CASE STUDY

The role of research metrics at a top-ranked global university: The University of Queensland

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SciVal® is one of the tools used at The University of Queensland to assess and benchmark its research output. The solution works with the university's repository UQ eSpace to generate detailed reports that support various research evaluation activities. The data derived using SciVal has enabled a more meaningful analysis of research performance.
The University of Queensland (UQ) in Brisbane, Australia, has long been known for world-class research that has far-reaching social, economic, health and environmental impacts. Research success is measured by quality and impact. International rankings highlight the excellence of UQ’s research performance. The 2015 Excellence in Research for Australia assessment ranked all UQ’s research at world standard or above. The results reaffirmed UQ as one of the nation’s three leading research-focused universities. Elsevier’s SciVal is used at the university to analyse its research profile. The data can be used in a variety of ways to assess research output and impact.

Dr Amberyn Thomas, Associate Director of the UQ Library’s Scholarly Communication and Repository Services, and her colleagues in the Research Outputs and Impact team have responded to a growing demand for reports on UQ research for the purposes of:

• Developing an accurate assessment of the university’s performance compared to the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) benchmarks
• Evaluating the university’s existing strengths and uncovering potential areas of inquiry
• Supporting grant applications

The ability to import data directly into SciVal from the university’s repository - UQ eSpace - has helped the team increase the efficiency and precision of its reporting. It has provided the team with new and useful ways to access the data in the repository, enabling a more meaningful understanding of the university’s research output, including data on research collaborations with other global institutions.

As Queensland’s largest university, it has over 50,000 students including more than 12,200 postgraduates and approximately 11,400 international students and has one of the largest PhD enrolments in Australia.

Executive Summary

Since it was founded in 1909, The University of Queensland (UQ) has made significant contributions to Queensland, Australia and the world. The university is one of Australia’s leading teaching and research universities, ranked in the world’s top 50 by the QS World University Rankings and Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities, and well within the top 100 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings and the Academic Ranking of World Universities.

UQ is one of only three Australian members of the global Universitas 21, a founding member of the Group of Eight (Go8) universities, and a member of Universities Australia.

The university has one of the largest academic libraries in Australia. UQ Library provides information and library services at each of the university’s campuses, as well as at major teaching hospitals in Brisbane and regionally. The Ranking Web of World Repositories ranks the research repository UQ eSpace among the top 20 worldwide, and second in Oceania.

For more information, see www.uq.edu.au
We want to use the best research tools to understand our rich research portfolio in more meaningful ways. By being able to aggregate disparate data sets on a number of levels, the Elsevier solutions have allowed us to learn new information about our scholarship, and make strategic, evidence-based decisions in research management.

- DR. AMBERYN THOMAS, Associate Director
Scholarly Communication and Repository Services, UQ Library
To meet the university’s demand for an efficient way to analyse its research performance and benchmark with other global universities, Dr. Thomas and her team turned to SciVal.

SciVal provides access to the research performance data of 7,500 research institutions worldwide. Importantly, SciVal also works with the university’s repository UQ eSpace, which includes more than 240,000 records of the university’s research output, including a growing number of research data records.

UQ eSpace is populated on a weekly basis using sophisticated workflows that capture publications information from databases like Scopus and Web of Science, as well as human resources and organisational structure data to associate publications with researchers and their faculty, school or centre.

“Using our data warehouse, we have the ability to segment the publications in our repository at a very detailed level and generate a list of publication EIDs,” Dr. Thomas said. She continues, “This can be the complete output of a school or a group of researchers during a certain time period. These lists can then be fed into SciVal as a publication set where we can do detailed analyses, using a range of metrics.”

With SciVal, UQ Library’s Research Outputs and Impact team are able to analyse the latest data from disparate data sets across the university’s systems. As a result, they have increased the frequency and speed with which they can produce research intelligence reports. Their rich analyses are drawing the attention of more and more staff at the university, and demand for bibliometric data has seen a sizeable increase.

“SciVal has made it easier to benchmark critical categories against each other, down to a researcher and paper level.”

- DR. AMBERYN THOMAS, Associate Director Scholarly Communication and Repository Services, UQ Library

By 2016, we expect to have generated 100 reports for our schools,” Dr. Thomas said. “We now have the potential to be very specific with our analyses in ways that were not possible before. SciVal has made it easier to benchmark critical categories against each other, down to a researcher and paper level.”

Other units at the university are also uncovering new uses for SciVal.
The ability to slice the publication data using our UQ eSpace repository and for further evaluation in SciVal is a total game changer. The fact that this can be quickly done has significantly reduced the preparation process, freeing up more time to focus on our investigations and enhancing our research strategy.

- DR. AMBERYN THOMAS, Associate Director
  Scholarly Communication and Repository Services, UQ Library

Example analyses done in SciVal using publication data segmented by UQ eSpace. Dr. Thomas gets the metric highlights of the resulting Publication Set in the Overview module and then compares its relative performance in the Benchmarking module.