

Priority Research Themes

Investment and participation in high quality research, and the use of research findings, ensures our initiatives are based on the best available evidence, and supports delivery of Queensland Government priorities.

The Queensland Government is committed to providing Queenslanders with a policy agenda which prioritises jobs, health and education, and takes strong action for the community.

The Department of Education (the Department) supports research that assists us to deliver effective and focussed education, now and into the future. The Department has identified **Priority Research Themes** to maximise the benefits to the government and local communities of research undertaken within schools or other departmental locations.

The Priority Research Themes and our list of **priority research questions** align closely with the [Queensland Government objectives for the community](#).

Our **Priority Research Themes** inform research activity in the Department including investment and participation decisions. These themes are broad and respond to the continuum of portfolio interests of the Department. Similarly, priority research questions may apply to a range of diverse groups and contexts, including the priorities of local education communities.

All research applications to conduct research in departmental sites are assessed on their merit. The priority research questions identified under each Priority Research Theme are used to encourage researchers to investigate critical areas of relevance to the Department, inform research approval processes and prioritise participation in research projects.

Research applications without demonstrated alignment to priority research questions may not be accepted by the Department for review.

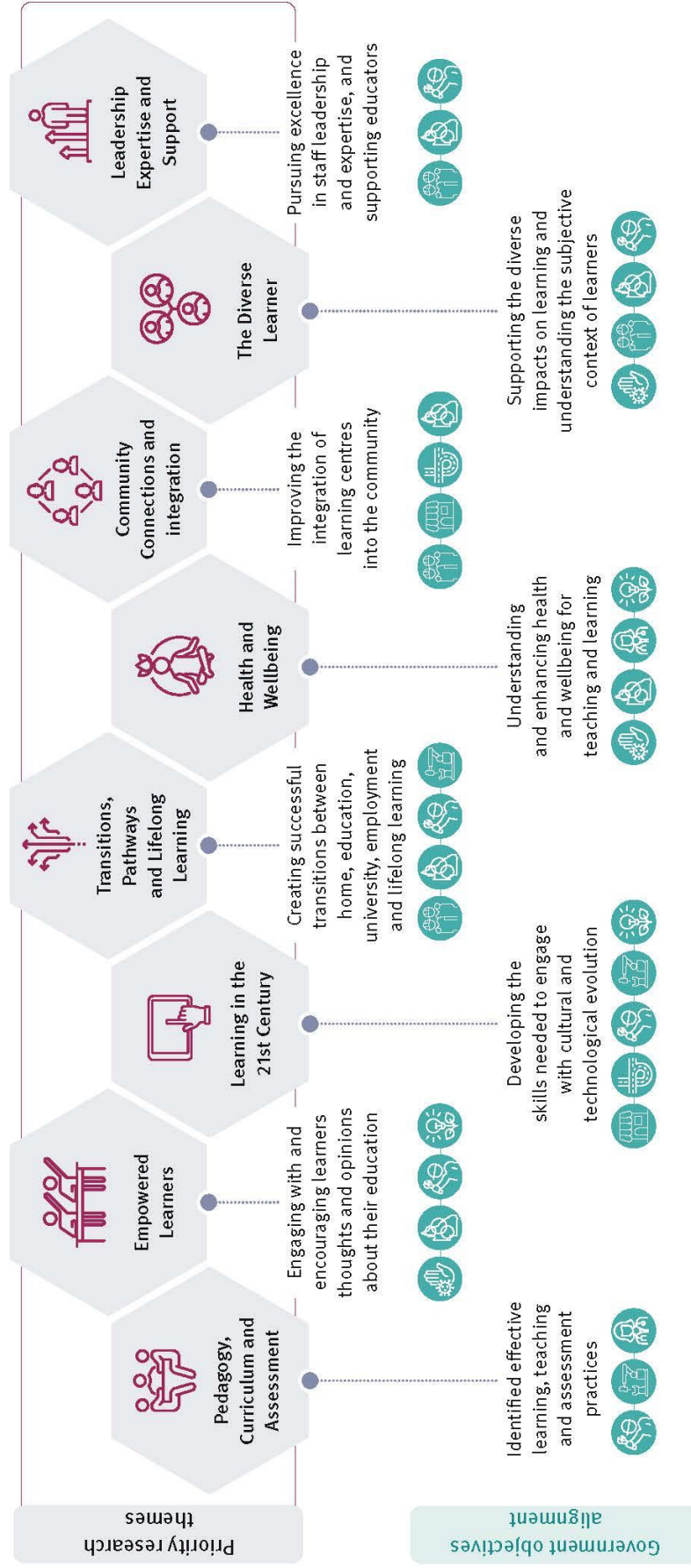
Further information on the **Priority Research Themes** is contained in this document, including the list of priority research questions for each theme.

Priority Research Themes:



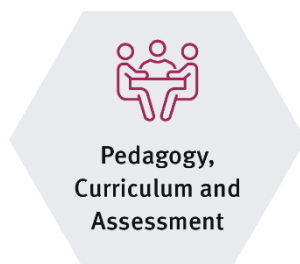
Priority research themes and Government objective alignment:

Priority research themes and Government objective alignment



Government objectives key

- Safeguarding health
- Supporting jobs
- Backing small business
- Building Queensland
- Growing our regions
- Investing in skills
- Making it for Queensland
- Backing frontline services
- Protecting the environment



Pedagogy, Curriculum and Assessment

Priority Research Theme

New evidence is continually emerging regarding what is important for young children and students to know, and how best to learn, teach and assess. This poses significant challenges for curricula, pedagogy and assessment practices. The Department values research which will help us identify and apply evidence-based practices that enable positive outcomes for students.

Priority Research Questions

- How can we build teachers' confidence to embed the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities (literacy, numeracy, ICT capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding, intercultural understanding) across the curriculum they are responsible for teaching?
- What approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy increase the engagement and performance of underperforming learners?
- What interactions with educational data produce the most significant changes in teacher behaviour, knowledge and values?
- What pedagogy, curriculum and assessment practices are most effective for improving the outcomes of students with a disability? How can assistive technologies best be utilised to support inclusive education?
- How do we measure children's learning and development outcomes in early years services?
- What are the best practices for gauging and facilitating learning growth in students in the early years?
- How are schools responding to curriculum, assessment and reporting reform in senior secondary and what are the effects on student learning and outcomes?
- How are schools, education systems and learning centres designing, implementing and measuring the outcomes of STEM curricula and programs?

Note: Questions may apply to different groups and contexts, including the priorities of local education communities.



Empowered Learners

Priority Research Theme

The Department respects and values the opinions of learners and welcomes research which builds knowledge and provides evidence of educational experiences and pedagogies which will improve learners' outcomes and experience.

Priority Research Questions

- What do children, young people and families view as the essential purposes of education, and the essential characteristics of effective teachers and educators?
- How does evaluation and translation of research best occur in classrooms and learning centres, in partnership with their learners and learning communities?
- What are the barriers that prevent learners from conceptualising education as an investment for their future? How can the principles of behavioural economics be used to alleviate such educational barriers?
- What factors enable students to have a say on issues related to their education in ways that are important to them?
- What do students from diverse backgrounds perceive as important to ensure their education success?
- How can schools foster a culture that values and focuses on the strengths of all students?
- How can schools, regions and education systems be responsive to key issues identified as important to young people, such as mental health, environmental sustainability, equity and discrimination?
- What are the benefits of teaching children critical thinking/reasoning and problem solving from an earlier age, including beneficial impacts on key learning areas and preparing learners for the jobs of the future?

Note: Questions may apply to different groups and contexts, including the priorities of local education communities.



Learning in the 21st Century

Priority Research Theme

Technological and cultural change is affecting Queensland society in many ways. Further research is needed to identify the opportunities and impacts of technological and cultural change on ways of learning, pedagogies and learning spaces, to optimise educational outcomes.

Priority Research Questions

- How should quality early learning environments be designed to respond to the developmental skills and interests, age, and needs of diverse learners?
- How can the knowledge from neuroscience be translated to influence the practice of early childhood educators and teachers?
- How are students being prepared for entrepreneurship and global leadership at school? What are the hallmarks of successful engagement in this regard?
- How do educators effectively adapt pedagogy to capitalise on technological change? What are the barriers to teachers and schools including new technologies with respect to teaching, learning and wellbeing in schools?
- How do we harness blended learning approaches to enrich educational experiences for students?
- What is the role of languages in developing global competence?
- What school-wide approaches are most effective (in implementation and outcomes) in educating students about the safe and positive use of smart devices and on-line safety?
- What Information and Communication Technology (ICT) needs do children and young people have across the state? In what ways do patterns of access and use of technology affect educational outcomes, especially for vulnerable and socially disadvantaged students?

Note: Questions may apply to different groups and contexts, including the priorities of local education communities.



Transitions Pathways and Lifelong Learning

Priority Research Theme

Positive transitions between early childhood learning centres and school, and different levels of education and training, are critical for learners of all ages and abilities. The Department values research which will inform effective transition strategies at a systemic and local level and help deliver positive outcomes for learners.

Priority Research Questions

- How can schools and/or school communities transition all students successfully? How can we measure/define a successful transition for children and families experiencing vulnerability?
- What school-level factors and initiatives predict successful long-term outcomes for students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, rural and remote and/or low socio-economic communities, if we monitor their progress from early childhood through to post-schooling?
- How can opportunities for students in disadvantaged communities be maximised? What strategies are effective to alleviate the sense of 'hopelessness' for students in these communities?
- What enables effective educational transitions for vulnerable learners and learners with special needs, such as the transition from special school to mainstream schooling, or transition for learners involved in youth justice?
- How can schools respond to the risks of decreased student retention and increased disciplinary absence following transition from primary to secondary school?
- What are effective school and system strategies to support middle years learners to achieve and stay engaged in education?
- How can schools partner with their local industries and tertiary providers to successfully support students into a diverse and equitable range of post school pathways? How can schools support students to make life choices that are meaningful to them?
- What are the specific school capabilities required to increase school retention to Year 12 and support successful transitions to further study or work for all students in Queensland?

Note: Questions may apply to different groups and contexts, including the priorities of local education communities.



Health and Wellbeing

Priority Research Theme

There is a proven link between health, wellbeing, and productivity. The Department values research that supports the health and wellbeing of all staff and learners. A better understanding of the impacts of health and wellbeing on learning and other outcomes will support the Department in implementing best practice across the system.

Priority Research Questions

- How can we build capability within the workforce to understand and embed protective factors within a child's first 1000 days?
- What strategies are effective for developing a whole-school approach to support student and staff health and wellbeing? How can local mechanisms support implementation, such as Regional Offices and partnerships with providers/agencies?
- What are the relationships between mental health issues and student disengagement? What are appropriate and effective school based and classroom strategies to support students with mental health issues?
- How can education systems and schools support the health and wellbeing of young people including protecting young people from the harmful effects of bullying and harassment based on gender and sexuality?
- How can systems and capabilities across agencies be better utilised to improve the wellbeing of children and their families and staff, including in remote areas?
- What might be the impacts of large-scale threats (such as climate change, natural disasters and other health or economic crises) on the health and wellbeing of students (mental health, physical health, impact on learning), including in rural and remote areas? How can schools educate for a sustainable future in the face of such threats?
- How does the physical school environment (e.g. administrative areas, outdoor areas, classrooms and amenities) affect staff and student health and wellbeing and student learning?
- What are effective approaches to manage issues associated with workload and the social burden on teachers, principals and staff, to support wellbeing and retention?
- How do educators best support and work with traumatised children and students?
- How do the contemporary stages of child cognitive, emotional, behavioural, social and physical development interact with learning, learner voice and the education system?



Community, Connections and Integration

Priority Research Theme

Research suggests that early years education and schooling works best when the learning environment is integrated into the community and responsive to the local community. The Department encourages research which provides evidence to build our understanding of the complex relationships between early learning centres, schools, learners, parents, and the broader community, including universities, business and industry.

Priority Research Questions

- How can schools make and use connections, locally and internationally, to develop teachers' and students' global competencies?
- How can schools, education facilities, and local communities work together to prevent and ameliorate the impact of poverty and disadvantage on outcomes for children across the social, emotional, physical and cognitive domains?
- How can schools, local communities, organisations and families collaborate to foster a two-way relationship that has benefits for all partners and the holistic needs of learners?
- What are the key factors in educators building strong and respectful connections with the families and communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners to improve outcomes and empower cultural identity?
- How can vulnerable students who have high absence rates be engaged in education, including students who experience significant illness?
- How can schools and systems proactively enable meaningful parent engagement and collaboration for student learning and wellbeing?
- How do education and external child support providers effectively collaborate with learning centres, learners (particularly disenfranchised learners) and parents to achieve better educational outcomes?
- How can the capacity of school leadership teams be developed to understand and link pools of data in partnership with communities?

Note: Questions may apply to different groups and contexts, including the priorities of local education communities.



The Diverse Learner

Priority Research Theme

Learners bring a wide variety of life experience with them into learning activities, and these experiences can have a significant impact on their dispositions to learning, motivation and application to the learning task, as well as to learning outcomes. Research which facilitates better outcomes for learners of all backgrounds and abilities is valued by the Department. Of special significance is research which facilitates better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Priority Research Questions

- How can gifted and talented learners from diverse backgrounds best be identified, assessed and supported?
- What are the patterns of school participation, attainment, achievement and behavioural indicators for students from diverse backgrounds?
- How can academic performance, wellbeing and retention of disenfranchised learners be best supported at the school and system level? How can students who are under-achieving best be identified, assessed and supported?
- What strategies are most effective to support behaviour change with students who engage in bullying of peers in the school environment?
- How can schools and communities successfully create inclusive environments for learners with diverse identities and capabilities?
- How do teachers and schools engage successfully with a diverse range of parents of students with disability, as equal partners in their child's education? What makes the difference for the family and the student?
- What pedagogies and approaches support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in schools to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D students to access the curriculum and demonstrate achievement?
- How do education systems effectively increase leaders' cultural capability to better improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students?
- What are the enablers of system change that will give parents of children with disability the confidence that their child can succeed in a learning environment?

Note: Questions may apply to different groups and contexts, including the priorities of local education communities.



Leadership, Expertise and Support

Priority Research Theme

Research shows that effective leadership can improve the responsiveness and performance of learning centres on a variety of measures (across the early years and school education). Effective leadership can be encouraged and developed, and expertise shared to enhance outcomes for both staff and learners. The Department values research on how staff leadership and educator expertise can best be supported.

Priority Research Questions

- What are effective leadership models, practices and success factors that drive school and education system improvement outcomes?
- What approaches enable meaningful community engagement for educators and leaders? How can educators utilise cultural voice as a means to inform the development and implementation of education initiatives?
- How are successful school leaders adapting their approaches to leadership in response to the demands and challenges of the 21st century, including through inquiry-based leadership?
- How can leadership development and opportunities for middle leaders best be supported and operationalised?
- What internal aspects of teachers (e.g. sense of place identity, psychological feeling) mediate retention, especially in rural and remote areas? How effective are induction and onboarding processes at facilitating staff retention in this regard?
- What are effective evidence-based strategies to attract and retain teachers across career stages and hard to staff locations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers?
- What is the role of coaching and mentoring in enabling confident leadership in schools?
- How does the amount and type of resourcing provided to a school, above and beyond the “fixed” costs of meeting minimum operating costs, make a difference to student outcomes?
- How can education systems capitalise on diverse qualifications to mature workforce capability, including micro-credentialing?
- What are the main barriers preventing individuals changing careers and entering post-graduate teaching programs and/or discouraging preservice teachers from teaching in a classroom once they graduate? How can post-graduate pathways into teaching be improved in this regard?

Note: Questions may apply to different groups and contexts, including the priorities of local education communities.