comprehensive institution in the Social Sciences building at the St Lucia campus preparing thousands of educators and conducting world-class research. The School has consistently bridged the gap between educational theory and practice, past wisdom and future possibilities. This journey of innovation and impact reflects not only the evolution of education itself, but the School's enduring mission to connect knowledge with community, research with reality, and traditional excellence with transformative change.

The early days

Education courses were first offered at UQ in 1937 under the Board of Studies in Education, through the Faculty of Arts. These foundational years established the School's commitment to innovation, with 80 students enrolled between 1937-1943 pursuing the Diploma or Certificate in Education, that would transform Queensland's educational landscape. Most of these graduates would go on to be employed in State Schools (both primary and secondary).



Images (left to right)

Left: The building of the Forgan Smith Building began in 1937 and was finished in the 1940s. Photo of Noel McElnea in front of the Forgan Smith building in 1948. Source: Fryer Library University of Queensland Photograph Collection.

Right: Faculty of Education handbook, 1952-4 Source: University of Queensland Archives.

1945-1950s

Establishing the School of Education

The transformative decade of the 1940s brought formal recognition when the Department of Education was established in 1945, followed by faculty status with distinctive lilac colours in 1949. Most significantly, Professor Fred J. Schonell was appointed as the first Professor of Education in 1949, beginning a legacy of bridging research and practice that continues today.

Programs were expanded in the 1950s to include postgraduate programs: a Diploma in Education (for those seeking to qualify to teach in secondary schools), a Diploma in Educational Psychology, a Bachelor of Education and a Master of Education. Some of these programs could be taken externally, via correspondence. In the late 1950s, a Doctor of Philosophy was also offered. In 1959, more than 50 teachers graduated with a Diploma in Education.

The 1950s marked the School's emergence as a research leader with the opening of the Remedial Education Centre in 1952 and the launch of "The Slow Learning Child" journal in 1954, establishing UQ's pioneering role in connecting academic inquiry with real-world educational challenges in special education alongside traditional teacher training programs. The same year, a Certificate program was offered to train remedial teachers, and teachers of children with disabilities, in association with Bowen House (an Occupation Centre for training and teaching of children with an intellectual disability).

From the early years staff have engaged in research at the federal, state, school and individual student level. Projects in the 1950s included education of migrants' children, and the effect of the Queensland State Scholarship examination on curriculum and teaching methods.

The house at 38 Jordan St, Bowen Hills in Brisbane was converted in 1955 from a house to a school and became known as Bowen House. The school was attended by persons with an intellectual disability. Bowen House was closely associated with the Remedial Education Centre at The University of Queensland.

Here, students could take a Department of Education certificate course for the teaching and training of children with intellectual disability, developed by Professor Fred Schonell. The course ran from 1954–1972. The Foundation Principal of Bowen House was Thelma Sara McConnell.

Images (top to bottom)

Students on the ground-floor reading room of the Main Library in 1950. Source: Fryer Library University of Queensland Photograph Collection.

Bowen House Senior Block. Source: University of Queensland Archives [S185-11].



1960s–1970s

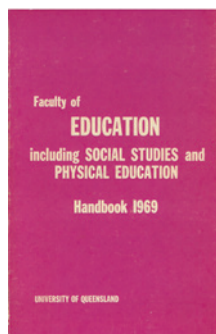
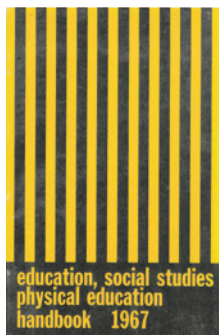
Innovation and specialisation – spanning new territories

These decades witnessed the School's remarkable growth in influence and scope, as it bridged emerging educational needs with groundbreaking solutions.

The 1960s saw Professor Schonell's transition to Vice-Chancellor (and subsequent knighthood in 1962), while the School expanded its postgraduate offerings and strengthened its research profile. The decade culminated with the Remedial Education Centre being renamed the Fred and Eleanor Schonell Educational Research Centre (FESERC) in 1968, cementing its status as a bridge between university research and community support.

The 1970s brought transformative change with Professor Betty Watts becoming UQ's fourth woman professor and first Professor of Special Education in 1974, alongside the launch of "The Aboriginal Child At School" journal in 1973.

The Faculty expanded to include Departments of Education, Physical Education, and Social Work, while FESERC published influential research. Towards the end of the 1970s, the journal, "The Slow Learning Child" published in the FESERC was renamed "The Exceptional Child".



Source: University of Queensland Archives.

Dr Graham Maxwell
Student 1961 (Dip Ed),
1962–1965 (BEd)
Staff member, 1972–2002
(PhD 1996), Senior Lecturer

"A lasting and vivid memory of my DipEd year 1961, when Prof Bassett was Head and Dean, was the inclusion of 'culturally broadening' activities such as art and music appreciation."

Prof G.W. (Bill) Bassett. Source: University of Queensland Archives [S135/N].



Emeritus Professor Bob Lingard
Student, 1973–1975 (BEdST)
Staff member, 1974–1975
Research Assistant, staff member,
1989–2003 (PhD, 1992)
Professor, staff member,
2008–2017, Professorial Fellow

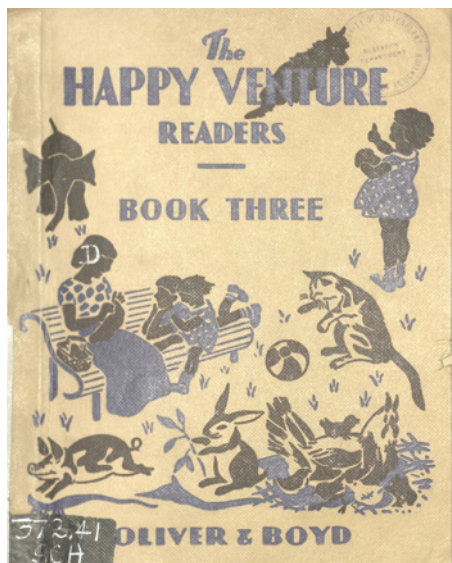
“In 1974 and 1975 I had the privilege of working in the School of Education as a Research Assistant to Professor Betty Watts, the fourth female Professor at UQ, on an Evaluation of the Aboriginal Secondary Grant Scheme for the Whitlam government, elected in December, 1972. We had an Advisory Committee chaired by the late Charles Perkins, the first very senior Indigenous federal public servant. We surveyed and interviewed principals, teachers and Aboriginal students across the entire nation.

For interviews with students and other Indigenous people, the other research assistants and I were at all times accompanied by an Indigenous person. Rita Huggins, mother of Professor Jackie Huggins, and Mary King, Aunty of Professor Tracey Bunda, were two of these women with whom I conducted interviews, along with a third Indigenous woman, Alice Stefan. This was an ethical stance in data collection long before universities had ethics committees and procedures. For me the entire experience was deeply educative; I learnt so much from conducting data collection and from working with and learning from these three wonderful and very intelligent open-hearted women, who had only primary schooling to Year 4 because of legislative restrictions on the schooling of Indigenous Australians when they were growing up.

The experience of visiting urban, rural and remote Indigenous communities was also salutary, deeply moving, indeed confronting and a visceral history lesson for me of the depredations of colonisation on Indigenous peoples and cultures. I always pondered about the federal monies committed to this research to the end of informing through evidence policy formation, when many Indigenous Australians at the time lived in deep poverty. A positive outcome, though, was that the Report of this research (*Access to Education: An Evaluation of the Aboriginal Secondary Scheme* (1976)) contributed to the strengthening of the grant scheme in so many ways.

Professor Watts was also able to win from the Whitlam government funding to establish the journal, *The Aboriginal Child at School*, which she edited 1975–1982 out of the Department of Education at UQ and which is fifty years old this year and has transmogrified into the *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, a more academically oriented journal, now produced out of The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit at The University of Queensland. Just as the Watts research was evidence for policy, *The Aboriginal Child at School* was predicted on the assumption of disseminating research on Indigenous schooling for teachers across the nation.

Prior to the *Access to Education* Report, Professor Watts had completed a report for the Northern Territory government in 1973 on Indigenous schooling. Across the 1970s, Professor Watts of the School of Education made a significant and profound contribution to improving schooling for young Indigenous Australians and to opening up this important domain for research.”



Images (clockwise from top)

Social Sciences Building St Lucia. Source: Fryer Library University of Queensland Photograph Collection.

Supporting students in reading Schonell Remedial Education Centre 1969. Source: Fred and Eleanor Schonell Education Research Centre Records [UQ FL683].

Happy Venture Readers (Books I-IV) (Schonell, F.J., & Sargeant, F.I. 1958) started in 1939 in the United Kingdom and were used in Australian schools after Prof Fred Schonell's arrival in Australia in 1949. They were prescribed in Queensland and were used extensively in Western Australia and used as supplementary readers in the other states in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Source: Copy held in The University of Queensland Library, Call Number PE1119.S35 1958.



Janetta Hargreaves
BA (UQ, 1976) Grad Dip Ed
(UQ, 1978)

"I undertook a Graduate Diploma in Education at The University of Queensland in 1978, after having been awarded a Bachelor of Arts in English and History from there in 1976. Jill Borthwick taught me English curriculum studies, Russ Cowie, History. Helen Yeates, who had also taught me English at Ipswich Girls' Grammar School, lectured me in Cultural Studies, and Ron Wilkes attempted to explain Standard Deviation to me through the Evaluation in Education course. My practicums were spent at Ipswich State High School, under the inspiring mentorship of Ray McGuire. I continue to be convinced that teaching is indeed, 'the lighting of a fire' (Yeats), 'the most powerful weapon ... to change the world' (Mandela). I am grateful to the School of Education at The University of Queensland for having equipped me for this vital task."



Images (top to bottom)

Students in the Schonell Centre, Department of Education's Certificate in Diagnostic Testing and Remedial Teaching Term 2 1967.

Certificate Students' Graduation Photo 1960s taken on stairs in Student Union Bldg. Source: Fred and Eleanor Schonell Educational Research Centre Records [UQ FL683].

1980s–1990s

Consolidation and modernisation

These decades focused on consolidating research excellence while adapting to changing educational landscapes and linking traditional approaches with modern innovations.

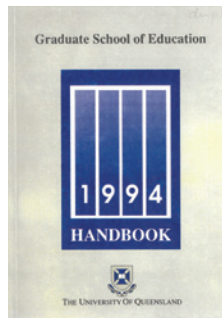
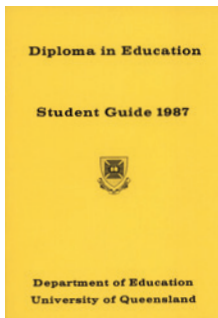
The 1980s saw Professor John Elkins appointed as Professor of Special Education and Director of FESERC in 1985.

During the 80s, the UQ Department of Education's teaching spanned both pre-service and in-service professional development. Many other students also undertook education subjects as part of an Arts degree, or enrolled in the Bachelor of Education Studies and the Master of Education Studies with interests other than teaching. Members of the Department of Education were involved in 2 main statutory bodies and their committees – Board of Teacher Education and Board of Secondary School Studies.

International recognition grew with the journal “The Exceptional Child” becoming the “International Journal of Disability, Development, and Education” in 1989.

The 1990s brought structural transformation with the Department of Education renamed the Graduate School of Education in 1994, focusing entirely on postgraduate programs and bridging theory with practice through enhanced field placements.

New programs like the Graduate Certificate in Education for university teachers emerged, while the School pioneered distance education through external studies. The decade concluded with geographic expansion through the opening of the School of Education at Ipswich in 1999, offering innovative dual degrees in Middle Years of Schooling that connected multiple disciplines with teacher preparation.



Source: University of Queensland Archives.

Emeritus Professor Nan Bahr
Student 1996-1998
(MEd (Research) 1998),
staff member and Course
Designer (BEd) 1998-2000,
Director of Teacher Education
2000-2009 (PhD 2000)

“The programs for the [Ipswich] campus were also considered to be at the cutting edge of online integrated pedagogies.”



1984, Grad Dip Ed, Teaching and Learning Processes Tutorial in the Social Sciences Annexe (Bldg 31A).
Source: Prof Rhonda Faragher.

Pam Tupe **Professional staff, 1988–2007**

“I started work in the Fred and Eleanor Schonell Special Education Research Centre as a clerk-typist in 1988, and later became secretary to the Director of the Centre when Sannie Pritchard changed to part time work prior to her retirement. After a restructure within the School of Education I was relocated to the role of Finance and Resources Officer for the School from 2003-2007, when I left UQ. Before working in the Research Centre, I had been employed in the Schools of Economics and then Psychology. What a different environment I walked into at the Schonell Centre! We were made to feel a part of the research centre and were not “just a typist” – Sannie and I were given opportunities to develop our existing skills to fit with the particular needs within the research centre as well as the standard requirements. The Director at the time was Professor John Elkins, followed by Adrian Ashman and Christa van Kraayenoord.

They all helped create and develop the ethos of the centre. The breadth of areas of research at the Centre was impressive, and being a small part of it was an experience that was unique and something that I’m very grateful I had the opportunity to be there.”

Prof Adrian Ashman in his office Level 6, Social Sciences building (1990s).
Source: Fred and Eleanor Schonell Educational Research Centre records [UQ FL683].



Dr Warren Beasley
Ass. Prof., 1979–2005

Dr James Butler
Ass. Prof., 1976–2004

“The DoFE Project that had the most profound impact on the education of children in our time at UQ, was the **Philippines-Australia Project in Basic Education (PROBE) 1996–2000**.

We secured and led this project. This project was the highlight of our teacher education careers at UQ. It's where we believe we achieved the most for the enriched education of children on a very large scale. This project was a striking example of the magnificent educational good that can be achieved for teachers and students when Impactful Goals are funded with matching Financial Resources and conducted by Inspirational Staff!

The essential goal of PROBE funded by AusAID (\$35M), was to improve basic education in English, Mathematics and Science at the elementary and lower secondary levels in five remote Regions in the Philippines.

Six hundred Inservice Teacher Fellows received training in the School of Education on The University of Queensland campus during 1997/98.

Four Groups of 150 teacher Fellows, were on the UQ campus for 2 months each and were given intensive in-service training. Central to the design of this systemic reform effort was the establishment by the returning teacher fellows of one hundred and fifty teacher support units throughout the five remote regions of the Philippines. These teacher support units, staffed by teachers returning from the UQ DoFE, provided professional development for more than nine hundred schools with ten thousand teachers and one million students benefiting.

UQ School of Education staff provided the intellectual leadership for this project in Australia and with follow up in-service activities in the Philippines. Two independent evaluations funded by AusAID resulted in an extension of PROBE until July 2003. The model of professional development introduced though PROBE have now been institutionalised in the five Regions of the Philippines Department of Education.”

Philippines-Australia Project in Basic Education, Graduate School of Education, UQ, Spring course October–November 1997. Source: Dr James Butler.





International collaboration: New Zealand researchers Anne Bray, John Pankhurst and Fay Pankhurst visiting the Schonell Centre in the 1980s. The Pankhursts co-authored a report of a survey of special education in New Zealand with Prof John Elkins in 1987. Dr Anne Bray and the Pankhursts are pictured with research staff from the Schonell Centre. Source: Fred and Eleanor Schonell Educational Research Centre records [UQ FL683].

Sannie Pritchard **Professional staff, 1980–2003**

“I started working as a clerk/typist at the Fred and Eleanor Special Education Research Centre in November 1980 where Betty Watts was the first Professor of Special Education. When I started Mary Grigg had been the secretary for many years and after she retired, I became secretary for two years, however, my skills were better utilised working with the journal *The Exceptional Child*. We were by now using computers and I experimented with formatting. The result was that, for 10 years, I formatted every issue of the journal before printing it on the required paper from which UQ Press could print and distribute.

Over the years one of my tasks became collecting all publications of Schonell Centre academics, researchers and students. These had to be prepared for inclusion in the annual University of Queensland Report. Due to government requirements this task became more onerous as time went on. At some stage I was told to also collect publications of all authors in the School of Education which meant liaising with a greater number of staff and students.

By the time I retired in September 2003 I was still working with the journal, now called the *International Journal for Disability Development and Education* and published by Carfax in the UK. The Bibliographic Record of both the School of Education and Schonell Centre, as described above, continued to be one of the tasks required of me even though I had been working part time since April 1994.”



Source: School of Education

Thanh Le PhD, 2010–2015, Vietnam

“Being a PhD student at UQ’s School of Education was a real privilege and great honour in my academic life. I obtained not only knowledge and research skills but also warmth and kindness.”



2000s to present Contemporary excellence and future vision

The new millennium has demonstrated the School’s remarkable ability to bridge traditional excellence with future-focused innovation, maintaining its legacy while adapting to contemporary challenges and opportunities.

The Graduate School of Education became the School of Education in 2001, introducing comprehensive undergraduate dual degrees alongside its postgraduate strengths.

While the historic FESERC closed in 2005 after more than 50 years of groundbreaking research, its legacy continued through integrated special education programs.

In the 2010’s, the School launched innovative initial teacher education programs, the Master of Teaching (Primary) and Master of Teaching (Secondary).

These programs allow students with prior undergraduate degrees to transform their knowledge via coursework and professional placements to become teachers. The 2010’s also saw program redevelopment to accommodate national education reforms.

The 2020s have brought restructured programs responding to contemporary needs, and most recently, participation in the Department of Education’s Turn to Teaching internship program that bridges academic preparation with authentic classroom experience.

Today, as the School celebrates 8 decades of bridging past wisdom with future possibilities, it offers comprehensive programs from specialised Bachelor of Education degrees to doctoral research, continuing to connect educational theory with transformative practice while preparing educators for tomorrow’s challenges and opportunities.



Images (clockwise from top left)

Academic and Professional staff November 2010.

Assoc Prof Obaid Hamid (5/7/2010–present) and his current and former PhD students presenting a symposium at the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) Congress 2024 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (11–16 August 2024).

Academic and Professional staff 2020. Source: School of Education.

Our impact

The School of Education has established itself as a cornerstone of educational excellence, evolving from its historical foundations to become a dynamic institution that shapes the future of education.

Today, the School offers a comprehensive suite of 11 coursework programs, and enrolls many research students. We welcome students from across Australia and internationally, while maintaining strong connections with alumni.

We have a strong commitment to representing diversity in education. Our staff represent this diversity; 73% of academic staff are female and 6% of all staff in the School are Indigenous, one of the highest representations of Indigenous staff at UQ.

The School is committed to embedding Indigenous perspectives in teaching and research, with work continuing via the Indigenous Engagement Committee.

Our influence extends far beyond campus. Staff continue the tradition of leadership, serving on national and state government boards, holding key positions in professional associations, and contributing to academic discourse through editorial roles on prestigious journals.

Deirdre White Professional Staff 2004-2020

"I can in all honesty say that my time at the School of Education was a lovely experience. The staff, academic and professional, were terrific and respect flowed in both directions. I got to know so many of the research students during that time. I would like to think that my friendships with the International PhD students helped to make their time at UQ a little less stressful. Meeting up in the lunchroom and chatting with students and academics was enjoyable especially when Tony Wright was talking about his science experiments.

During this period there were many physical changes to spaces in the School. Teaching spaces on Level 3, the Staff Room on Level 4, the Meeting Room and the RHD student areas on Level 6 were all improved and brought into the 21st Century. I would like to acknowledge the work that Ady Boreham who was the EA to the Head of School and School Manager did to ensure that this work was carried out.

I left UQ in December 2020 at the end of COVID-19 which was a very stressful time for everyone."

Many graduates have advanced to leadership positions at universities and institutions worldwide, carrying forward the School's values and expertise.

Through ongoing professional development opportunities, community partnerships, and collaborative research endeavours, the School of Education remains committed to advancing educational practice and policy.

As it builds on decades of achievement, the School continues to serve as a vital bridge between academic excellence and real-world educational impact, ensuring its legacy of influence will endure for generations to come.

Images (top to bottom)

Academic and Professional staff 2025.

MTeach Graduates 2015. Source: School of Education.

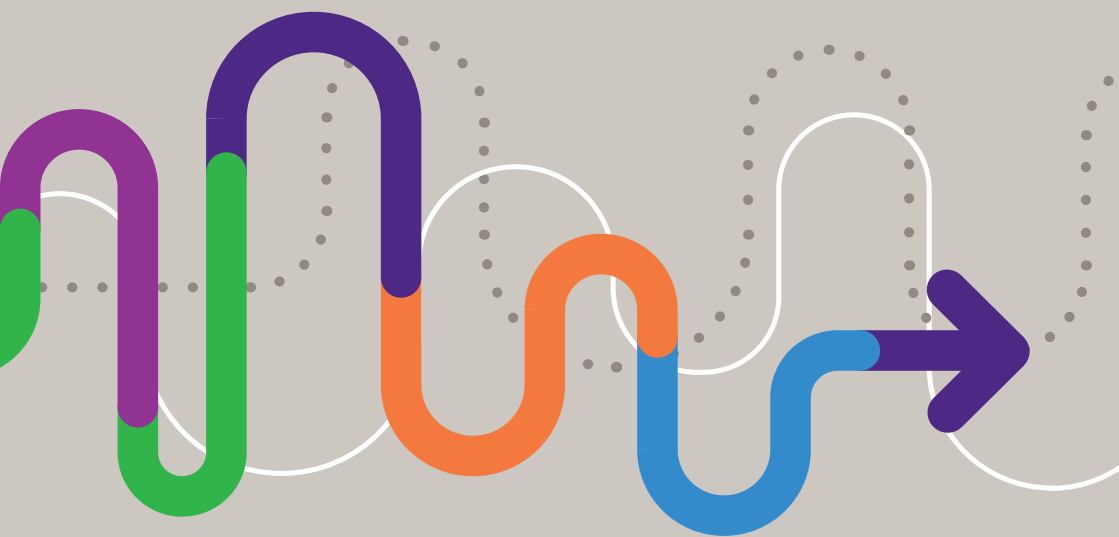




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