

Diversity Gender and Equity in Practice

SEPTEMBER 2025

Introduction

CQUniversity is deeply committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and diverse environment where all students can thrive. The university diligently tracks student success metrics by cohort type to identify emerging disparities and to inform strategic improvements. The university collects detailed data on student demographics through the application and enrolment process, ensuring that key equity groups, such as gender, Indigenous status, socio-economic background, and disability, are accurately represented. This data is then analysed through the DataSmart platform, which allows for comprehensive tracking of student success metrics, including attrition, retention, and completion rates.

This data not only aids in internal evaluation but is also reported to the Australian Government, ensuring transparency and accountability. By analysing this information, CQUniversity can refine its strategies to better support underrepresented student groups and to close equity gaps. The university's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion are underpinned by targeted programs and initiatives aimed at enhancing student experiences and outcomes, ensuring that all learners, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to succeed.

The data is reported to the Australian Government and is publicly available through the links below. To explore CQUniversity's results, click on a link below, select the type of information to explore on the left-hand side of the screen, then search for CQUniversity:

- Cohort analysis- completion rates
- Attrition, retention and success rates
- Equity performance data
- More information is available on the Department of Education website.

Diversity at CQUniversity

CQUniversity prides itself as being one of Australia’s most inclusive universities. As a leading regional university in Australia, CQU is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive community where students from all walks of life can succeed. Our student body is a rich reflection of this commitment, drawing individuals from various backgrounds, cultures, and experiences.

In 2024, the university's student cohort was made up of the following:

- 59% female- 11.8% were females in a non-traditional areas
- 6.22% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island origin
- 20% were from a non-English speaking background
- 7.9% identified as living with a disability
- 49% were the first in their family to attend university
- 36% from low socio-economic status

This diverse composition is not only celebrated but actively supported through strategic programs and initiatives designed to enhance access, retention, and success for all students. Through its inclusive approach, CQUniversity strives to ensure that every student, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to thrive in their academic journey.

The following data tables present the percentage of students who have identified as belonging to one or more relevant student equity groups. This information, collected and analysed through our internal DataSmart system, is continuously tracked and monitored. It plays a crucial role in shaping strategies aimed at enhancing the student experience, while also improving retention and completion rates for the diverse cohorts of learners at CQUniversity. These insights allow us to make informed decisions that support our commitment to fostering equity and inclusion across the university.

<i>Student Equity Group (%)</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2025</i>
<i>Yes</i>	86.19	87.73	88.55	88.96
<i>No</i>	13.81	12.27	11.45	11.04

Table 1.1 – Students who are part of a student equity group by year

<i>Socio-Economic Status (%)</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2025</i>
<i>Low SES</i>	38.36	38.69	39.48	39.17
<i>Not Low SES</i>	61.54	61.17	59.96	60.83

Table 1.2- Percentage of students that are low socioeconomic by year

<i>Non-English Speaking Background</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2025</i>
<i>Yes</i>	5.46	6.29	6.97	7.1
<i>No</i>	94.43	93.61	93.03	92.9

Table 1.3- Percentage of students that are from non-English speaking background by year

<i>Regional or Remote</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2025</i>
<i>Yes</i>	68.87	69.93	70.75	70.55
<i>No</i>	30.8	29.74	28.56	28.31

Table 1.4- Percentage of students that live in regional or remote areas by year

Gender Diversity

Tracking gender and equity diversity at CQUniversity is crucial for ensuring that our institution promotes an inclusive and equitable environment for all students. In 2024, female students accounted for 63% of the total student population, reflecting strong overall representation. However, there is a notable decline in female completions, with women representing 63% of the completion rate, indicating the need for further support to improve retention and success.

Additionally, women in non-traditional areas, such as STEM fields, comprised only 8.02% in 2024, down from 8.67% in 2022. This trend highlights the importance of targeted initiatives to encourage and support female students in traditionally male-dominated areas. Promoting gender equity in all fields is essential for fostering a more diverse and dynamic learning environment at CQUniversity.

<i>Student cohort by Gender</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Female- all</i>	13453	13207	13233	13272	61
<i>Male- all</i>	7683	7986	8153	8322	39
<i>Female- commencing</i>	6354	5994	5910	6024*	60
<i>Male- commencing</i>	3991	4142	3971	4315*	40
<i>Female- completion</i>	2792	2686	3063	1404*	63
<i>Male- completion</i>	1381	1383	1794	1040*	37

Table 2.1- Number of female vs male students per year, and percentage of most recent year

*incomplete year of data

<i>Women in Non-Traditional Areas (%)</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2025</i>
<i>Yes</i>	8.67	8.54	8.02	7.91
<i>Not applicable</i>	30.35	29.29	28.51	28.74
<i>No</i>	60.75	61.76	63.05	63.01

Table 2.2- Percentage of female students in non-traditional areas by year

CQUniversity is actively working to increase female participation in non-traditional fields, such as STEM, through a range of targeted programs and initiatives. Programs like the Women in STEM Ambassador Program and STEM Girls provide mentorship, hands-on learning experiences, and networking opportunities to encourage more women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Additionally, initiatives such as scholarships for women in engineering and coding workshops aim to break down barriers and create supportive pathways for female students in these fields. By fostering an inclusive culture and providing resources for success, CQUniversity is committed to closing the gender gap and empowering women to thrive in traditionally male-dominated disciplines.

Despite the challenges in certain areas, the overall success rates for female students are higher than those for their male counterparts. These statistics demonstrate that CQUniversity's efforts to support female students are yielding results, particularly in terms of overall participation and academic success.

Moving forward, CQUniversity remains dedicated to addressing the gender disparities that persist, particularly in STEM fields. By promoting gender equity and providing tailored support to female students, the university aims to empower women to succeed across all disciplines, contributing to a more diverse and inclusive academic community.

<i>Success (%)</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Indeterminate /Intersex/ Unspecified</i>	<i>Male</i>
<i>2024</i>	88.01	74.03	84.99
<i>2023</i>	86.09	79.12	82.93
<i>2022</i>	83.96	77.71	80.79
<i>2021</i>	84.54	74.03	83.52

Table 2.3- Unit of study pass rate for domestic bachelor students by gender by year

First Nations

In 2024, Indigenous students represented 5.34% of the total student population, compared with 6.33% in 2023. While this reflects a slight decrease in enrolment share, there has been a substantial reduction in the proportion of students choosing not to disclose their Indigenous status, falling from 6.45% in 2022 to just 1.17% in 2025. This trend indicates growing confidence among students in identifying as First Nations, reflecting CQUniversity’s ongoing commitment to recognition and cultural safety.

	(%)	2022	2023	2024	2025
<i>Indigenous</i>		6.45	5.67	6.33	5.34
<i>Non-Indigenous</i>		53.05	57.49	60.32	49.22
<i>Not specified</i>		39.46	35.43	31.6	44.27
<i>Prefer not to answer</i>		6.45	5.67	1.75	1.17

Table 3.1- Percentage of students identified as indigenous by year

Retention outcomes show encouraging progress. Re-enrolment rates for Indigenous students increased from 67.46% in 2021 to 73.56% in 2025, with 2025 data showing a higher proportion of Indigenous students continuing their studies from Term 1 to Term 2 than their non-Indigenous peers (73.56% vs 68.68%). This suggests that support services, tailored programs, and the University’s inclusive culture are contributing to stronger continuity of study for First Nations students.

Success rates, measured by the proportion of units passed, remain a key focus area. In 2024, the pass rate for Indigenous students was 75.39%, compared with 86.5% for non-Indigenous students. Although a gap persists, the positive trajectory is clear: the Indigenous pass rate has risen from 68.37% in 2021 to 74.38% in 2025, improving at a faster rate than non-Indigenous students. This demonstrates that targeted interventions and academic support are having impact, while highlighting the importance of continued investment to further close the gap.

<i>Re-Enrolment (%)</i>	<i>Indigenous</i>	<i>Non-Indigenous</i>
<i>2025 (T1 to T2)</i>	73.56	68.68
<i>2024 (T1 to T2)</i>	61.81	74.07
<i>2023 (T1 to T2)</i>	70.04	69.66
<i>2022 (T1 to T2)</i>	70.31	74.32
<i>2021 (T1 to T2)</i>	67.46	72.72

Table 3.2- Percentage of HE students by Indigenous status by year who returned after the first term of study.

<i>Success (%)</i>	<i>Indigenous</i>	<i>Non-Indigenous</i>
<i>2025</i>	74.38	86.33
<i>2024</i>	75.39	86.5
<i>2023</i>	74.54	84.86
<i>2022</i>	71.81	83.68
<i>2021</i>	68.37	83.48

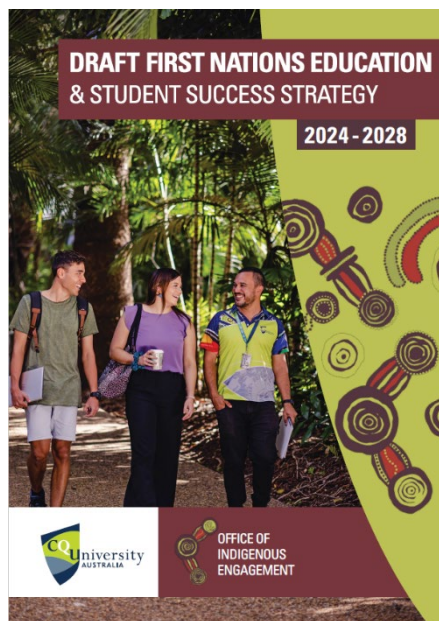
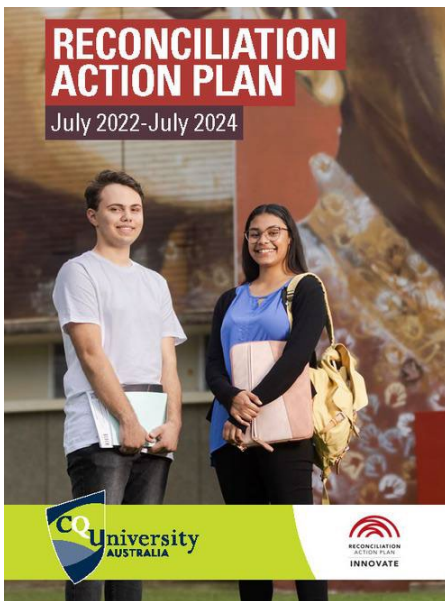
Table 3.3- Unit of study pass rate for HE students by Indigenous status by year

As part of its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), CQUniversity has implemented several strategic initiatives aimed at improving the educational outcomes for First Nations students. One of these key initiatives is the Nunbal Wayu symposium. The symposium's name, "Nunbal Wayu," is a Jirrbal language phrase meaning "teaching to transform," and it reflects the event's goal of addressing the comparatively low course completion rates of First Nations students. The symposium will bring together university staff to explore the internal and external factors that impact Indigenous student performance, with a focus on developing strategies to enhance both higher education and vocational training outcomes.

The symposium is also a direct response to the Australian Universities Accord – Final Report 2024, which calls for significant improvements in enrolment, retention, and course completion rates for equity groups, especially First Nations students, by 2035. The event will focus on two key goals: first, to better understand the patterns of Indigenous student performance and how they relate to the university's teaching and student support services; and second, to develop actionable steps that will strengthen CQUniversity's efforts to close the educational gap for First Nations students, particularly in north Queensland.

CQUniversity's commitment to Indigenous students is further demonstrated through its broad range of support services, including the Indigenous Student Support Team, which provides culturally safe and personalized assistance, such as academic mentoring and tutoring. The Gunggari Indigenous Student Engagement Program also offers networking, leadership development, and cultural activities to foster a sense of community among Indigenous students. These initiatives, along with targeted scholarships and financial assistance, are crucial in helping reduce financial and academic barriers for First Nations students.

With more than two thousand First Nations enrolments across Vocational Education and Higher Education in 2023, CQUniversity is seeing increasing engagement from Indigenous communities. However, the university acknowledges that further efforts are needed to improve course completion rates. By hosting the Nunbal Wayu symposium and implementing long-term strategies such as the Draft First Nations Education and Student Success Strategy (2024–2028), CQUniversity is committed to making substantial progress in reducing inequalities and ensuring success for its First Nations students.



People Living with Disabilities

CQUniversity is committed to supporting students with disabilities by carefully tracking and monitoring their participation and success rates. In 2024, 5.44% of the student population identified as having a disability, a slight decrease from 6.72% in 2024. The university continues to enhance accessibility and provide tailored support services to ensure these students can fully engage in their studies. Additionally, the percentage of students whose disability status is unknown has significantly decreased, from 23.43% in 2021 to just 1.08% in 2025, demonstrating the university's efforts to better understand and address the needs of students with disabilities. This data helps CQUniversity refine its strategies to foster an inclusive environment for all students.

<i>Students with a disability (%)</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2025</i>
<i>Yes</i>	6.31	6.4	6.72	5.44
<i>No</i>	92.33	92.25	91.61	93.48
<i>Unknown</i>	1.36	1.35	1.67	1.08

Table 4.1- Proportion of students identified as living with a disability by year

CQUniversity offers a wide range of support services to ensure students with disabilities have equal access to education and opportunities. The Inclusion and Accessibility Service provides tailored support plans, including reasonable adjustments for assessments, specialised learning resources, and access to assistive technology. Students also benefit from one-on-one support through Disability Advisors, who coordinate accommodations such as note-taking, alternative exam arrangements, and physical accessibility solutions. Complementary programs like peer mentoring and well-being workshops further enhance the student experience, fostering a supportive and inclusive campus environment.

Encouragingly, the pass rate for students living with a disability has improved every year, rising from 76.91% in 2022 to 81.10% in 2025. This steady upward trend demonstrates that CQUniversity's support services are making a measurable difference in helping students with disabilities achieve academic success. However, a gap remains when compared to students not living with a disability (84.40% in 2025), highlighting the need for continued investment and targeted strategies to ensure full equity in outcomes.

<i>Success (%)</i>	<i>Living with disability</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>2025</i>	81.10	84.40
<i>2024</i>	80.67	87.21
<i>2023</i>	79.43	85.13
<i>2022</i>	76.91	83.00
<i>2021</i>	77.68	85.25

Table 5.2- Unit of study pass rate for HE students by SES status by year

Low Socio-Economic Status

The retention and success rates for students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds at CQUniversity have shown consistent improvement over the years, though they remain lower than those of their peers from high SES backgrounds. In 2025, the re-enrolment rate from term 1 to term 2 for low SES students was 75.24%, compared to 77.50% for high SES students.

Similarly, the success rate—defined as the proportion of subjects passed—was 84.49% for low SES students, slightly lower than the 88.02% success rate for high SES students. This data highlights the ongoing challenges faced by low SES students in maintaining academic success and staying enrolled, underscoring the importance of targeted support initiatives.

To address these challenges and reduce financial barriers to education, CQUniversity offers a variety of support services tailored to low SES students. Scholarships are available to assist with tuition and living costs, while initiatives like the CQUni Cares fundraisers provide additional financial aid to students in need. The university also offers free services such as academic mentoring, counselling, and well-being programs to ensure that all students, regardless of their financial background, can access the resources they need to succeed. These programs play a critical role in helping low SES students overcome barriers and improve their retention and success rates.

<i>Retention (%)</i>	<i>High SES</i>	<i>Low SES</i>	<i>Medium SES</i>	<i>SES Not Available</i>
<i>2025 (T1 to T2)</i>	77.50	75.24	80.27	48.85
<i>2024 (T1 to T2)</i>	75.13	71.03	76.85	70.86
<i>2023 (T1 to T2)</i>	78.74	74.74	78.88	48.09
<i>2022 (T1 to T2)</i>	80.44	73.97	76.04	64.94
<i>2021 (T1 to T2)</i>	75.99	71.51	75.22	48.65

Table 5.1- Percentage of HE students by SES status by year who returned after the first term of study.

<i>Success (%)</i>	<i>High SES</i>	<i>Low SES</i>	<i>Medium SES</i>
<i>2025</i>	88.02	84.59	87.70
<i>2024</i>	88.94	84.76	88.18
<i>2023</i>	87.31	83.08	86.20
<i>2022</i>	85.23	82.27	84.67
<i>2021</i>	84.91	81.46	84.36

Table 5.2- Unit of study pass rate for HE students by SES status by year