

Media Release:

Students studying Doctor of Dental Medicine ineligible for Centrelink Support

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Students enrolled in UQ's new Doctor of Dental Medicine program have been left in financial distress after UQ failed to submit the program to the Department of Social Services as an approved course. Students are only finding out they are ineligible for Centrelink support following the rejection of their applications for Austudy.

UQU understands that the University is aware that the program should be eligible to be listed as an approved course under the *Student Assistance (Education Institutions and Courses) Determination 2019*.

"It is concerning that the University offered a full-time program to students without ensuring students have access to proper welfare support through Centrelink," says UQU President Angus McRae.

The process for a course to become approved for Centrelink support requires legislative change, which means applications should be submitted in the previous academic year.

"UQU stands with these students during this difficult time, and we will support them however we can," McRae continued, "but the University will need to communicate to these students how they plan to remedy this oversight, and how they will support these students in the interim."

As of the time of writing the DmD cohort has received no correspondence from the university detailing what has gone wrong nor how the university proposes to support them through the first semester. The UQ Union holds concerns for the welfare of the affected students who are expected to complete placement hours preventing outside work but no longer qualify for financial assistance from the government.

"This is an entire student cohort whose future is currently uncertain," says UQU Vice President Student Rights Jeryn Chang, "many of these students are living away from home and are struggling to make ends meet, let alone study. Time is not on our side here."

"No student should be lead to believe that they are eligible for Centrelink payments when they are not especially when cost of living is an issue disproportionately impacting students", says UQU Vice President Student Rights Jordy Duffey, "The University must ensure that any new courses they approve and provide for new students is approved for Centrelink support before students start the course so that no student is left behind whilst they are studying."

UQU has contacted the University for comment and is aware that an internal discussion is ongoing, with the university planning to make a submission during the next submission period. As of the time of publishing UQU has not yet received a response detailing a support structure for the DmD students in the interim period.