

Young Achievers Program

2021 Annual Report





Enabling bright futures

The Young Achievers Program supports the tertiary study and career aspirations of senior secondary school students from disadvantaged backgrounds by engaging and mentoring them throughout their academic journey and beyond.

The Young Achievers Program contributes to building a culture of university participation within selected secondary schools, and has a positive impact on the families and local communities of the students involved.

An important goal of the program is to help students understand their civic responsibility in a learning environment. For this reason, Young Achievers are required to serve as role models and volunteers within their schools and communities.

Young Achievers are identified by their school principals as ATAR-eligible students with the potential to succeed at university. Since 2009, 1304 Young Achievers have participated in the program. Eleven cohorts of students have completed secondary school and almost 318 students are now working towards a university qualification.

UQ values the achievements of Young Achievers and the contributions of volunteer mentors in the pursuit of their personal and professional success.

Raising the bar, changing the game

The Young Achievers Program offers a valuable support framework, designed to enable participants to reach their tertiary goals.

Welcome to our new students

In 2021, a group of 110 highly motivated Year 10 students from 61 state secondary schools in Brisbane, Ipswich, Darling Downs, Capricorn, Wide Bay-Burnett, South West Queensland and other regions were selected to join the program. Of these, 53 percent were attending a school in a regional or remote area of Queensland, 47 percent indicated they would be the first in their family to go to university and 6 percent identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

In October, we formally welcomed the new Young Achievers and their families, and together celebrated the many achievements of our graduating Year 12 students. These events, which were attended by school principals and guidance officers, were an opportunity to recognise the leadership potential and the many accomplishments of the Young Achievers.

University experience

Each year, Young Achievers attend a residential camp held at a UQ residential college on the St Lucia campus. These experiences present a wonderful opportunity for students to become familiar with the university environment, establish supportive social networks and learn more about the range of post-school study options that will best complement their future career ambitions.

Mentoring

Mentoring is critical to the success of the program. During the past 12 months, 44 passionate and highly enthusiastic UQ students – many of whom were past Young Achievers themselves – generously volunteered their time to serve as role models for the students in the program. These mentors are a valuable source of information, encouragement and friendship for younger students, staying in touch with them throughout their senior school years and helping them to stay on track to achieve their goals.



Hayley Simmons
Year 12
Bundaberg State High School

The Young Achievers Program has been such a valuable experience so far, I have made great friendships and learnt beneficial information. The program has made me feel more confident about going to university, as I have been given valuable insight as to what it is like, and many of the services and opportunities that are available. The mentors are amazing, they are friendly, relatable and give advice from experience. Through the Making A Difference Challenge we have the opportunity to make a positive difference in our community, practising the YAPttributes and gaining valuable skills. I am proud to be a YAPper.

The program has attracted growing interest among UQ students, who recognise it as an opportunity to give back to the UQ community while enhancing their leadership, employability and communication skills.

Access and support

Young Achievers are eligible to receive five adjustment factors to help them secure a place in their preferred UQ program. As well, the students receive transition support to assist with making the move from high school to university. Financial assistance offered throughout the program helps to ease the financial stress on families. In their senior years of schooling, Young Achievers receive an annual bursary of \$1000, and students who transition to UQ on completion of Year 12 receive an annual scholarship to the value of \$7000 a year, for up to four years.

Social and community impact

Making a Difference (MAD) Challenges

The Making a Difference (MAD) Challenges that Young Achievers undertake as part of the program have significant impacts not only in their schools but also in their local communities.

The most inspired MAD Challenges for 2021 came from three Young Achievers whose positive impact benefitted students, parents and community members alike.

MAD Challenge for the environment

Shae Keith

Keppock State High School

Beautiful one day, perfect the next – that's the message that Shae took on when she made a difference in cleaning up the beautiful beaches of Bundaberg. The beach is like her second home and with many beaches surrounding the region, she wanted to give the beaches the spotlight they deserve. Shae is very passionate about the environment and had great pleasure in doing her bit to remove rubbish on the shore. She made a difference in the community, and the environment too and now spending time on the beach is enjoyable for not only herself, but for others too.

MAD Challenge at school

Zane Benstead

Beaudesert State High School

Zane spent his MAD Challenge providing multiple mathematics tutoring groups around the school for the junior students in years 7 and 8. He chose to help in this way as when he was in junior levels at school as he wished something like this was available for him, and it is for this reason he feels that he has made a difference to these students. This challenge taught Zane that by making small contributions can help people achieve very realistic goals in school.

MAD Challenge in the local community

Khalid Abdela

Glenala State High School

Khalid volunteered to help at the local community centre on Sundays and was involved in multiple activities such as singing, reading and writing. Doing this each week and helping people from different backgrounds and ages helped them with their English skills and improve their confidence in the community. Through this MAD Challenge, she was able to make a difference by connecting with her local community during and after the struggles of the pandemic and this helped her have the patience and a positive attitude towards others.

Continuous mentoring

In 2021, the 12th cohort of student mentors included half who were previous program participants. This demonstrates that past students are continuing to give back to others by sharing their experiences and inspiring those still at school. Additionally, two UQ students who completed two years as a volunteers student mentors are now undertaking the role of senior mentors. This type of continued involvement demonstrates the positive impact the program has on the UQ students involved with mentoring Young Achievers.



Lara Borg
Year 12
Bremer State High School

The Young Achievers Program has been an amazing experience. I have gained experiences and memories that I will cherish throughout the rest of my schooling and into my new adventure that awaits me. I have benefitted in multiple different ways throughout my Young Achievers journey, this may be through support, financially, physically, or mentally. Throughout my year 11 and 12 journey alongside the Young Achievers, the program has taught me that your dreams can come true, you just have to put your mind to it. Since being selected into the program, I have been dedicated to each and every subject that I take consistently doing my best to ensure I can succeed in the best way possible! Thank you to every individual within the Young Achievers that has believed in me throughout all my struggles and my successes.

Success at school

The Young Achievers Program aims to support and inspire students during their senior years.

Valuable family support

Information evenings held throughout 2021 were greatly valued as an opportunity for families to seek more specific advice about university pathways, application processes, accommodation options and support services at UQ.

The popularity of UQ Open Day continued, with more than 300 people attending the online event in 2021. Open Day is the biggest annual event on UQ's calendar and is often the first time many Young Achiever families have had an opportunity to visit a university campus, whether virtually or in person.

WRIT1999 - Effective Thinking and Writing

In 2021, the Young Achievers Program continued to offer a bursary to attend WRIT1999, a summer intensive course offered at UQ St Lucia to students commencing Year 12. The course aims to help students who demonstrate high academic achievement to improve their critical thinking and writing skills. Young Achievers were invited to participate from selected schools located close to the St Lucia campus, with 14 students taking up the opportunity.

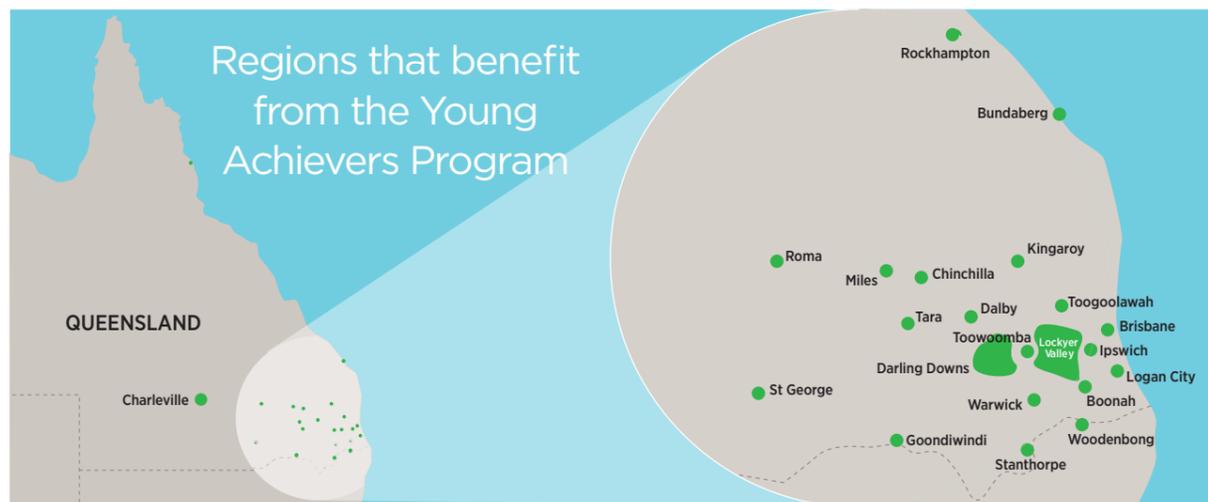


On-campus experiences

In January, 230 Young Achievers took part in the annual residential experience at the St Lucia campus. The students were highly motivated and eager to expand their knowledge, demonstrating a wholehearted commitment to the program.

Creating community spirit

The Young Achievers enthusiastically embraced the community-service ethos of the program, volunteering their time to undertake an impressive list of 'Making a Difference' (MAD) Challenges. The students demonstrated a great sense of civic responsibility by supporting projects in important areas such as the environment, community and youth development, education, animal welfare, health, sport and the arts.



Hannah Marino

Young Achiever Program alumnus

Graduated from a Bachelor of Business Management (Marketing) at The University of Queensland

I grew up in a country town where university study was not very heard of. My mum was forced to leave school after Year 10 to help her family on their farm. She had always told me that she wanted me to have a better life than she did and wanted me to grow, learn and make something of myself. This stuck with me, and in turn I was very ambitious, putting in 100% as I wanted to make my mum proud.

I wanted to go to university, but many barriers stood in my way. I applied for YAP in year 10, hoping it could help me overcome my barriers. When I was accepted, I remember screaming with joy as my Mum and I opened the letter together.

The program helped me through school, during university and has continued to support me after graduation as I now have a position in the YAP team. I couldn't be more honoured to be a part of the team and make an impact on students' life, as it did mine. I am excited to provide support and even add my personal touch to the program using my first-hand experience as a mentee.

YAP benefits to high school students



On-campus experiences



Valuable family support



WRIT1999 Effective Thinking and Writing



Five adjustment factors to assist with entry to UQ



\$1000 annual bursary in Year 11 and 12



Two years of mentoring support by UQ students

YAP benefits to UQ students



Accommodation support



\$7000 per year for up to four years



Workshops and events



Networking opportunities



Ongoing YAP staff support



Ellie Billsborough

Young Achiever Program mentor and scholarship recipient

Fourth-year Bachelor of Education (Primary) student

I was always sure that I wanted to go to Uni while I was completing my senior years of school, however, the YAP personally raised my aspirations in attending UQ. Not only were we able to see the campus/residential colleges and meet current Uni students (mentors), the scholarship (at school and UQ), but also reduced my financial burden on my parents who were supporting me at the time. Knowing that I had financial support from the YAP also gave me time to relax into Uni and get to know the routine/lifestyle without having to work straight away to cover any other life costs.

I gained so much personal confidence from being in the YAP (as a mentee and mentor). It was so unbelievably helpful to meet and mingle with so many like-minded students and with 'real-life' mentors who used to be in our shoes not too long ago. The way that the residential camps connected people on such a creative, relaxed and fun manor really made the transition from school to Uni so much easier and less scary coming from a small town to the big city. I could always look back at things that I learnt from YAP and the experiences that I had if I ever needed too and felt way more confident in my capacity to be a Uni student. For example through knowing about timetables and different Uni classes.

I think there is always some doubt when starting a new journey, and especially for me as I wasn't 100% sure what I wanted to study, but through YAP I definitely felt prepared in my capacity as a Uni student. Particularly how Uni works, what it looks like, where I could stay and what I might need to do.

You can always achieve anything that you put your mind too! I received so much support from my peers and mentors in the YAP and it truly was the confidence boost and encouragement I needed to make it through year 12 especially and start at Uni.



Continuing success at UQ

Support during university

The Young Achievers Program continues to partner with UQ Student Services to help support students in their transition to university. Hosting catch-ups and events for Young Achievers at UQ ensures that students receive access to support programs and activities on offer through the University.

Accommodation partners

In partnership with donors, UQ residential colleges and local student providers, the program has continued to support students to overcome some of the challenges involved in transitioning from high school to university. In 2021, 31 Young Achievers students needing to relocate benefitted from accommodation grants and scholarships.

Bowness Family Foundation scholarships

Four Young Achievers, Jettison Bell (Rosedale State High School), Braydan Bielefeld (Bundaberg North State High School), Juliana Evangelista (Kingaroy State High School) and Amy Heath (Roma State College), were selected for the prestigious Bowness Family Foundation award based on their outstanding academic achievement, demonstrated service leadership and commitment to upholding the values of the program.

Celebrating success

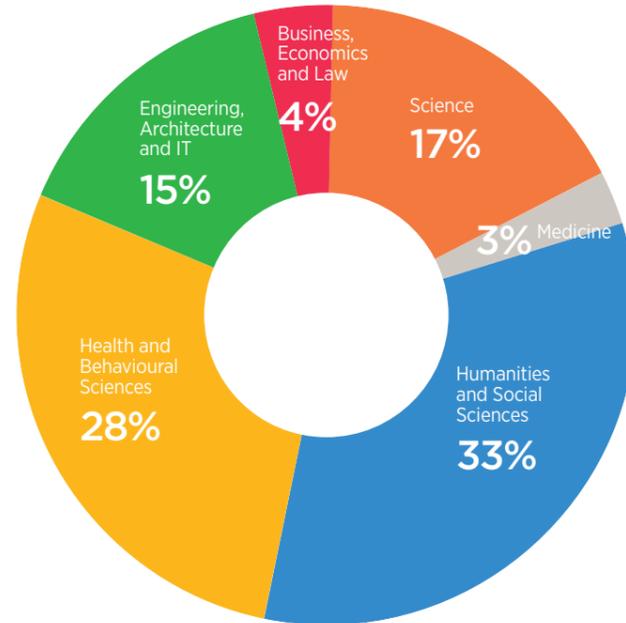
116 students completed Year 12 in 2021

111 applied to a tertiary institution

100 accepted an offer from a tertiary institution

81 accepted an offer to study at UQ

YOUNG ACHIEVERS PROGRAM
STUDENT ENROLMENTS BY FACULTY IN 2022



Young Achievers Program students who commenced at UQ in 2021

99% completed first year
4.5 average GPA

\$7000
annual scholarship for Young Achiever students at UQ

Success beyond university

TOP POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMS that Young Achievers are studying at UQ:

- Medicine
- Publishing
- Nursing
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Architecture
- Writing / Editing
- Physiotherapy



40 graduates in 2021

225 graduates since 2009



Justin M'Mangwa
Currently working as a Youth Worker in Brisbane
Bachelor of Journalism (2019)

Going to University had always been a goal of mine. I grew up in a family with little money. No one in my family had ever had the chance to attend university prior. We all viewed university as a way to better my life and contribute to overcoming poverty in my family.

I decided I wanted to study Journalism because of my interest in working with different people and hearing their stories. I wanted to help others and broaden my worldview by speaking with people in the community.

After graduation, I had to have an honest conversation with myself to truly unveil what it was I wanted to do and find the real reason I wanted to become a journalist in the first place. I realised the main reason was to meet different people, hear their stories, and help. This realisation led me to my career as a Youth Worker. I have been in the role for over a year and have recently stepped up as a Senior Youth Worker.

As a Senior Youth Worker, I am working closely with young people from different backgrounds with unique stories and enjoy mentoring them to become independent in the world.

In the future, I would love the opportunity to travel the world and meet with people all over, hear their story and help out. Being in the program opened my mind and showed me that there is a big world out there with a lot of possibilities. Don't be afraid to be open-minded and willing to educate yourself to grow.



Louise Butler
Currently working as Outreach Program Officer at The University of Queensland
Bachelor of Health, Sport and Physical Education (Honours) (2018)

There are no words to describe the positive impact the Young Achievers Program has had on my life. Growing up in a low income household from Stanthorpe it was hard for me to even give University a thought. After receiving acceptance into the program I had no idea how much my life was about to change. The camps were a great introduction to University life where I gained confidence navigating my way around and could not only picture myself studying at UQ but also living there. The staff and mentors who ran the camps were amazing! Such nice, friendly people who were incredibly supportive and encouraging. They were a familiar face I could always turn to making it feel like a home away from home. With their help and the financial support from the program I was brave and made the decision to relocate to Brisbane and start my Bachelor's degree.

Throughout my degree I was excited about becoming a mentor for the program. I loved helping others who were in the same boat as myself and sharing my knowledge to make a positive impact on their lives. I have now graduated and am still continuing to help students break down perceived barriers they may have about University. Working full time for the UQ Outreach Program has allowed me to go back and work in schools to help raise student's tertiary aspirations from low socio-economic backgrounds. I love my job and am forever grateful to the Young Achievers Program for the support, knowledge and guidance I needed to kick start my career.



Your support ensures success

Students are the driving force behind everything UQ does, and we are committed to providing them with the opportunities to pursue education and succeed.

We aim to continue to attract the best students – regardless of their background or ability to pay for education – and prepare them to become leaders who create change to advance our community.

Scholarships are a lifeline for these students, particularly as they navigate their first year of university in an unfamiliar city, often hours away from the place they call home.

Philanthropic support provides students with opportunities to learn and flourish, through work-integrated learning, undergraduate research and international study.

Together, we can empower and support students to reach their potential.

Contact Advancement and Community Engagement for more information on how to support this life-changing work.

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