



2015 QUT Equity Scholarships Scheme Report

*Prepared by Equity Services Department
August 2016*



About this Report

QUT's [Equity Scholarships Scheme](#) annually provides scholarships, bursaries and computers to low-income students which aims to reduce financial hardship as a barrier allowing our students to realise their full potential and succeed.

The scheme is aligned to [QUT's Blueprint4](#) KPI of increasing the proportion of low-Socio-Economic background and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The scheme also works within QUT's [Widening Participation](#) strategy and helps with the recruitment and retention of under-represented groups, with a particular emphasis on low- Socio-Economic-Status, rural and Indigenous students.

The impact analysis in this report shows the positive retention effect of a scholarship, something that has been consistent for over a decade.

QUT participated in a recent study to investigate relationships between equity scholarships and the retention and success outcomes of recipients. The study was done at three deliberately different universities, Deakin University, Queensland University of Technology and the University of Sydney, for the academic year of 2013. The key finding of this study is that equity scholarships are effective in retaining recipients, across the three universities, across demographic groups and across different scholarship products. The receipt of a scholarship reportedly reduced stress, boosted morale and allowed scholarship holders to dedicate more time to their studies at each of the universities. There were more varied results with regard to the success rates of recipients which may reflect design features of the scholarship products and programs and other variable institutional characteristics. This report *"Moving Beyond 'Acts of Faith': Effective Scholarships for Equity Students"* can be accessed from the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education's [website](#).

Providing Feedback – Contact Details

For any feedback, ideas, suggestions on this report or the services please contact the QUT Equity Scholarships Team. We value your feedback as it helps improve our services to meet the requirements.

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QUT Equity Scholarship Scheme Details and Process

QUT's [Equity Scholarships Scheme](#) annually provides scholarships, bursaries and computers to low-income students.

What's on offer each year?

Semester 1

Domestic students can receive:

- Laurie Cowled LPF PhD scholarship (\$10,000 for one year; \$5,000 per semester) – only one scholarship available every year
- an Equity Scholarship of \$5,000 for one year (there are limited scholarships available at this value)
- an Equity Scholarship of \$3,500 for one year
- an Equity Bursary of \$1,500 for one year
- an Equity computer (a reconditioned desktop computer, a broadband grant for some students and a USB drive).

International students can receive:

- an Equity Bursary of up to \$1,500 for one year
- an Equity computer (a reconditioned desktop computer with the capacity to access internet, and a USB drive).

Semester 2

Students, who have received a scholarship or bursary in Semester 1, cannot apply for another scholarship in Semester 2.

Domestic students can receive:

- an Equity Scholarship of \$1,750 for one semester
- an Equity Bursary of \$1,500 for one semester
- a Faculty Equity Bursary of \$1,500 for one semester.

International students can receive:

- an Equity Bursary of up to \$1,500 for one semester
- a Faculty Equity Bursary of \$1,500 for one semester.

Other financial supports

Other products available throughout the year

- Equity Emergency Bursary
 - \$750 for one semester
 - \$500 for one semester
 - \$300 for one semester
- Equity WIL Bursary
 - \$750 for one year
 - \$500 for one year
 - \$300 for one year
- Student Financial Assistance Scheme (SFAS)
 - An interest free loan of up to \$2,000
- Caboolture Campus Student Assistance Scheme (CCSAS)
- Hardship grants

- Faculty support
- QUT Guild financial support

Scholarships available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students only

- Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarships (three scholarship types with numbers subject to federal government funding)
 - Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship (ICAS) (\$2,543.50 per semester/4 years)
 - Indigenous Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship (ICECS) (\$1,271.50 per semester/4 years)
 - Indigenous Access Scholarship (IAS) (\$4,823 one off)

(Note: Indigenous students who have received an ICECS also receive the Equity Starter Bursary (\$957).

2015 Allocation

In 2015, the QUT Equity Scholarships Scheme distributed over \$7.5m worth of scholarships and bursaries to students from low-income backgrounds. Funding sources were the Commonwealth Government (\$1,451,517) and QUT (\$6,144,020), the latter including funds from the [Learning Potential Fund](#) and the university. More than 1900 students received a scholarship or a bursary. This involved a total of 4872 payments made to students via Financial Services, excluding Faculty Equity Bursaries.

In semester 1, 1692 QUT Equity Scholarships, and 752 Equity Bursaries were awarded. In semester 2, 1700 QUT Equity Scholarships, and 385 Equity Bursaries were awarded. All commencing Indigenous students continued to receive a guarantee of a Bursary of at least \$1500. [Q-Step](#) students receive a guarantee of a QUT Equity Scholarship of \$3500 if allocated in semester 1 and \$1750 if allocated in semester 2. The [Smith Family](#) Learning for Life (LFL) students enrolled at QUT were also guaranteed a scholarship of \$3500 if allocated in semester 1 and \$1750 if allocated in semester 2, and a computer, if required. During 2015, a total of 41 Successful LFL students received scholarship payments.

In total, 160 Equity Starter Bursaries were distributed in 2015.

In 2015 [Emergency Bursaries](#) (\$300, \$500 or \$750) continued to be paid to students, deemed by QUT Welfare Services or International Student Services to be facing unexpected financial challenges. In total, 266 students received an emergency bursary in 2015. Both domestic and international students are eligible to receive an emergency bursary.

Semester 2, 2015 saw the commencement of the [WIL Bursaries](#) (\$300, \$500 or \$750). These bursaries were paid to students, deemed by QUT Welfare Services or International Student Services as completing a work integrated learning (WIL) placement and experiencing financial hardship. In total, 85 students received a WIL bursary in 2015. Both domestic and international students are eligible to receive this bursary.

In 2015, 400 [Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarships \(ICS\)](#) payments were made. This included 122 continuing and 278 new scholarships.

Computers were awarded to 332 students. Ex-QUT reconditioned computers were collected by 275 students with 57 declining the offer. Some of the reasons for declining the offer are that students have already purchased their own computer prior to the allocation being made, or they assumed that the reconditioned computer is a laptop.

Growth of low-income support measures

In 1999, a small number of Equity Bursaries were made available to low-income students studying at QUT, funded by the Learning Potential Fund. In 2003, QUT established a small-scale scholarship scheme for commencers using funds from the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and Head of Division (TILS). The first computer give-away scheme was established in 2003 involving reconditioned ex-QUT computers with free ISP connection being given to students in need. Previously, a small number of computers had been lent to needy students. Eligibility criteria and the value of scholarships, as well as the size of the Scheme have changed over time.

Commonwealth Learning Scholarships (now [Commonwealth Scholarships](#)) were introduced in 2004 and were distributed using the existing Equity Scholarship Scheme mechanism. In 2005, QUT Council agreed to allocate 15% of the increased HECS funds for support and outreach for low-income students. This enabled the expansion of the program allowing QUT to establish a program of Access Scholarships for school-leavers from schools in low socio-economic areas, and increase the number of Equity Scholarships (2,500) and bursaries (1,000).

In 2007, QUT Council agreed to endorse a funding model for equity scholarships and outreach activities which ties investments in these areas to a percentage Commonwealth load-based revenue (1% of combined Commonwealth Grant Scheme and student contribution), funded from two sources: investment returns from funds held in the [Learning Potential Fund](#) (LPF); and the balance funded from the University's discretionary budget. The LPF component has been growing each year.

In 2009, the Commonwealth Government dismantled the administration of Commonwealth Scholarships by universities, except for Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarships and passed responsibility to Centrelink. QUT continues to have a large scale scholarships scheme for low-income students, although the scale has been reduced due to these Government changes. As of 2014 there are no longer any grandfathered commonwealth scholarship students.

Additionally, 2015 marked the thirteenth year of the Equity Computer Scheme, which offers students a reconditioned ex-QUT computer with broadband grants for eligible applicants. Although the number of computers available has been slightly reduced in recent years, it still continues to provide invaluable technology to around 300 students annually, who are limited in terms of time and money, and who have barriers to accessing the computer labs on-campus. Broadband grants, valued at \$200, were allocated to 11 students who required funds to install a broadband system in their home.

In 2010, the [QUT Equity Scholarships Scheme](#) commenced the allocation of Equity Scholarships valued at \$5,000. In 2015, \$5,000 equity scholarships were awarded to 37 students.

In 2015, the value of the main scholarship product, the QES was lifted from \$2500 to \$3500, and the bursary from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

Application Process

Applications have been made on paper-based forms each year except for 2009, when applications were made through the [QTAC](#) Equity Scholarships Application web service. In mid-2009, following the Government's announcement to move the CS program administration to Centrelink, QTAC advised they would not continue to process equity scholarship applications. In 2010, the application process reverted to a paper form, with application direct to the university.

The equity scholarships scheme [online application form](#) was released to students for the first time in 2013. Students applied directly to QUT for all equity scholarships via one application form, which was available online. The 2015 applications opened early to prospective and continuing students, with the intention of making scholarship offers prior to Christmas. Applications for the first round of offers closed on 07

November 2014 and on 06 February 2015 for the second round offers. The bulk of the applications were lodged by the second round closing date.

By late February, 2579 direct applications were received. By semester 2, the scheme had received an additional 696 applications, resulting in 3275 applications being received for the scheme in 2015.

From 2013 QTAC applicants have been able to apply to the equity scholarship scheme via the QTAC educational access scheme (financial hardship category) as part of their QTAC application.

In 2015, 1311 applications were received via the QTAC [Educational Access Scheme](#), of whom 737 went on to enrol and receive a QUT Equity Scholarship.

The QUT Equity Services Department has developed a comprehensive means of assessing poverty which has been trialled and improved over a number of years. Applicants are allocated points on the basis of the information provided in their application (both qualitative and quantitative) and sorted according to the total number of points. The focus is on need as established through information relating to income, expenditure and life circumstances. A selection panel of QUT staff and alumni representatives considers the lists and establishes cut-off points for each scholarship type. The most valuable scholarships are awarded to eligible students with the highest number of points, and the remainder are distributed in descending order of value to rank-ordered applicants. In 2009, the QUT Equity Scholarships Scheme won an ALTC Program Award for its support for learning of low-income students.

QUT Equity Scholarship Scheme Performance in 2015

Applications and Applicant Pool

There were a total of 3275 direct scholarship scheme applications in 2015 as compared to 3338 applications in 2014. There were 677 computer scheme applications received in 2015 as compared to 674 applications the previous year. This applicant pool included 231 verified Indigenous students, an increase from 203 in 2014. Additionally, 1311 applications were received via the QTAC [educational access scheme](#) giving a combined total of 4586 applications.

The graphs below display a trend of online applications made for the Equity Scholarship Scheme over the period of 2011-2015.

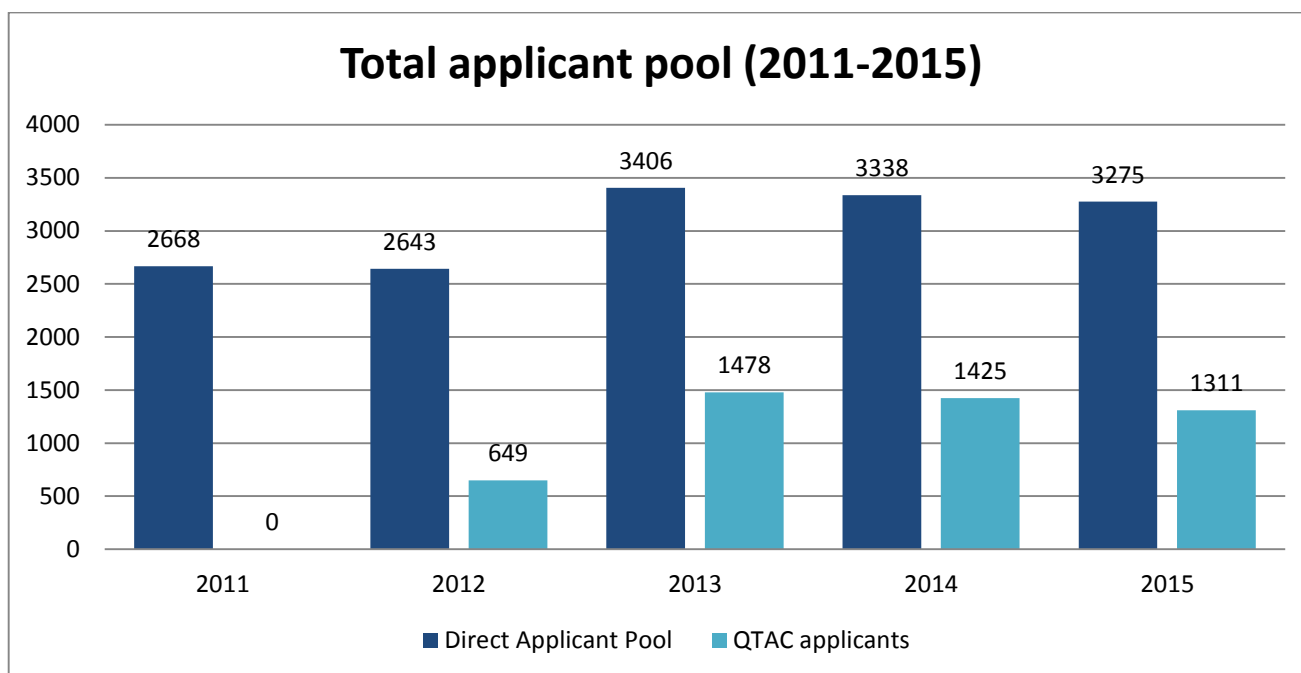


Figure 1 – Total Applicant Pool (2011-2015)

The application numbers have increased over the years with the highest number received in 2013 at 3406 direct applications. A similar pattern can be observed in QTAC applications as well with 2013 seeing the highest number of applications as compared to the other years. QUT started receiving the QTAC scholarship applications from 2012 onwards.

There has been an increase in the computer scheme applications over the years with 2015 seeing the highest number of applications at 677.

2015 saw the highest number of Indigenous applicants. This is in trend with the increasing enrolment numbers of Indigenous students at QUT.

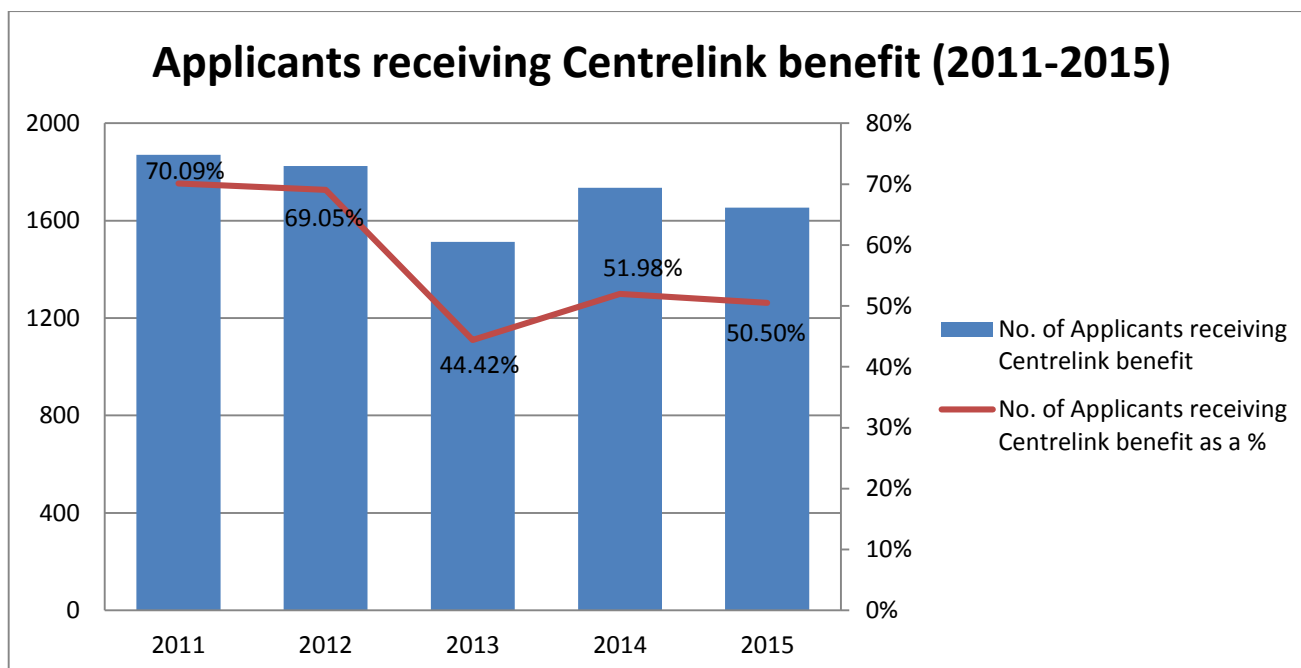


Figure 2 - Applicants receiving Centrelink benefit (2011-2015)

Applicants on Centrelink benefits have been declining over the years. In 2015, 1654 applicants were on Centrelink benefits which are a slight decline from 2014 with 1735 applicants. Percentage of the scholarship

applicants receiving Centrelink benefits are relative to their numbers since 2011 at 70.09%, and showing a slight decline from 2014 (51.98%) to 2015 (50.50%).

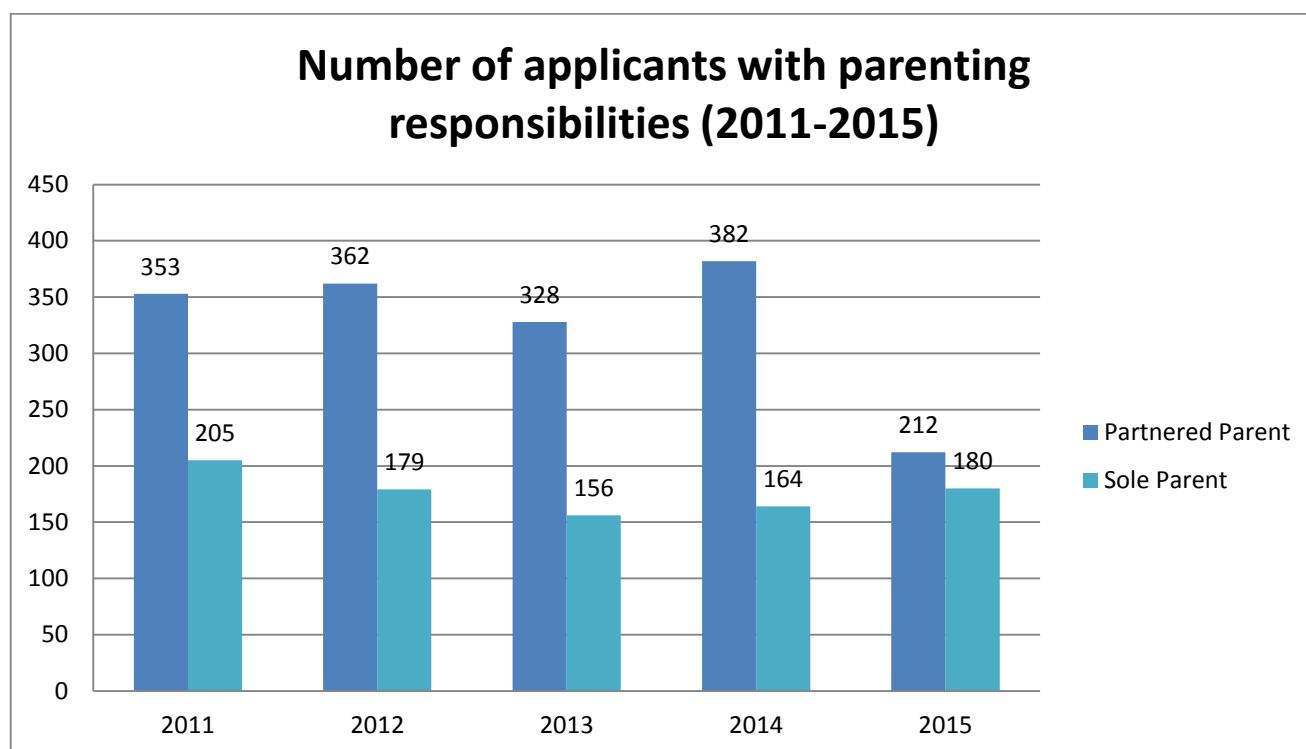


Figure 3 - Number of applicants with parenting responsibilities (2011-2015)

There is no typical trend with applicants with parenting responsibilities, however 2015 had the smallest numbers, with 212 being partnered parents and 180 being sole parents.

Equity Scholarships Outcomes

In 2015, 96% of the total applicant pool consisted of domestic applicants with the remaining 4% who were international students.

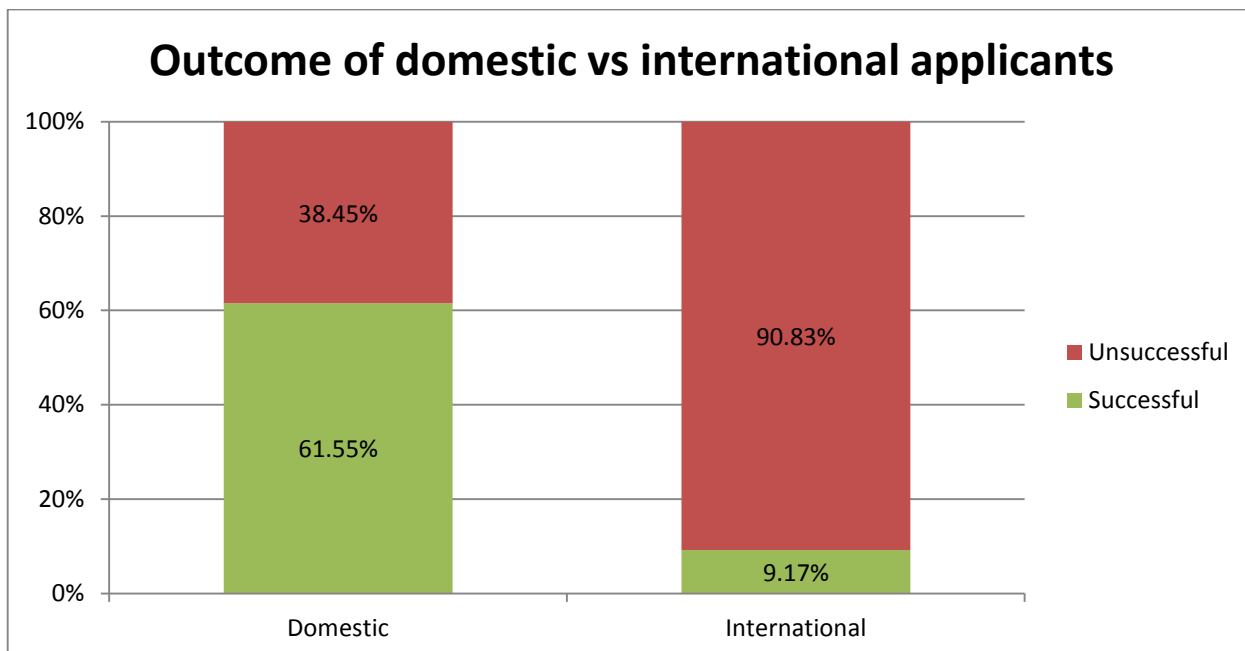


Figure 4 - Outcome of Domestic VS International Applicants (2015)

The outcome of the applications saw 61.55% success rate for domestic applicants and 9.17% for international applicants. Many international applicants do not provide documentation for assessment nor receive a course offer at QUT are deemed unsuccessful.

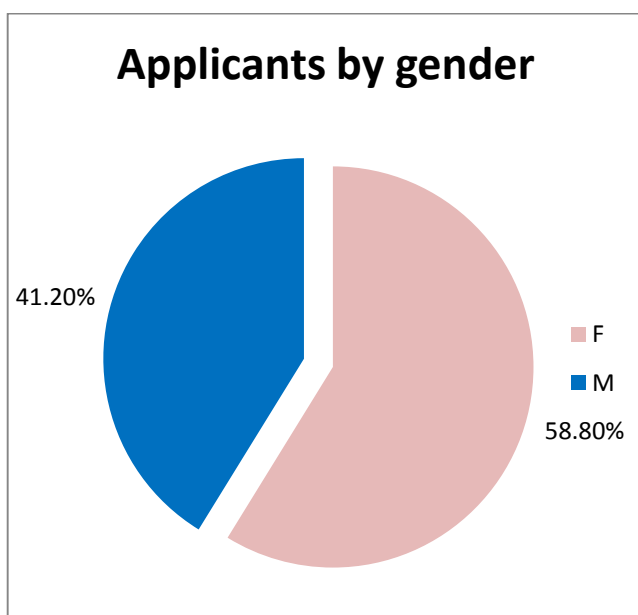


Figure 5 - Applicants by Gender (2015)

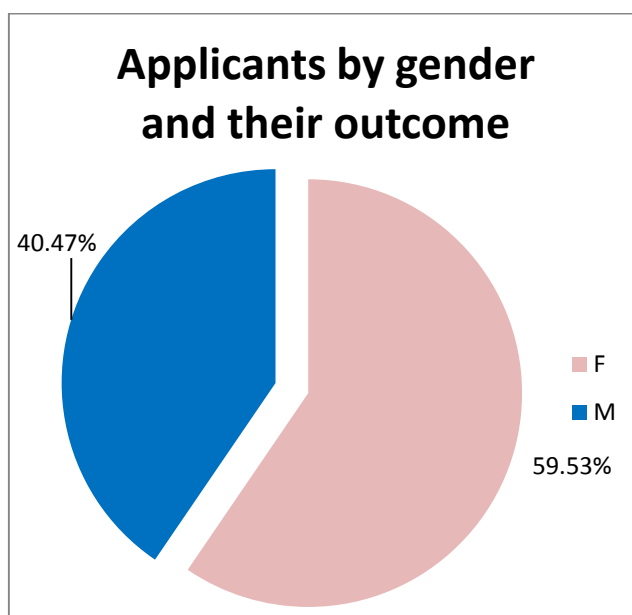


Figure 6-Applicants by Gender and their outcome (2015)

The proportion of applicants based on gender for 2015 was male – 41.20%, female – 58.80% and their success rates not dissimilar at 40.47% and 59.53% respectively.

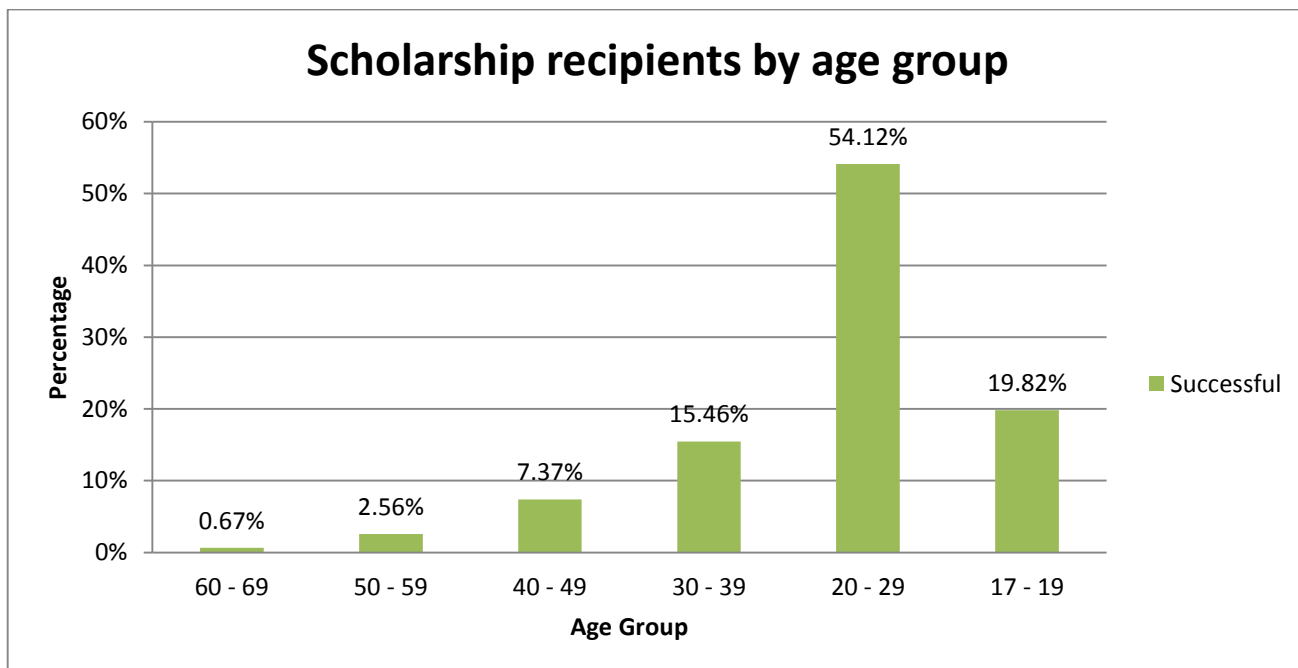


Figure 7 - Scholarship Outcome Vs Age Group of Applicants (2015)

The majority of our successful applicant pool was from the age-group of 20-29 years, followed by the 17-19 years' group.

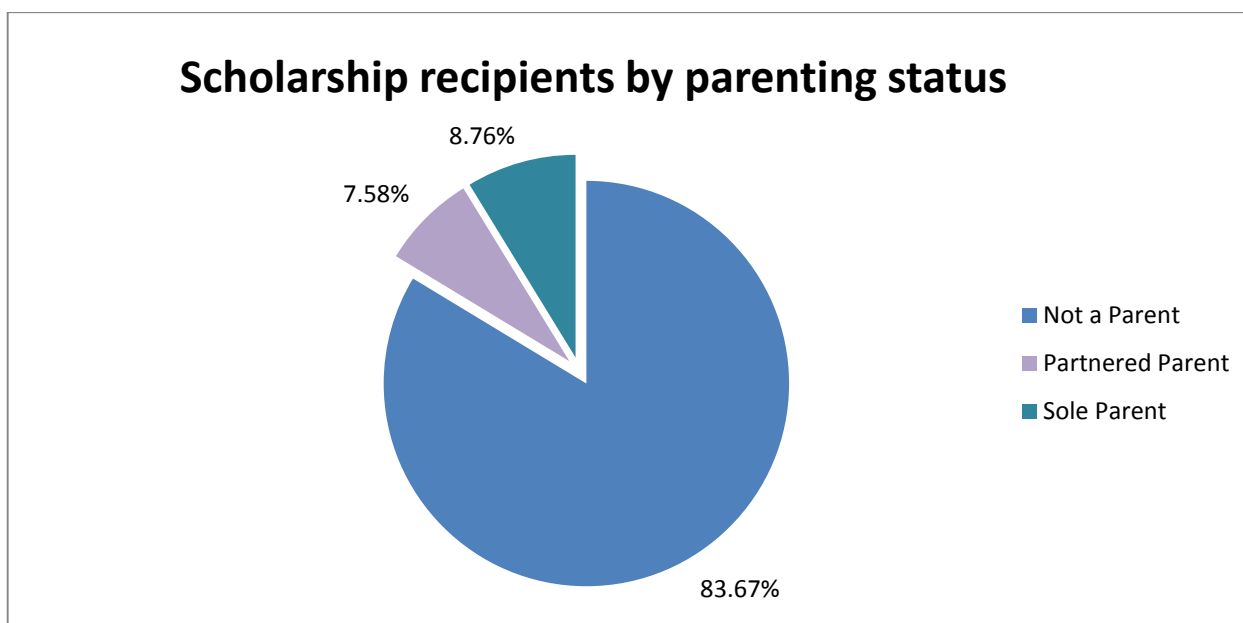


Figure 8 - Parenting Description of Successful Applicants (2015)

In 2015, the majority of our successful applicants i.e. 83.67% were not a parent, while 8.76% were sole parents and 7.58% partnered parents. This is reflective of the trend analysis where the parenting responsibilities saw a decline in the number of applicants for 2015 as compared to previous years.

Financial hardship of applicants

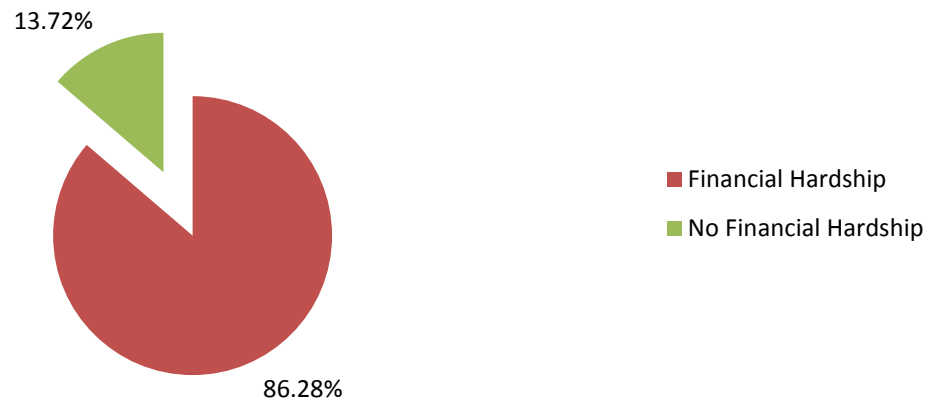


Figure 9 - Financial Hardship Cohort (2015)

The majority of our successful applicants faced financial hardship. This is a global 'deprivation' score allocated by scholarships assessors, which indicates the level of daily struggle and financial deprivation of the applicant, taking into account all known factors. The analysis shows, 86.28% students faced some form of financial hardship while 13.72% did not provide enough evidence of their financial hardship situation. The majority of the applicants with no financial hardship scores were applicants who received guaranteed scholarships because of their low-income background.

Table 1 - Total number of scholarships paid in 2015

Semester 1, 2015 scholarships disbursement							
Scholarship Type	2011 students paid in 2015^	2012 students paid in 2015^	2013 students paid in 2015^	2014 students paid in 2015^	2015 students paid in 2015^	Total No. paid	Total Paid
ICAS (\$2,543.50 per sem/4 yrs)	-	5	4	25	30	64	\$162,784
ICECS (\$1,271.50 per sem/4 yrs)	1	12	24	65	80	182	\$231,413
IAS (\$4,823 once only)	-	-	-	-	97	97	\$467,831
Laurie Cowled LPF PhD scholarship (\$10,000 for one year; \$5,000 per sem)	-	-	-	-	1	1	\$5,000
QUT Equity S'ship (\$5,000 for one year; \$2,500 per sem)	-	-	-	-	37	37	\$92,500
QUT Equity S'ship (\$3,500 for one year; \$1,750 per sem)	-	-	-	-	1311	1311	\$2,294,250
QUT Equity Bursary (\$1500 for one year)	-	-	-	-	459	459	\$688,500
Equity Starter Equity Bursary (\$957)	-	-	-	-	160	160	\$153,120
QUT Broadband Grant (\$200 for one year)	-	-	-	-	11	11	\$2,200
QUT Emergency Bursary (\$750 for one year)	-	-	-	-	42	42	\$31,500
QUT Emergency Bursary (\$500 for one year)	-	-	-	-	55	55	\$27,500
QUT Emergency Bursary (\$300 for one year)	-	-	-	-	36	36	\$10,800
Equity PCs	-	-	-	-	332	332	NA
Total paid in semester 1, 2015						2787	\$4,167,398

Semester 2, 2015 Scholarships disbursement							
Scholarship Type	2011 students paid in 2015^	2012 students paid in 2015^	2013 student s paid in 2015^	2014 student s paid in 2015^	2015 student s paid in 2015^	Total No. paid	Total Paid
ICAS (\$2,543.50 per sem/4 yrs)	-	3	4	25	42	74	\$188,219
ICECS (\$1,271.50 per sem/4 yrs)	-	9	20	65	104	198	\$251,757
IAS (\$4,823 once only)	-	-	-	-	31	31	\$149,513
Laurie Cowled LPF PhD scholarship (\$10,000 for one year; \$5,000 per sem)	-	-	-	-	1	1	\$5,000
QUT Equity S'ship (\$5,000 for one year; \$2,500 per sem)	-	-	-	-	35	35	\$87,500
QUT Equity S'ship (\$3,500 for one year; \$1,750 per sem)	-	-	-	-	1167	1167	\$2,042,250
Half QUT Equity S'ship (\$1,750 for one year; offered in Semester 2 only)	-	-	-	-	194	194	\$339,500
QUT Equity Bursary (\$1500 for one year)	-	-	-	-	167	167	\$250,500
QUT Emergency Bursary (\$750 for one year)	-	-	-	-	55	55	\$41,250
QUT Emergency Bursary (\$500 for one year)	-	-	-	-	50	50	\$25,000
QUT Emergency Bursary (\$300 for one year)	-	-	-	-	28	28	\$8,400
QUT WIL Bursary (\$750 for one year)	-	-	-	-	15	15	\$11,250
QUT WIL Bursary (\$500 for one year)	-	-	-	-	35	35	\$17,500
QUT WIL Bursary (\$300 for one year)	-	-	-	-	35	35	\$10,500
Total paid in semester 2, 2015						2085	\$3,428,139
Total paid in 2015						4872	\$7,595,537

^ Excludes completions, discontinued, lapsed and intermittent enrolments

Table 2 - Actual number of student recipients by type of benefit during 2015

Scholarship type	Number of students
ICAS	74
ICECS	198
IAS	128
Laurie Cowled LPF PhD scholarship (\$10,000) (semester 1)	1
QES (\$5,000) (semester 1)	37
QES (\$3,500) (semester 1)	1311
Half-QES (\$1750) (semester 2)	194
Equity Bursary (\$1,500) (semester 1 and 2)	626
Faculty Bursary	29
Equity Starter Bursary (semester 1)	160
QUT Emergency Bursary	266
QUT WIL Bursary	85
QUT Broadband Grant	11
Equity computers	332
Total	3452

Table 3 - Faculty Equity Bursaries awarded in semester 2, 2015

Bursary type	Number awarded	Value	Total
Business	6	\$1,500	\$9,000
Creative Industries	4	\$1,500	\$6,000
Education	2	\$1,500	\$3,000
Health	6	\$1,500	\$9,000
Law	6	\$1,500	\$9,000
Science and Engineering	5	\$1,500	\$7,500
Total Awarded	29		\$43,500

Table 4 - 2014 allocations – breakdown by faculty

Faculty Name	Laurie Cowled LPF PhD scholarship (\$10,000 for one year; \$5,000 per sem)	QUT Equity Scholarship (\$5,000 for one year)	QUT Equity Scholarship (\$3,500 for one year)	QUT Equity Scholarship Half (\$1,750 for one year)	QUT Equity Bursary (\$1,500 for one year)	QUT Equity Starter Bursary (\$957 for one year)	Emergency Bursary (\$300)	Emergency Bursary (\$500)	Emergency Bursary (\$750)	WIL Bursary (\$300)	WIL Bursary (\$500)	WIL Bursary (\$750)	Faculty Total	Faculty Total
QUT Business School	0	1	88	20	70	23	9	6	12	0	0	0	229	8.43%
Creative Industries Faculty	0	7	170	23	80	30	4	11	5	0	0	0	330	12.15%
Faculty of Education	1	3	118	11	40	19	7	11	2	13	14	6	245	9.02%
Faculty of Health	0	6	402	60	200	42	12	33	29	19	21	8	832	30.62%
Faculty of Law	0	3	94	22	41	19	9	8	8	0	0	0	204	7.51%
Science and Engineering Faculty	0	8	275	46	128	28	14	19	19	2	1	1	541	19.91%
University-wide (i.e. Interfaculty)	0	9	168	12	96	18	5	13	14	1	0	0	336	12.37%
Total	1	37	1315	194	655	179	60	101	89	35	36	15	2717	100.00%

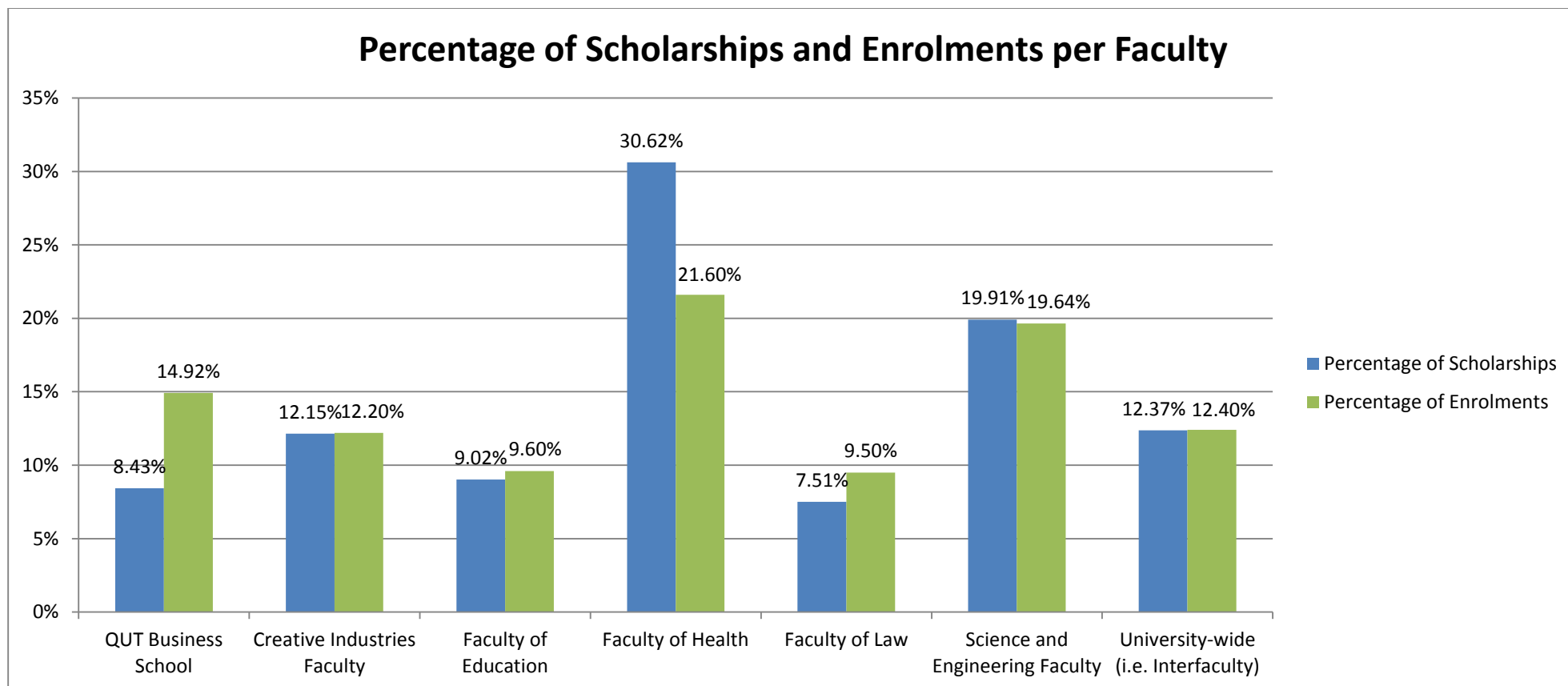


Figure 10 - Percentage of Scholarships and Enrolments per Faculty (2015)

A total of 2717 students received an LPF-funded equity scholarship in 2015. It was a similar trend in 2014.

Figure 10 shows the percentage of scholarships and enrolments per faculty in 2015. As shown in the graph the Faculty of Health has the highest proportion of students followed by Science and Engineering Faculty, this is in correlation with the proportion of the scholarships awarded.

Acknowledgements

The 2015 Equity Scholarship Scheme was successful thanks to the cooperative effort of various partners around the University:

- DTILS for making the free computer scheme possible,
- QUT Virtual team for the support of the equity scholarships database,
- Financial Services for facilitating payment to students,
- Counselling and International Student Services who recommend the emergency and WIL bursaries
- Marketing and Communication for publicity and assistance in bringing scholarships to the attention of students, and
- Development Office for fund-raising with alumni and others for the [Learning Potential Fund](#).
- QTAC for the assessment of the [education access scheme](#) applications.

QUT Equity Scholarship Scheme 2015 Impact Analysis

Overview

The QUT Equity Scholarships Scheme has expanded to become one of Australia's largest programs of scholarships for low-income students. In 2009, the QUT Equity Scholarships Scheme won an **ALTC Program Award** for its support to learning for low-income students through this scheme. This program includes the Commonwealth Scholarships, QUT-funded scholarships, all of which are awarded on a needs basis. Until 2010 all Commonwealth Scholarships (CS) were administered by universities. However, in 2010 the Federal Government moved the administration of all Commonwealth Scholarships - except for Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarships (ICS) - to Centrelink. For details of the scheme's administration, see Part 1 of this report. Over 2,000 scholarships were awarded.

A survey of recipients has been undertaken annually since 2005 in order to determine the impact that the scholarships have, and to gain feedback about the scheme. The survey was repeated in 2015 and the data has shown many similarities with previous years, including the increased awareness of the program amongst school leavers.

The striking similarity in survey responses from each year indicates that the impact of holding a scholarship is consistent and thematic. This is a solid body of data which shows that the scholarship scheme has a significant impact on the lives of low-income students and this has also been borne out in the analysis of retention data as explained below.

In brief, the scholarships have a retention effect by assisting students to give more time and attention to their studies. Recipients are able to buy educational materials, reduce the complexity and stress of their lives, and experience a "sense of belonging" at university. The scholarships also have a mild recruitment effect by encouraging some low-income students to enrol, or to persist with their enrolment. A new question was added to the survey to test the effect of allocating scholarships early (prior to Christmas and before any offer of a place to commencers has occurred), something QUT began in 2010. It was found that this early advice of scholarships success had an influence on the students' decision to go to QUT.

Students once again voiced a high level of appreciation of the scheme and reported that the scholarships had a significant impact on their finances, particularly with regard to relieving stress and the necessity for paid work. The scheme continued to make students feel supported and affirmed by the University as in previous years. Open-ended comments from the survey confirm the overwhelmingly positive effect of the scholarship program, and the intensity of student appreciation. Detailed survey findings are outlined in [Appendix 1](#).

These findings have shown that students from low-income backgrounds feel that having a scholarship helped them stay at university rather than drop out. This retention effect can be measured in actual terms by investigating the retention of students from low socio economic backgrounds who are scholarship holders. Data analysis has been conducted on this cohort and supports the survey respondents' claims.

[Appendix 2](#) shows that the retention rate of students from low socio economic backgrounds who are scholarship holders is higher at 88.05% compared with non-scholarship holders at 84.44%. Continuing students who are equity scholarship holders have a retention rate at 89.86% in comparison to non-scholarship holders at 87.75%.

Rural and isolated students, non-English speaking background students, Students with a disability, Commencing students, and Indigenous scholarship-holders, all have higher retention rates than the non-scholarship-holders. The overall retention rate for all QUT scholarship holders was higher with 88.61% as compared to all QUT non-scholarship holders at 86.45%.

Survey Process

The Scholarship Impact Survey was administered to students who were awarded a commonwealth scholarship, QUT Equity Scholarship (QES) or a QUT Equity Bursary in 2015. A total of 2,502 students were sent a link to the questionnaire via QUT's online student portal (QUT Virtual) and given several weeks to respond. A total of 913 students responded, giving a response rate of 36.49% which is the highest response rate so far when compared to 2014 (13%), 2013 (25%), and 2012 (35%). No incentive was offered to students to complete the survey. The [survey](#) consisted of 13 questions which took approximately five minutes to complete online. Questions were a range of types: summated rating, LIKERT-scaled, closed and open-ended. Thanks are due to the team at QUT Virtual for their assistance with this survey.

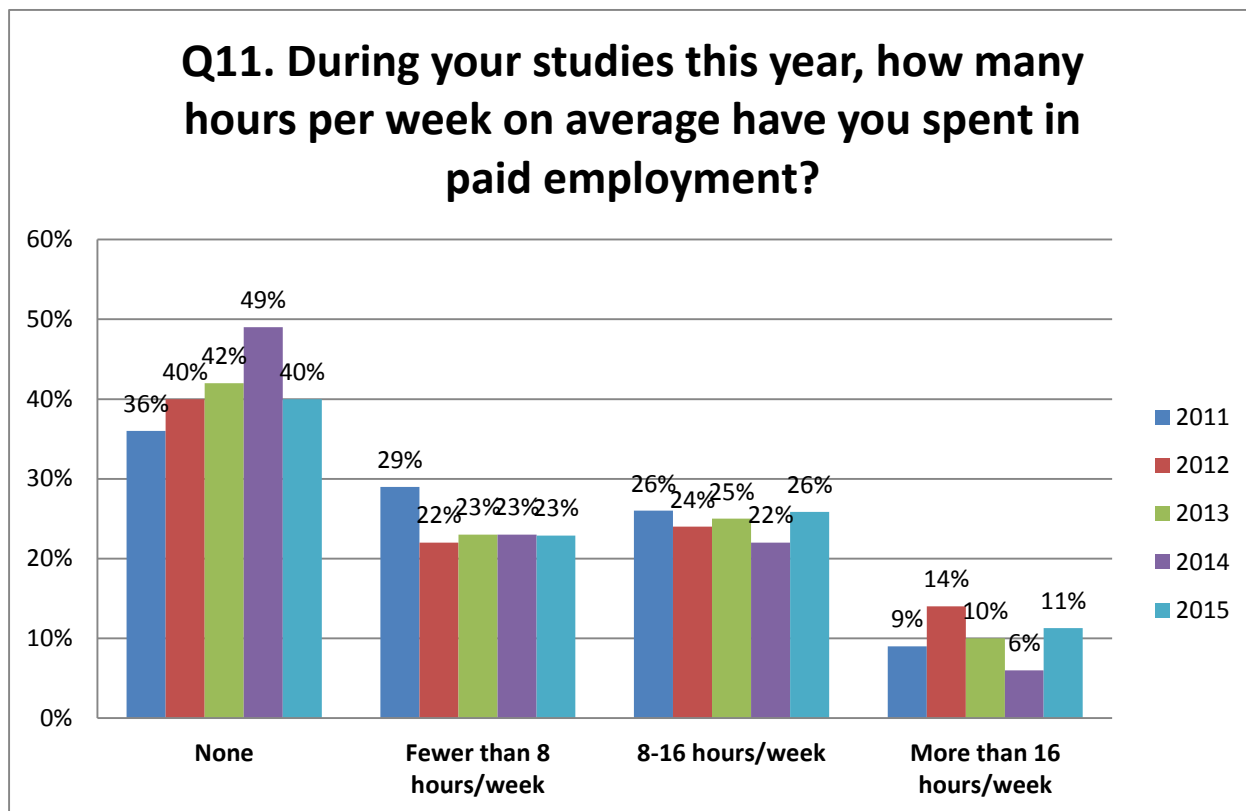
Recommendation:

That the report on the administration and impact of the Equity Scholarships Scheme 2015 be noted by relevant committees (Equity Board, Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee).

Appendix 1

Detailed Equity Scholarship Impact Survey Findings – QUT 2015

✓ All graphs in this section correspond to the data from the Equity Survey Questionnaire.

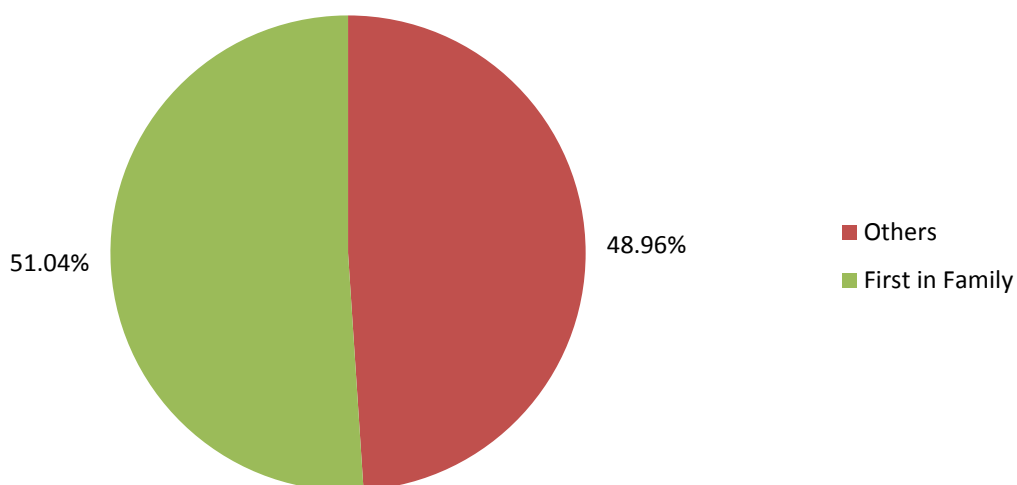


Graph 1 - Survey Question #11: During your studies this year, how many hours per week on average have you spent in paid employment? (2011-2015)

The average of paid hours worked by Australian undergraduate students is 16 hours according to the 2012 [Universities Australia](#) (UA) survey. UA surveyed more than 80,000 Australian university students in late 2012 in the [Student Finances Survey](#), providing the sector's peak national body with a comprehensive overview of student living standards. The study reveals that “more than 80 per cent of full-time undergraduates have to find a job, working on average 16 hours a week during semester. A majority reported that their job adversely affects their performance at university. A third of Australian undergraduate students said they regularly miss classes because of employment obligations, and around 17 % said they regularly went without food or other necessities because they were unable to afford them”.

The result from QUT’s scholarship impact survey shows that there has been an increase in the proportion of students who work more than 16 hours a week. The percentage of students working more than 16 hours a week has increased from 6% in 2014 to 11% in 2015.

Q12. Are you the first person in your immediate family (parents, siblings, children) to attend university?

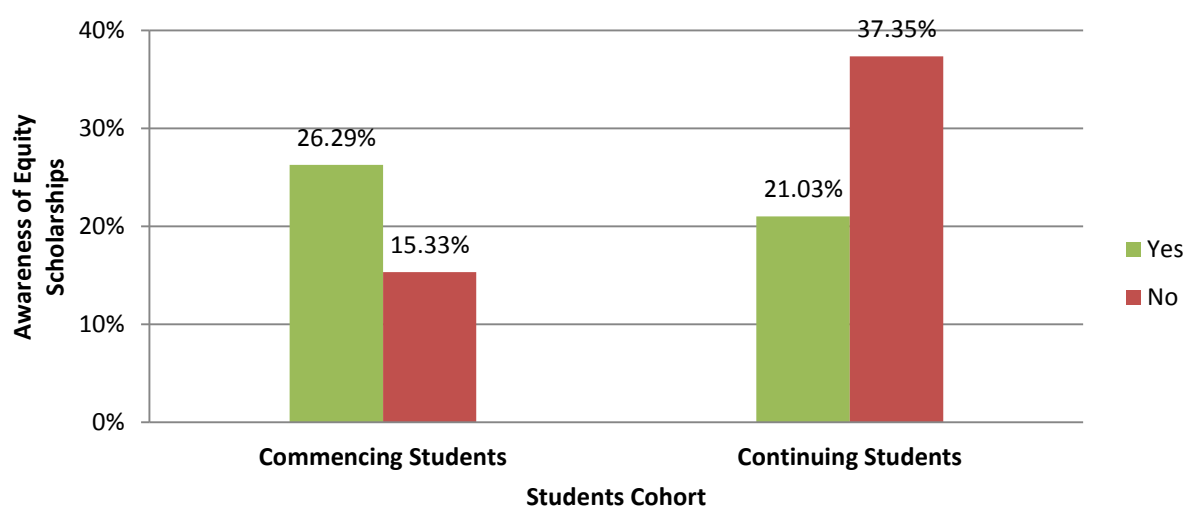


Graph 2 - Survey Question #12. Are you the first person in your immediate family (parents, siblings, children) to attend university? (2015)

In 2015, the proportion of scholarship-holders surveyed who are “first-in-the-family” to attend university was 51%, which is equal to the previous two years data.

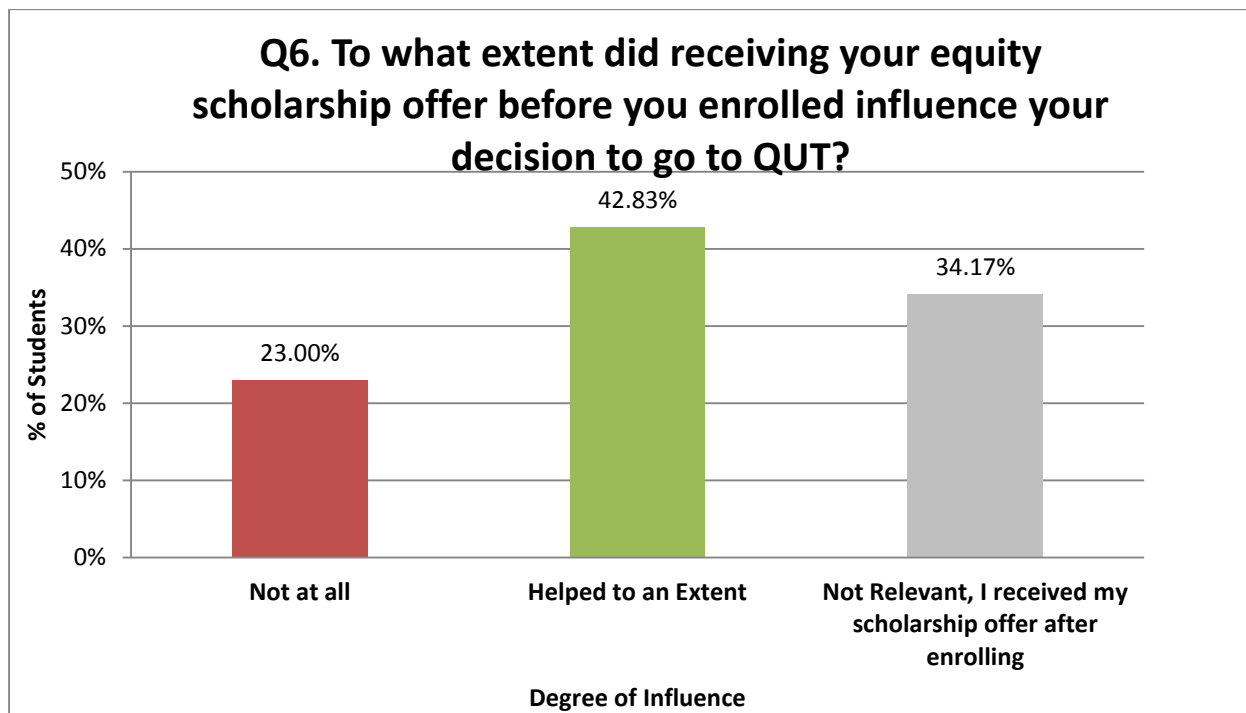
Questions four, five and six were asked to determine the “recruitment” effect of the scholarships scheme. Question five, introduced for the first time in 2011, has given a clearer perspective of the recruitment effect of the scholarships scheme.

Q3 Vs Q4. Awareness of Equity Scholarships before starting Uni among Commencing and Continuing Students



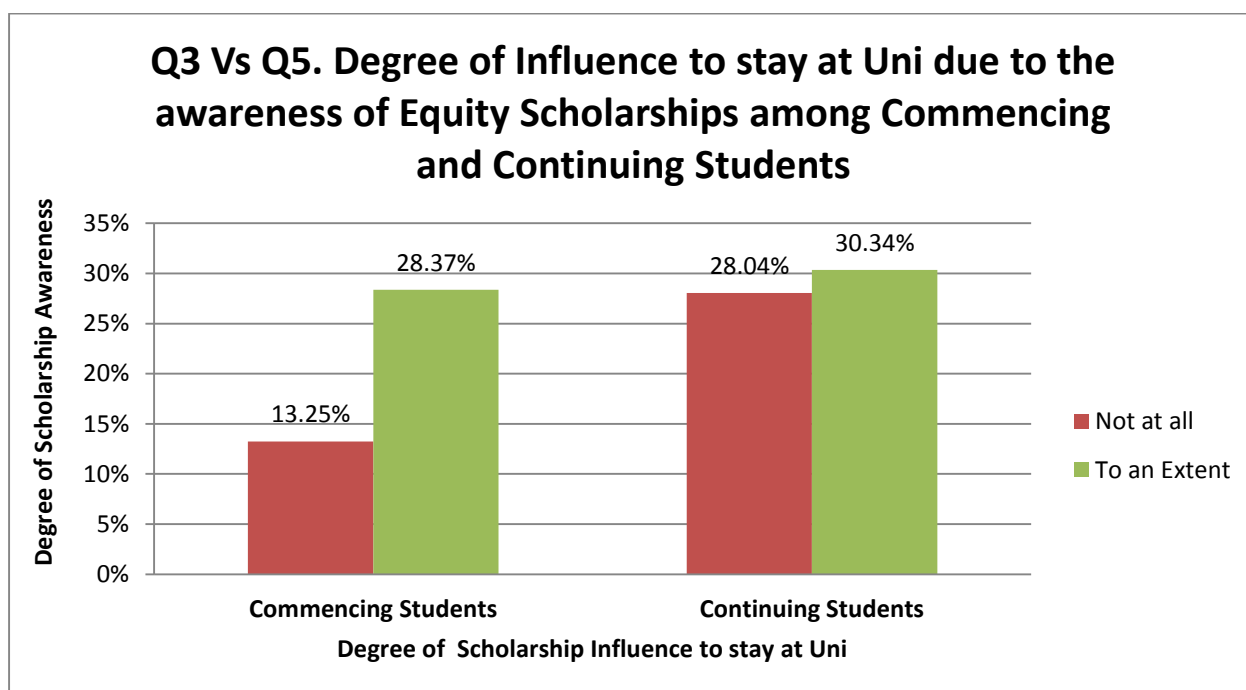
Graph 3 - Survey Questions #3 Vs #4. Awareness of Equity Scholarships before starting Uni among Commencing and Continuing Students (2015)

The commencing student cohort was found to have a higher awareness of the scholarship scheme before commencing university. This is due to the targeted marketing of scholarships as part of widening participation activities. 26.29% of commencing students were aware of the scheme as compared to 21.03% of continuing students.



Graph 4 - Survey Question #6. To what extent did receiving your equity scholarship offer before you enrolled influence your decision to go to QUT? (2015)

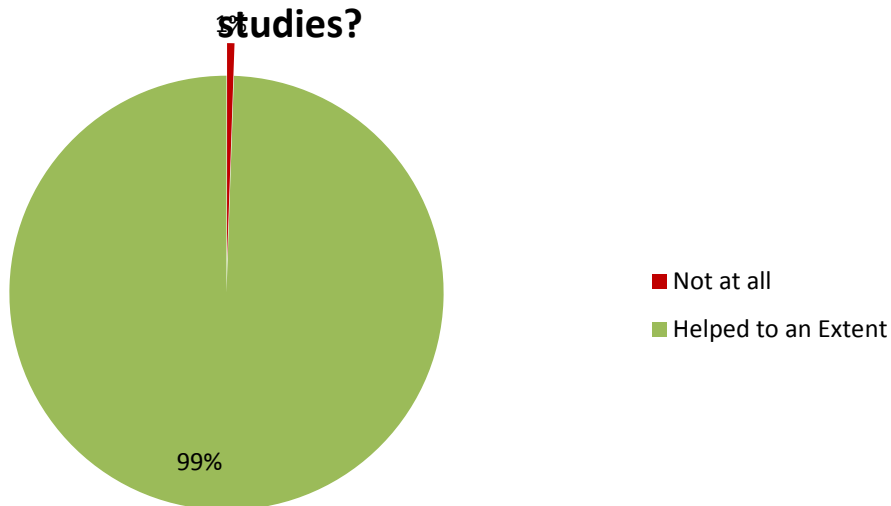
A high percentage of students said the scholarship offer before enrolment influenced their decision to go to university. 42.83% of the survey respondents found the Scholarship offer before enrolment to be helpful. This represents a strong case for offering scholarships prior to the QTAC course offer rounds and highlights the scholarships scheme's recruitment effect.



Graph 5 - Survey Questions #3 Vs #5. Degree of Influence to stay at Uni due to the awareness of Equity Scholarships among Commencing and Continuing Students (2015)

Almost 13 percent of commencers said that knowing about the scholarships did not influence their decision to go to university at all, and 28% claimed their decision was influenced from a slight to very large extent. Questions seven and eight were asked to determine the impact of the scholarship on studying.

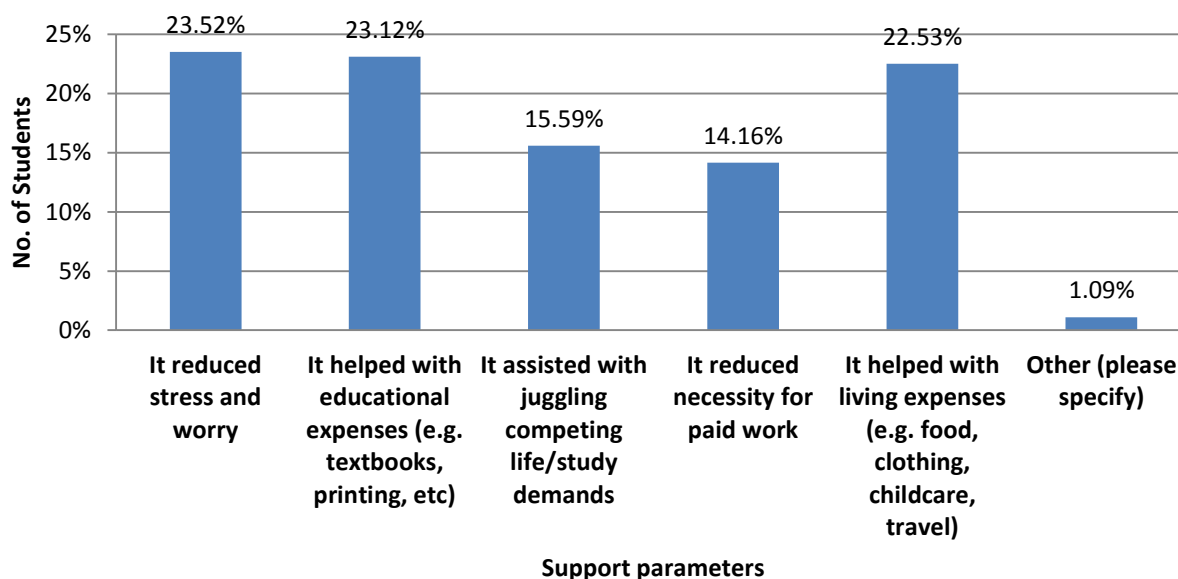
Q7. Since receiving the scholarship, to what extent has it helped you give more time and attention to your studies?



Graph 6 – Survey Question #7. Since receiving the scholarship, to what extent has it helped you give more time and attention to your studies? (2015)

An overwhelming 99% of students indicated the scholarship has helped them in giving more time and attention to their studies. This is a substantial increase in percentage from previous years which was 83% in 2014 and 79% in 2013. This strongly supports that the equity scholarships scheme works as a learning support scheme rather than a welfare scheme.

Q8. In what way did the scholarship assist you give more time and attention to your studies?

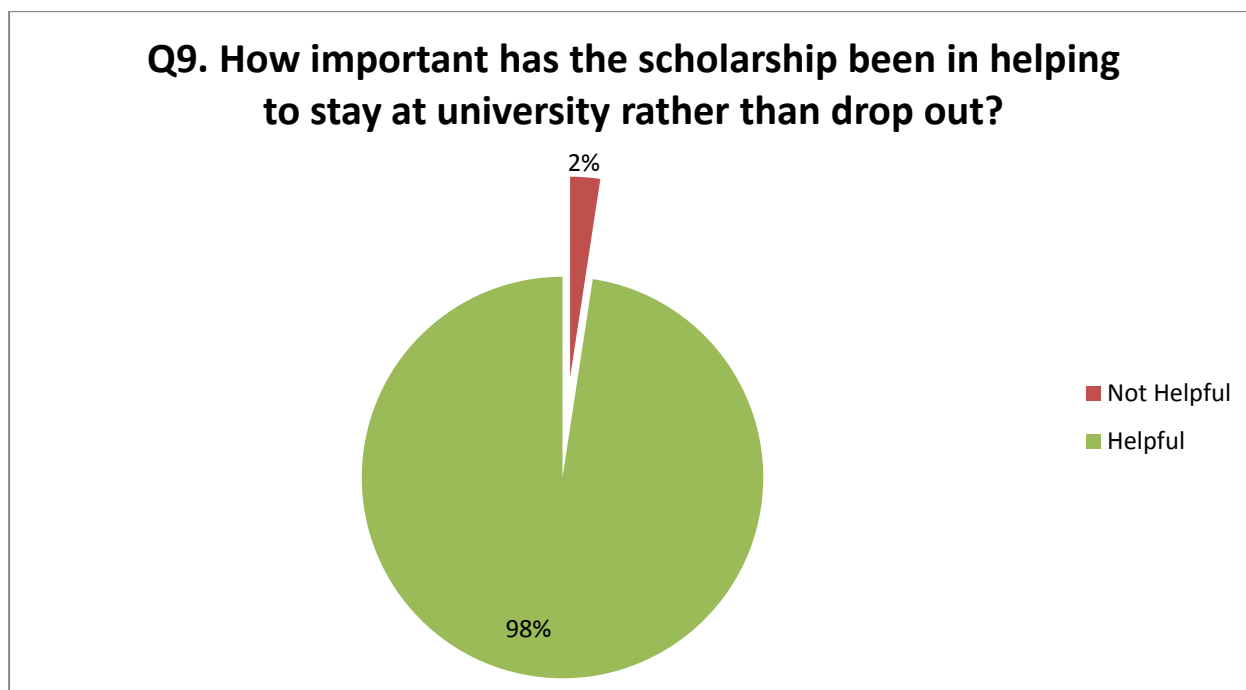


Graph 7 – Survey Question #8. In what way did the scholarship assist you give more time and attention to your studies? (2015)

None of the respondents reported that the scholarship did not assist with giving time and attention to their study. The majority of students reported that the scholarship assisted them to give more time and attention to their studies because it helped in reducing stress and worry (23.52%), it helped with educational expenses (23.12%), it helped with living expenses (22.53%), it assisted with juggling competing life/study demands (15.59%) and it reduced the necessity for paid work (14.16%). These results were remarkably consistent with data derived from the survey since 2008. They show that it is common for scholarship holders to use their additional funds on educational expenses and on buying “time” so they can study more. In addition, 130 respondents provided comments about how the scholarship helped them. As in previous years, the majority of these comments said that the scholarship helped by:

- helping to cover bills, transportation, rent, child care fees
- helping with buying course related materials such as computers and practicum
- enabling more time to be spent with family or on study
- paying medical expenses.

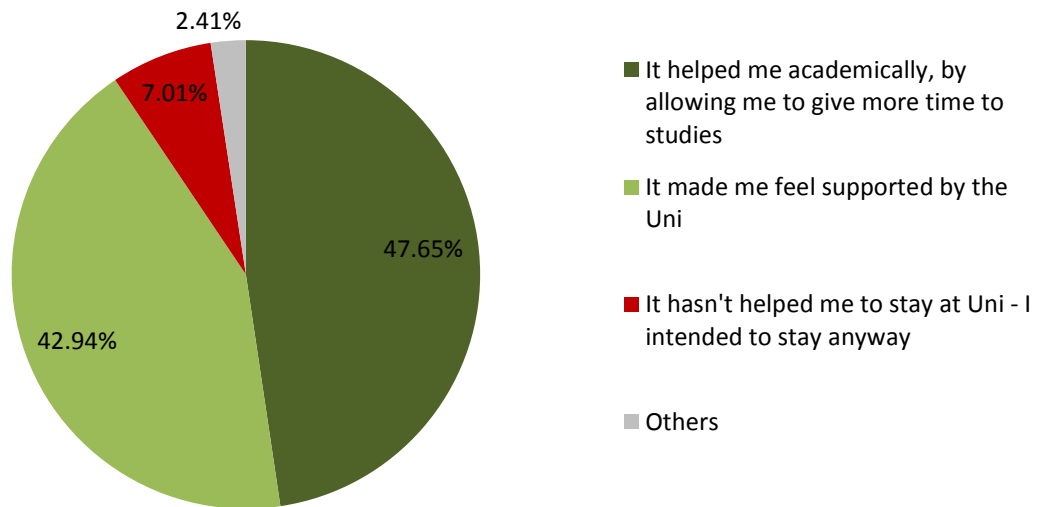
Questions nine and ten relate to the “retention” effect of the scholarship.



Graph 8 – Survey Question #9. How important has the scholarship been in helping to stay at university rather than drop out? (2015)

As in previous years, the proportion of students who said the scholarship helped them to stay at university rather than drop out was overwhelmingly positive at 98%.

Q10. In what way do you think the scholarship has helped you to stay at university?



Graph 9 – Survey Question #10. In what way do you think the scholarship has helped you to stay at university? (2015)

There was a continued increase in the proportion of respondents who said this retention effect was due to the scholarship “helping academically by allowing me to give more time and attention to my studies” (44% in 2012; 46% in 2013, 49% in 2014 and 48% in 2015). The proportion of students who said it made them “feel supported by the university” increased from 39% in 2014 to 43% in 2015. The proportion of students who said the scholarship had no retention effect, as they intended to stay anyway stayed at 7% as in the previous year.

This is reflected in the open-ended responses to question twelve where large numbers of students articulated how the scholarship helped them in multiple ways, and how grateful they are for the support.

Question 13: Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the scholarships program?

The result of an analysis of all comments from 401 respondents out of 913 survey respondents is the image below. It shows the most repetitive words in the comments in order of their visual prominence.



Graph 10 - Survey Question #13. Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the scholarships program?

44 percent of respondents provided comments and suggestions about the scholarships scheme. As in previous years, the bulk of comments were regarding the financial, academic and psychological impact that receiving a scholarship had on the respondents' life at university. A greater proportion of respondents in 2015, however, commented on the benefit of increasing the scholarship amounts due to increased cost of living:

- 25% of respondents commented on the financial impact
- 15% of respondents commented on the academic impact of less stress about financial issues
- 5% of students advised that an increase in the scholarship amount would be more beneficial
- 25% of respondents commented on the psychological impact of feeling affirmed and supported by the university
- 14% of respondents stated it helped their studies while undertaking parenting responsibilities
- 28% of respondents specified the scholarship helped with their expenses with almost 15% spending it on their text books.

Following are some of the comments from the QUT Equity Scholarships Scheme Survey respondents in 2015:

"Thank you very much for the support. The money we get at the start of the semester really sets the tone on how my semester pans out academically, as it reduces my financial stress."

"The equity scholarship I got awarded helped very much taking the stress of having to work and allowed me to focus more on my studies. So thank you :)"

"I think it is a tremendous help to students in need of financial issues. I would like to thanks the QUT equity department for their ongoing support to students in real need."

"Is a great service and shows that QUT values and supports its students"

"A life saver! Thank you!!"

"I am so immensely grateful for being a recipient of the scholarship. It helps so much financially, with textbooks and uni expenses but even for things such as when its exam time and you can't work the scholarship money helps ease the financial stress. For me, moving from Bundaberg, the scholarships meant that I was able to buy furniture and pay bond for somewhere to live. I am honestly so grateful for receiving this support and think it is such a fantastic opportunity that I hope I can one day give back to. THANK YOU SO MUCH!"

"The scholarship gave me outstanding opportunities and the ability to realistically balance a work/study balance. Without the scholarship I would easily have fallen behind in my studies. Cannot praise this scholarship enough, honestly I don't usually partake in these surveys, but it is the least I could do considering all this scholarship has done for me."

"Becoming a Learning Potential Fund Ambassador was an excellent addition to receiving the scholarship."

"Great program and initiative of the university, I would hope that they continue with supporting students into the future as it has assisted me greatly throughout my studies."

"Finance was always the big one, this scholarship was the push for me that I needed, if it wasn't for it I wouldn't be here."

"This scholarship has been so helpful to me AS WELL as my mum. It relieved some financial stress for the both of us with regard to my studies. The scholarship program is greatly appreciated by all recipients and I would definitely encourage others in a similar situation to attend QUT and apply for the bursary."

"Dear Madam/ Sir, Thank you very much for the scholarship. I greatly appreciate it. Before enrolling, I decided not to go to University because of the expensive course fee, and I couldn't study part-time as I am receiving Youth Allowance from Centrelink. Additionally, in my family, I have another twin sister who also would study in tertiary and a younger sister who was studying in year 11 at that time, and my family also has financial difficulty. Even though we are Australia's permanent residents, going to University or not was a hard decision. But my guidance officer in my Kedron High School told me that my sister and I could receive scholarships if we applied for EAS. After applying for EAS and QTAC, I got an email from both QUT and UQ about the offered scholarships. I used to think of choosing UQ because the offered scholarship was around \$5000, that would help a lot more. But QUT also offered a computer and a USB drive, on second thought, I choose QUT because all the money my family has are used for my sisters' and my studies. Both Universities have high course fees but if I chose UQ, I wouldn't have money to buy laptops/computers. They are expensive for all three of us. Finally, my sister and I chose QUT. I applied for a computer and we sharing it at home. The computer help us a lot as I don't need to worry about not having any laptops or computers at home to assist our studies. Thank you very much again, Madam/Sir!!!"

"Helped out alot with bills allowing me to work less and put that time into uni"

"I think that it is wonderful and hopefully in the future, I'll be able to donate in order to assist with this type of scholarship."

"Thank you so much, this scholarship has helped me in big ways. It allowed me to adjust to Uni without having the need to get a job, and now that I am fully adjusted to University life, I've applied and been offered a job."

"It has been a great help in my life. It's helped with a lot of expenses, for examples, textbooks (even though they were secondhand) were still expensive and transport to university."

"The scholarship has really helped me as it removed the worry of finding work in my first year of uni which has enabled me to focus on my grades which as a result have been excellent this year"

"No!!! but it has been helpful to me and my parents as it shifted the stress from my parents.. I have 7 siblings me to 8 and my parents do not have a stable job to provide my expenses and siblings at same time.. QUT scholarship gave me the opportunity to study and also help my parents with financials.. I am in grateful the help i received from QUT Scholarship Scheme Thank you :)"

"I am experiencing extreme financial hardship, and I thought I would be eligible for the \$5000 scholarship. However, despite my sad story and the tear I shared before the equity scholarship team, I was not given the \$5000 scholarship. Paying tuition fees upfront is the major financial problem I am experiencing. My centrelink payment can only help with rent, food and bills and as such I am finding life difficult at university where I have to pay tuition fees upfront. I believe when there more \$5000 scholarships available some of us who are experiencing extreme financial hardship deserve high value scholarships."

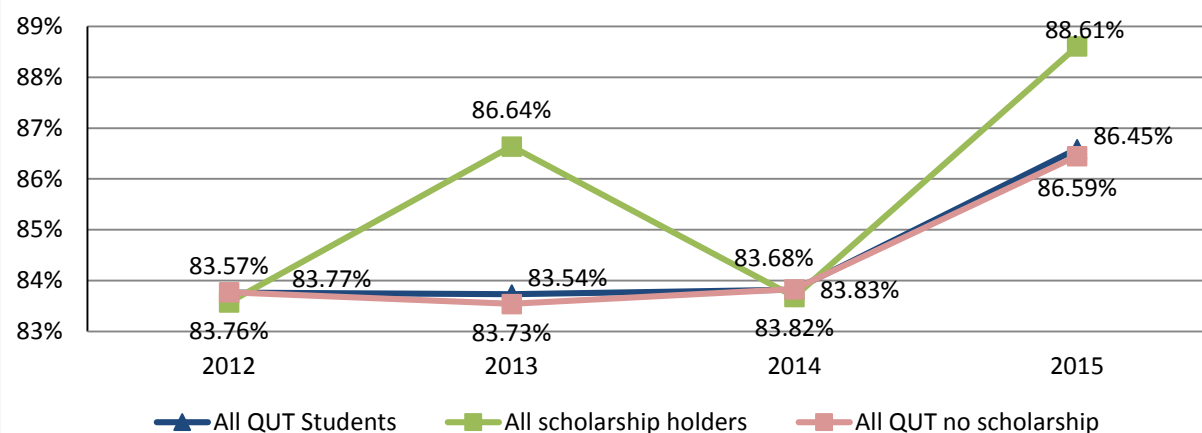
"The scholarship has been extremely valuable for me. It enabled me to buy a laptop, which has been invaluable to my studies and I believe it has greatly improved my study experience and academic performance. The equity scholarship reduced stress about being able to purchase textbooks because it gave me the funds I needed to purchase them. The scholarship allowed me to begin university with everything I needed to excel. It gave me peace of mind that I could obtain everything I needed to do well at university, letting me focus on doing my best in my studies."

Appendix 2

Retention Rate by Equity Target Group and Scholarship Holders, 2012 - 2015

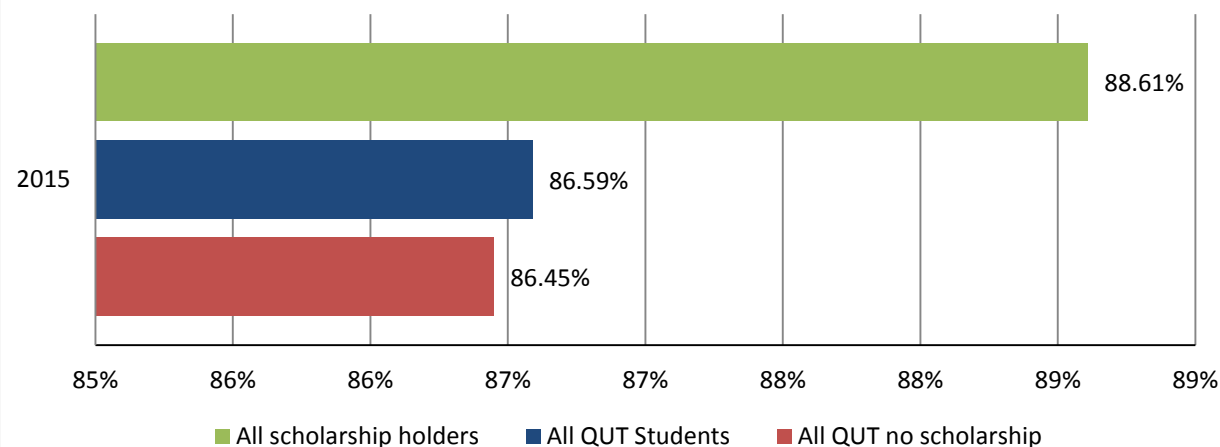
Year	2012	2013	2014	2015
Cohort	Retention %	Retention %	Retention %	Retention %
All QUT Students				
All QUT Students	83.76%	83.73%	83.82%	86.59%
All scholarship holders	83.57%	86.64%	83.68%	88.61%
All QUT no scholarship	83.77%	83.54%	83.83%	86.45%
Commencing students				
All QUT commencing	81.57%	80.78%	80.39%	84.98%
Commencing scholarship holders	82.18%	83.90%	79.52%	87.64%
Commencing no scholarship	81.52%	80.50%	80.46%	84.75%
Continuing students				
All QUT continuing	85.54%	85.94%	86.52%	87.85%
Continuing scholarship holders	85.38%	90.35%	89.33%	89.86%
Continuing no scholarship	85.54%	85.73%	86.40%	87.75%
Low SES (based on 2006 Census Postcodes)				
All QUT LSES students	82.48%	82.05%	81.70%	84.87%
LSES scholarship holders	83.21%	88.31%	84.60%	88.05%
LSES no scholarship	82.40%	81.20%	81.34%	84.44%
NESB				
All NESB students	87.53%	86.54%	87.24%	88.54%
NESB scholarship holders	96.91%	92.44%	88.00%	91.73%
NESB no scholarship	86.20%	85.50%	87.14%	87.97%
Regional and remote				
All regional and remote	80.89%	80.55%	81.17%	84.49%
Regional and remote scholarship holders	80.62%	85.24%	83.61%	86.02%
Regional and remote no scholarship	80.90%	80.27%	81.03%	84.39%
Indigenous students				
All Indigenous students	73.73%	78.46%	78.14%	82.62%
Indigenous students scholarship holders	77.63%	86.34%	80.00%	87.75%
Indigenous students no scholarship	71.63%	74.15%	76.92%	78.01%
Students with a disability				
All students with a disability	77.50%	80.09%	78.43%	84.18%
Students with a disability scholarship holders	76.82%	83.05%	79.57%	86.34%
Students with a disability no scholarship	77.63%	79.50%	78.16%	83.72%

All QUT students cohort - Trend analysis



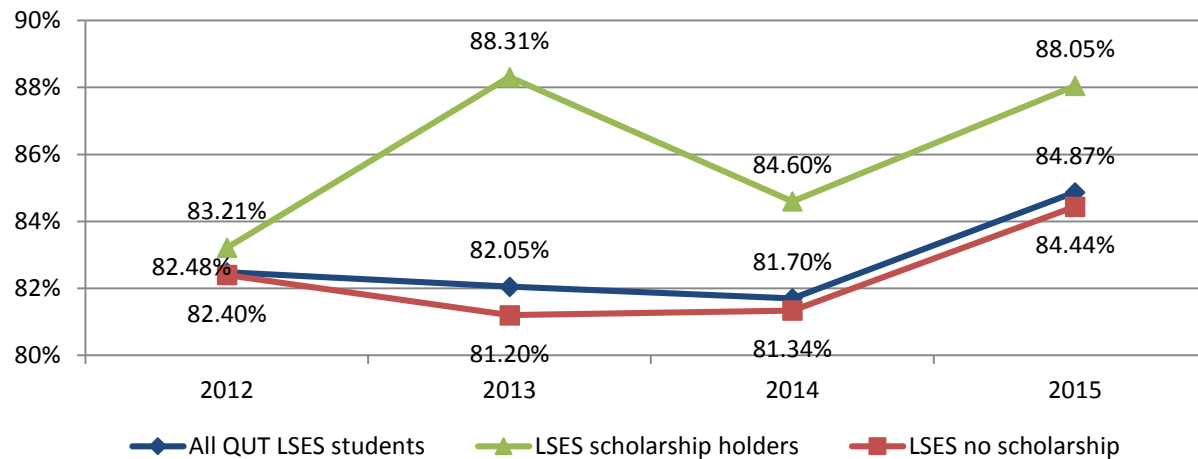
The all QUT students' cohort analysis over the years 2012 – 2015 shows an increase of retention rates for the year 2015. The Scholarship holders have the best retention rates with 88.61% as compared to the non-scholarship holders with 86.45%, while the consolidated retention rate across QUT stands at 86.59%. 2015 marks the best performance of the scholarship holders in terms of retention. In the past 4 years the retention rates of the Scholarship holders was either close to the non-scholarship holders with a variation of 0.2% and 0.15% for the years 2012 and 2014 respectively or higher with a variation of 3.1% for 2013.

All QUT students cohort - 2015



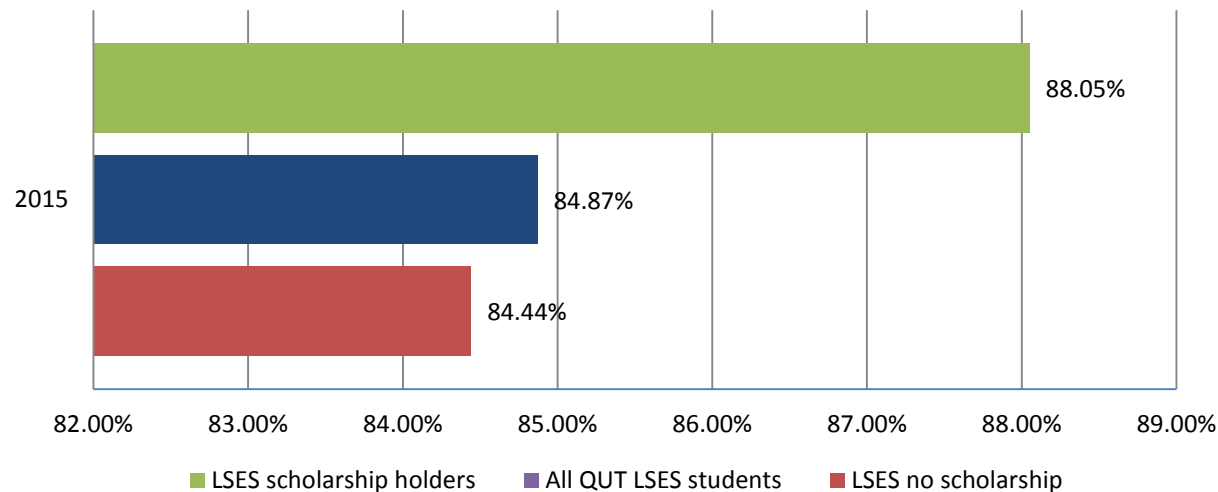
The all QUT students' cohort analysis for 2015 shows the best retention rates from the Scholarship holders with 88.61% followed by the consolidated retention rates of all QUT students with 86.59% and then the non-scholarship holders' retention with 86.45%. There is a variation of 2.16% between the scholarship holders' and the non-scholarship holders' cohorts for 2015. This indicates the impact of equity scholarships scheme on the retention rates of the scholarship holders.

LSES students cohort - Trend analysis



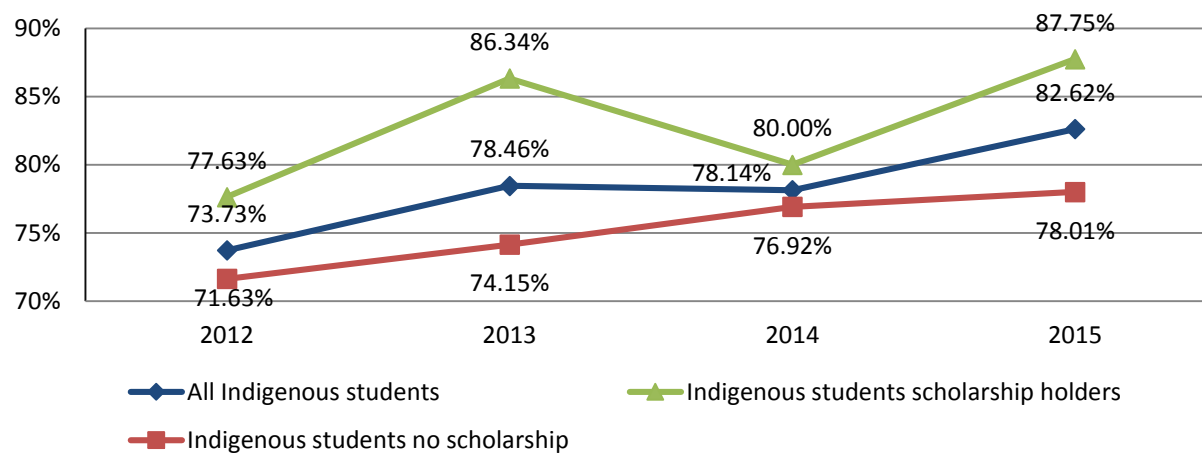
The LSES students' cohort trend analysis over the years 2012 – 2015 shows the best combined retention rates for all the cohorts. The Scholarship holders with best retention rate of 88.05% followed by the consolidated retention rates of all QUT LSES students with 84.87% and then the LSES non-scholarship holders' retention with 84.44%. Over the years, the LSES scholarship holders have consistently showed better retention rates than their non-scholarship holder counterparts. The variation in retention rates between the Scholarship holders and the non-scholarship holders was the highest in the year 2013 with 7.11% and lowest in 2012 with 0.81%.

LSES students cohort - 2015



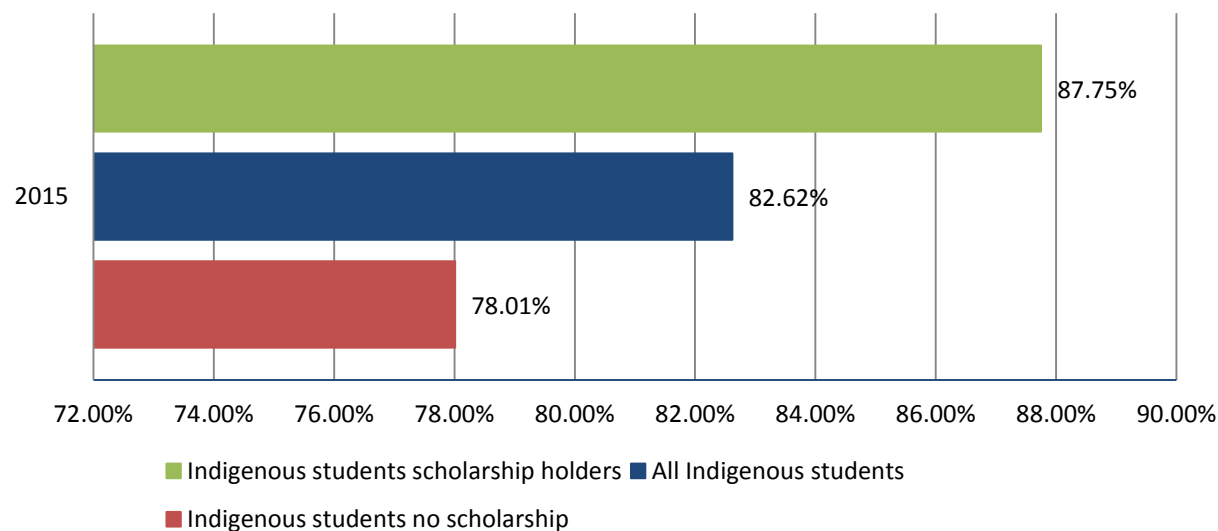
The LSES students' cohort analysis for 2015 shows the Scholarship holders retention rate was higher than the other cohorts with 88.05% followed by the consolidated retention rates of all QUT LSES students with 84.87% and then the LSES non-scholarship holders' retention with 84.44%. There is a variation of 3.61% between the scholarship holders' and the non-scholarship holders' cohorts for 2015. This indicates the impact of equity scholarships scheme on the retention rates of the scholarship holders.

Indigenous students cohort - Trend analysis

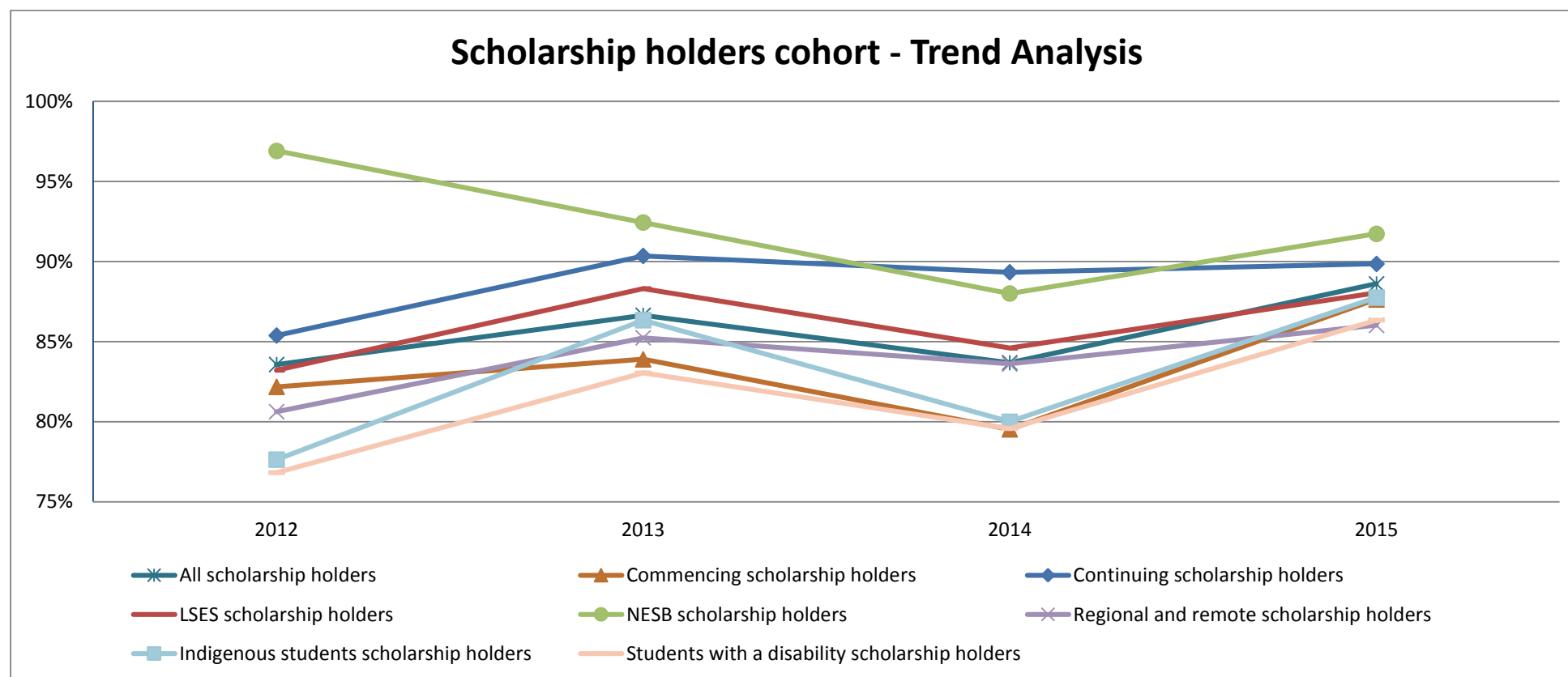


The Indigenous students' cohort analysis over the years 2012 – 2015 shows an increase of retention rates for the year 2015. The Scholarship holders have the best retention rates with 87.75% as compared to the non-scholarship holders with 78.01%, while the consolidated retention rate across QUT stands at 82.62%. 2015 marks the best performance of the scholarship holders in terms of retention. In the past 4 years the retention rates of the Scholarship holders has always been higher than the non-scholarship holders with a variation of 6%, 12.19%, 3.08%, and 9.74% for the years 2012 through 2015 respectively.

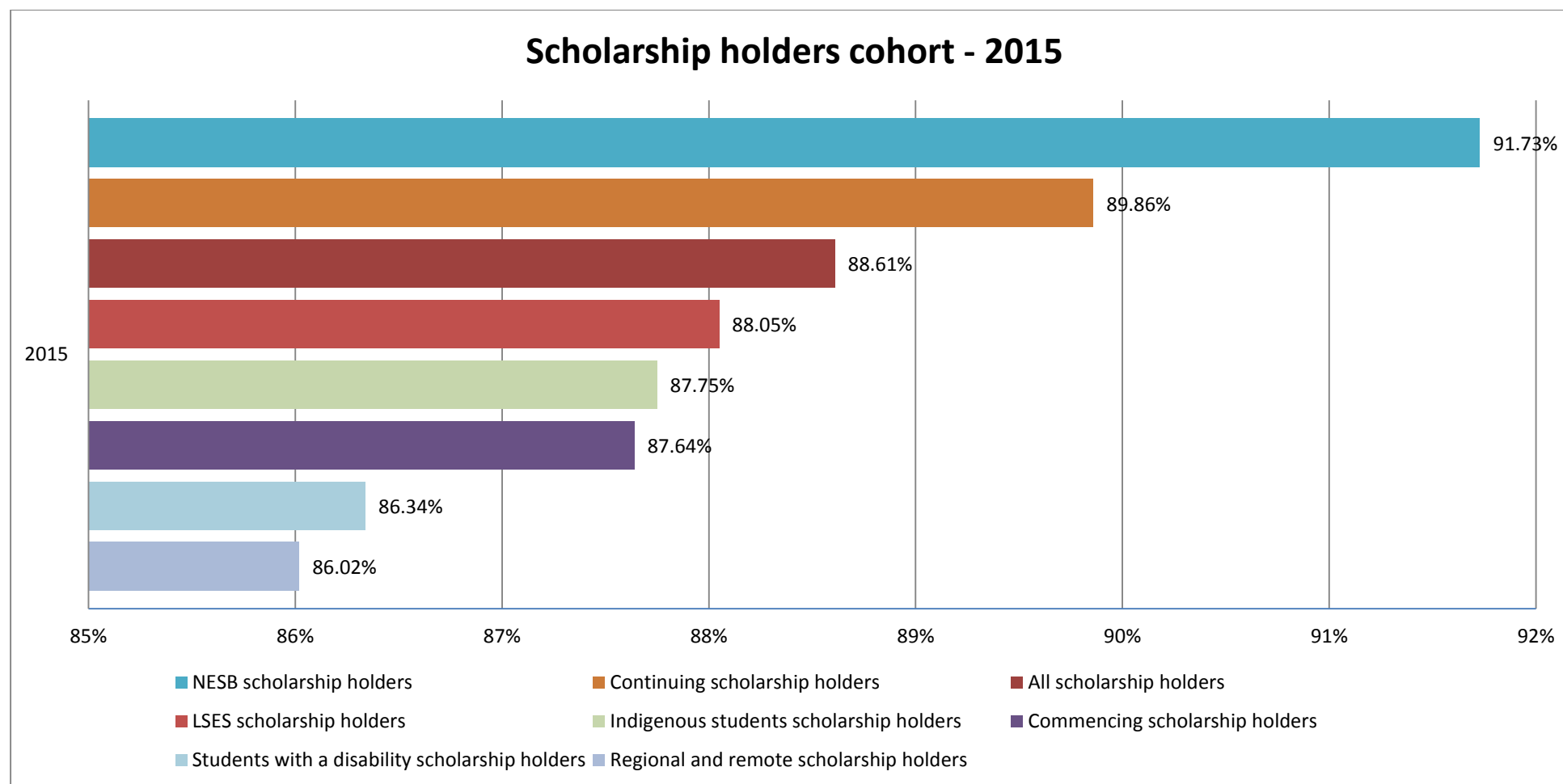
Indigenous students cohort - 2015



The Indigenous students' cohort analysis for 2015 shows the Scholarship holders retention rate was higher than the other cohorts with 87.75% followed by the consolidated retention rates of all Indigenous students with 82.62% and then the Indigenous non-scholarship holders' retention with 78.01%. There is a variation of 9.74% between the scholarship holders' and the non-scholarship holders' cohorts for 2015. This indicates the impact of equity scholarships scheme on the retention rates of the scholarship holders.



The trend analysis of all Scholarship holders' cohorts over the years 2012 – 2015 indicates the Scholarships impact in the retention rates for nEsb students has been higher as compared to the other cohorts while the retention rates for students with a disability has been comparatively lower. It is also observed that all the cohorts showed an improved retention rate from the previous years. 2015 has been the best retention year across all Scholarship holders' cohorts.



In the year 2015 the retention rates of nEsb Scholarship holders were higher than the other cohorts with 91.73%, while the regional and remote area scholarship holder students registered a lower retention rate comparatively with 86.02%. All the Scholarship holder cohorts had a higher retention rate than their respective non-scholarship holder cohorts for 2015.

Appendix 3

Equity Scholarship Survey Questionnaire

QUESTION	QUESTION TEXT
1	In what year did you commence your studies at QUT?
2	How did you find out about Equity Scholarships at QUT? QUT Open Day TSXPO QUT website Explore Uni school visit or camp QUT Publications Posters or other promotional material (e.g. shuttle bus ads) Referral, i.e. doctor, guidance officer, counselling services Explore your QUT booklet/O-Week materials Other (please specify) [.....]
3	Which of the following applies to your situation (tick one only)? I am new to QUT this year and I received my scholarship offer before I enrolled I am new to QUT this year and I received my scholarship offer after I enrolled I am a continuing student at QUT
4	Were you aware of Commonwealth Scholarships or QUT Equity Scholarships before you started university study? Yes No
5	Did knowing about these scholarship programs influence your decision to go to university? not at all to a slight extent to a moderate extent to a large extent to a very large extent
6	To what extent did receiving your equity scholarship offer before you enrolled influence your decision to go to QUT? not at all to a slight extent to a moderate extent to a large extent to a very large extent not relevant, I received my scholarship offer after enrolling
7	Since receiving the scholarship, to what extent has it helped you give more time and attention to your studies? not at all to a slight extent to a moderate extent to a large extent to a very large extent
8	In what way did the scholarship assist you give more time and attention to your studies? It reduced stress and worry

	<p>It helped with educational expenses (e.g. textbooks, printing, etc)</p> <p>It assisted with juggling competing life/study demands</p> <p>It reduced necessity for paid work</p> <p>It helped with living expenses (e.g. food, clothing, childcare, travel)</p> <p>Other (please specify)</p> <p>[.....]</p>
9	<p>How important has the scholarship been in helping to stay at university rather than drop out?</p> <p>1 (not helpful)</p> <p>2</p> <p>3 (helpful)</p> <p>4</p> <p>5 (essential)</p>
10	<p>In what way do you think the scholarship has helped you to stay at university?</p> <p>It helped me academically, by allowing me to give more time and attention to my studies</p> <p>It made me feel supported by the university</p> <p>It hasn't helped me to stay at university - I intended to stay anyway</p> <p>Other (please specify)</p> <p>[.....]</p>
11	<p>During your studies this year, how many hours per week on average have you spent in paid employment?</p> <p>none</p> <p>fewer than 8 hours/week</p> <p>8-16 hours/week</p> <p>more than 16 hours/week</p>
12	<p>Are you the first person in your immediate family (parents, siblings, children) to attend university?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
13	<p>Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the scholarships program?</p> <p>[.....]</p>