

**QUT response to questions on notice from Senator Faruqi
Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee
Inquiry into the quality of governance at Australian higher education providers**

Hearing appearance – 12 November 2025

Questions received – 18 November 2025

Answers supplied – 26 November 2025

1. *How many of your current Council members have direct experience in higher education?*

10 out of the 15 current QUT Council members (two-thirds) have higher education experience, including the elected members (3 staff members and 2 students).

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2. *I understand that Queensland University of Technology subscribes to the UniForum data benchmarking service. What steps has QUT's leadership taken to satisfy itself that UniForum benchmarking scores are meaningful, reliable and rigorous?*

QUT no longer subscribes to UniForum. The question is therefore not applicable.

QUT subscribed to UniForum from 2011 to 2022. Please see our answer to q8 for more detail.

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3. *Has UniForum data ever been used to inform (directly or indirectly) proposals or decisions to disestablish positions or to make staff members redundant at QUT? If yes, please provide details of the positions impacted (or proposed to be impacted) and the role that UniForum data played in decision making.*

Some 2018 UniForum data was provided to the team supporting our post-Covid Repositioning restructure in 2021 alongside a wide range of other data and indicators.

UniForum data was not used by QUT Executive in developing or implementing the Repositioning changes in 2021.

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4. *Has QUT's executive ever cited UniForum data in presentations or statements to the university's governing council? If yes, please provide details of how and when the UniForum data was cited and the arguments it was used to support.*

UniForum data constituted one of numerous inputs that were used to compile a chart as part of a presentation by the Vice-Chancellor to the QUT Council meeting of 30 June 2020. The chart compared the profile of several faculty metrics (academic FTE, EFTSL, teaching units and grant revenue) between the existing structure and a potential future model (with the 8 existing faculties and institutes combined into 5 new faculties). The UniForum data were not disaggregated from other input data.

A UniForum staff survey was mentioned in an attachment to the regular Risk and Audit Committee report provided for noting to the QUT Council meeting of 10 December 2020. The attachment was the Business Transformation Benefits Realisation Report: the most recent UniForum staff survey was referenced as confirmation that IT and AV staff had been centralised. No UniForum data were supplied.

UniForum data were not discussed in either meeting.

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5. *Does any member of staff at QUT have KPIs that are linked to UniForum data? If yes, please indicate what positions they hold and describe the KPIs in question.*

No.

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6. *Does any staff member at QUT have full access to the underlying UniForum data and methodology? If not, does lack of access to underlying data and methodology inhibit QUT's confidence in UniForum reports and benchmarking scores?*

No.

The supplementary question is not applicable as QUT does not use UniForum reports or benchmarking scores.

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7. *In the absence of access to underlying UniForum data and methodology, what steps does QUT take to validate the findings that UniForum provides?*

The question is not applicable as QUT does not use UniForum reports or benchmarking scores.

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8. *How long has QUT subscribed to the UniForum benchmarking service? Please provide a year-by-year breakdown of how much QUT has spent on UniForum services.*

QUT subscribed to UniForum from 2011 to 2022. QUT made its first subscription payment in December 2010 for the 2011 academic year, and withdrew from UniForum during 2022 (following a contracted notice period; QUT did not provide data input that year). QUT made a final payment for reimbursable expenses under the terms of the contract in early 2023.

QUT UniForum expense by payment year (ex-GST):

2010	\$100,000
2011	\$54,135
2012	\$123,748
2013	\$132,814
2014	\$152,653
2015	\$190,623
2016	\$175,597
2017	\$194,599
2018	\$198,113
2019	\$200,338
2020	\$210,960
2021	\$210,979
2022	\$106,000
2023	\$2,957

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9. *Please provide a full list of documents, datasets and reports that UniForum has provided to QUT since the beginning of 2023. Please indicate which of these are available to all members of staff at QUT.*

Nil.

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10. Does your institution have any partnerships, investments or links with any weapons companies or associated entities?

QUT has no direct investments in weapons companies.

QUT works with our independent investment manager, Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC, a Queensland Government-owned entity), to manage investments to ensure that QUT's investment pool is directed to ethical and appropriate investments within a framework of responsibility relative to climate risk.

QIC manages approximately \$917 million of QUT's investments. QIC manages these funds in a manner consistent with QIC's Sustainable Investment Policy, which sets out a number of exclusions applied across QUT's investments in areas aligned with these questions as well as QIC's approach to engaging with investee companies.

QIC is a signatory to the United Nations-backed Principles for Responsible Investment Initiative (UNPRI). They report annually on their environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) activities.

The QUT Finance and Planning Committee takes an active role in monitoring and reporting on QUT's revised investment strategy in order to ensure sustained financial return in line with social and responsible investment.

Through QIC, QUT has immaterial and limited exposure to investments in the aerospace and defence sector. QIC maintains an investment exclusion list that features controversial weapons, in line with Australia's position on relevant conventions and treaties. These are applied across the vast majority of QIC investment holdings as practicable. This may not be the case for investments in derivative indices, exchange traded funds or pooled investment vehicles.

QUT currently leads or participates in four research projects that between them involve partnerships with the defence-related companies Thales, Boeing and BAE Systems. Topics including *Intelligent Robotic Systems for Real Time Asset Management*, *Australian Digital Airspace Characterisation: Accelerating Regulatory Processes and Airspace Initiatives for the Emerging Aviation Technology Sector*, *Airspace Mid-Air Collision Risk Calculations* and *Biofouling Management of Maritime Assets*.

Boeing hosts QUT students for Work Integrated Learning placements and internships – for example, Boeing hosted 7 student placements over the 2024-25 summer. Other defence prime contractors also provide internships to QUT students and recent graduates, with and without QUT involvement, including Rheinmetall, Thales and Northrop Grumman.

QUT is not aware of any other links to weapons companies.

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11. *Does your institution have any partnerships, investments or links with any fossil fuel companies or associated entities?*

QUT has no fossil fuel direct investments.

QUT works with QIC to manage investments so that no fossil fuel investments of material significance form part of the QUT investment portfolio, including diversified companies for whom fossil fuels form a part of their operations.

In addition, QIC engages with companies exposed to climate-related risks to seek the mitigation of these risks and invests in companies providing the solutions required to support transition as well as using mechanisms such as sustainability linked loans to further encourage transition. QIC has a public commitment to Net Zero and its initial steps are outlined in its Climate Transition Plan.

QUT currently leads or participates in eight research projects that between them involve partnerships with the fossil fuel companies BHP, Yancoal, Woodside, Southern Oil Refining and Kumul. Topics including *Resilient and Intelligent Infrastructure Systems in Urban, Resources and Energy sectors, Carbon Utilisation and Recycling, Cancer and Ageing Research, Finding Porphyry Copper with Zircon Trace Elements Hyperspectral Display, and Dating and Trace Element Content of Zircon*.

The Senex Energy Learning Potential Fund Scholarship was established by Senex Energy in 2017 to encourage disadvantaged and low-income students from Western Queensland to undertake an undergraduate degree in the faculty of their choice at QUT.

QUT is not aware of any other links to fossil fuel companies.

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12. Does your institution have any partnerships, investments or links with any gambling companies or associated entities?

QUT has small residual shareholdings in two gambling-related companies, resulting from early-stage investment. In one case the investment was made before the business had moved into gambling; in the other case the business supports charitable raffles. QUT is looking for opportunities to divest both shareholdings.

Through QIC, QUT has immaterial and limited exposure to gambling companies and associated entities, including businesses in the hospitality sector.

QUT does not conduct research projects funded by or in partnership with gambling companies.

Since December 2024 QUT has hosted its graduation ceremonies at The Star Queens Wharf, a complex which also houses a casino. The advantages of this location include that it can accommodate the entire graduating class, it offers high-quality and cost-effective facilities and amenities, and it provides an accessible and safe location for students and their families. Graduation ceremonies are held in a separate dedicated event space within the complex, isolated from any gambling activities, with a separate direct entry that avoids engagement with the hotel and casino. Feedback from students and their families has been very positive about the new venue.

QUT is not aware of any other links to gambling companies.

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13. Does your institution have any partnerships, investments or links with any tobacco companies or associated entities?

QUT has no investments in tobacco companies.

Through QIC, QUT has exclusions in place for companies generating revenue from the production or manufacture of tobacco and related products. These are applied across the vast majority of QIC investment holdings as practicable. Examples of where this may not be the case are investments in derivative indices, exchange traded funds or pooled investment vehicles.

There are a number of companies in the portfolio that are involved in the sale of tobacco products, for instance supermarkets.

QUT does not conduct research projects funded by or in partnership with tobacco companies.

QUT is not aware of any other links to tobacco companies.

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14. Four years down the line from the Job Ready Graduates (JRG) fee hikes, what impacts are you seeing?

The JRG cluster funding arrangements have imposed distortions on the funding of learning and teaching in universities, with revenues largely uncoupled from the cost of provision. This has compelled institutions to implement inefficient cross-subsidies, and made load management and revenue forecasting difficult.

Anecdotally it is understood across the sector that the markedly elevated student contributions imposed on certain fields – especially in the humanities and creative arts – are placing unwarranted strain on students and recent graduates. This disproportionately affects women, Indigenous Australians, people with disabilities, low-SES Australians and first-in-family students, who are more likely to pursue these fields of study.

a. Do you agree that the government should urgently scrap the JRG fee hikes and funding cuts?

QUT shares the widespread sector view that JRG should be reformed as a matter of priority.