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CASE STUDY
Providing Quality Online Learning at the University of Southern Queensland

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Learning and Teaching Futures

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The Context

- UniSQ is an online learning leader and innovator
- Over 70% of students study all or part of their programs online
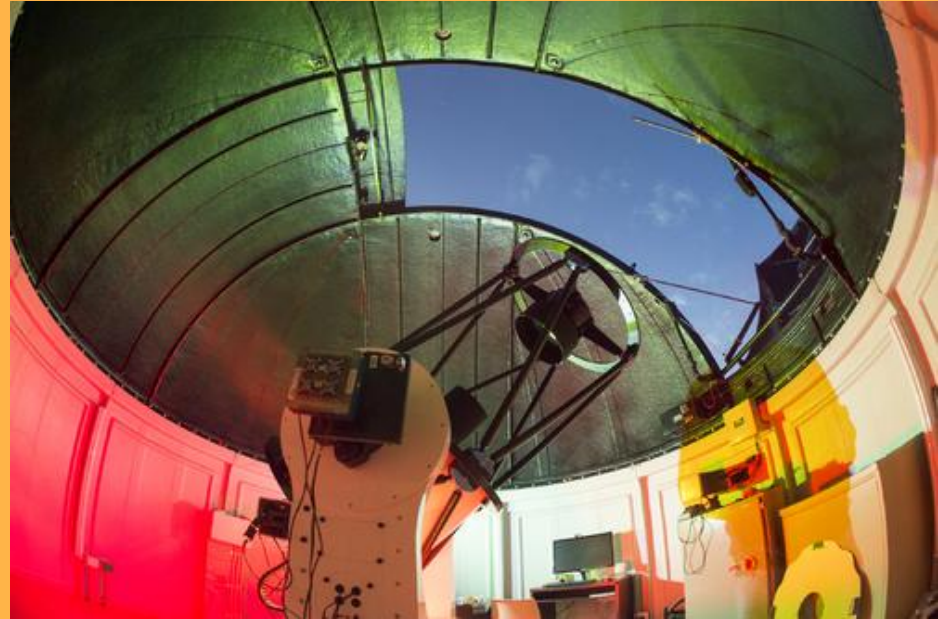- The global pandemic caused minimal negative impact on student access to learning

Image of UniSQ Mt Kent Observatory

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At UniSQ quality online learning is …..

1

DIGITAL FIRST

All courses at UniSQ are designed for blended or fully online learning

2

ACTIVITY DRIVEN and STUDENT CONNECTED

Focus on student engagement modes

3

MEDIA and EdTech RICH

Leveraged by multi-modal constructs and appropriate edtech

Digital Transformation supported by Technology and Pedagogy

Quality online learning requires a digital transformation in learning and teaching through:
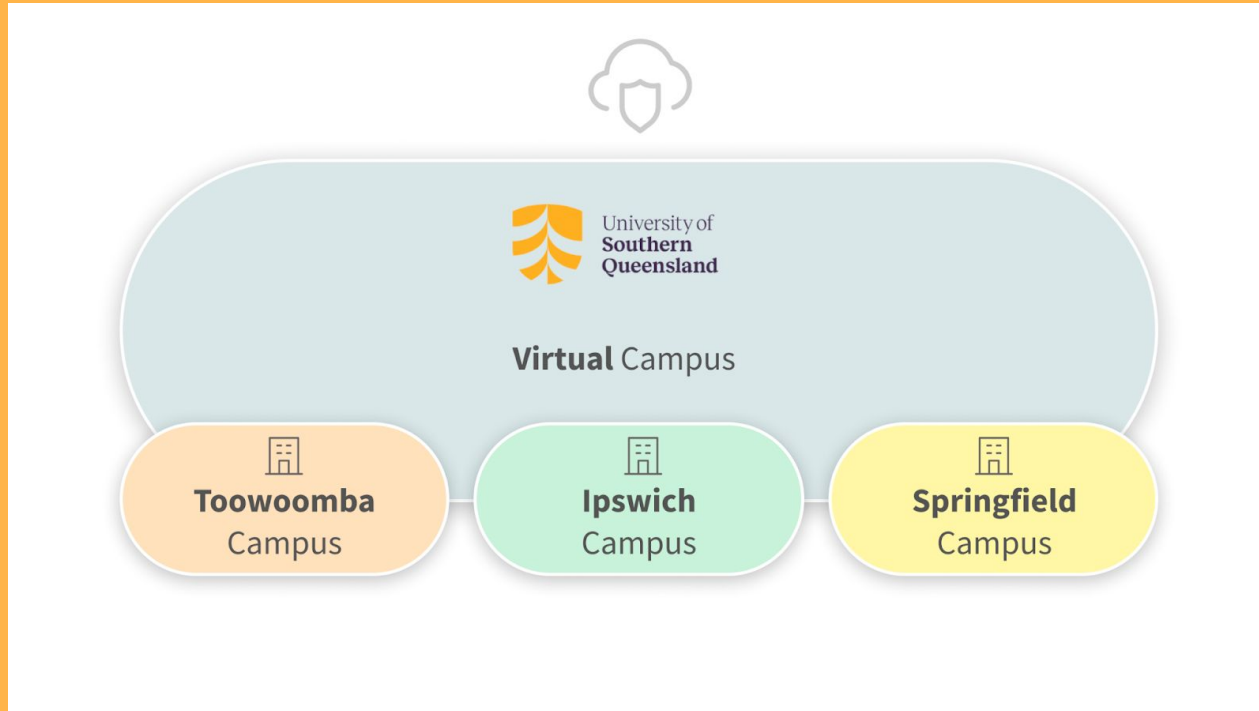
- Innovative use of educational technology
- Learning design that fosters new pedagogical approaches for interaction and collaboration:
  - Teacher to student
  - Student to content
  - Student to student

The Virtual Campus

Learning and Teaching Modes

ONLINE (content and teaching fully online)

- Students access content, readings, assessments, and discussions digitally, and active teaching sessions can be accessed synchronously or asynchronously

HYBRID (content online, teaching face-to-face and online at the same time)

- Typically, this mode teaches an online and on-campus class simultaneously, facilitating highlevels of interaction between on-campus and online learners

HYFLEX (content online, teaching is per students choice)

- The HyFlex mode offers a highly flexible, hybrid approach where course content is available online, and students engage with course teaching in ways that suit them, with the ability to seamlessly move between online/on-campus, synchronous and asynchronous.

Problem ….

How to provide **equivalent learning experiences and opportunities** for all learners through the **attributes of flexible learning environments**

Flexible learning is about ….

➜ Shifting belief from **synchronous** as the dominant learning mode

➜ Acknowledging **asynchronous** learning as the glue that holds online learning together

➜ Designing learning 'digital first' with **asynchronous** as the default

Asynchronous is the **glue** that **holds** online learning **together**

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Flexible learning means students have:

- **Choice** of where and when (time and place) they learn
- **Access** to learning spaces, places and materials at all times
- 'Flat learning' experiences

Flexible learning is:

1

Learning at the same time (face-to-face or online)

2

Learning at different times while online

3

Learning at anytime in a mode of choice

CHOICE

How students …

★ Determine the learning mode personally at the time

★ Participate in multimodal learning (text, video, audio)

★ Achieve learning outcomes via assessment choices

★ Interact and collaborate with others

How students …

★ Leverage content, ideas and collaborations flexibly

★ Use edtech tools for multi-modal participation

★ Determine the time and place to learn

★ Learn through use of Universal Design Principles and inclusive practices

How students …

★ Learn in a non-hierarchical environment

★ Sustain connections beyond the synchronous

★ Adopt social learning modes through appropriate use of technologies

★ Become active learners and reliable contributors and collaborators
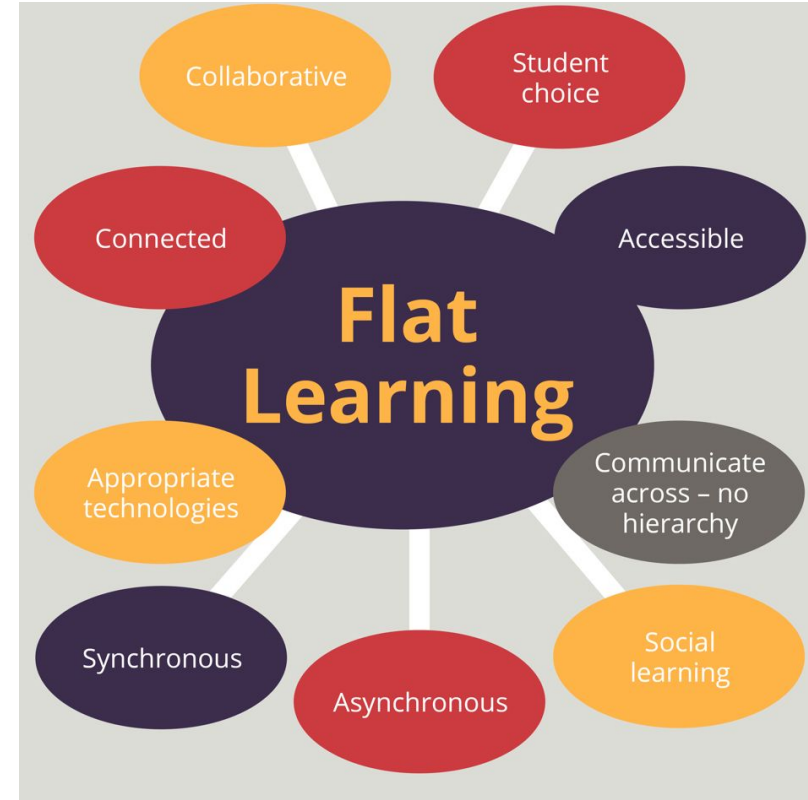
11 Minimum Requirements for Learning and Teaching

- All **course materials** available to students by the **end of week 1**, including **full assessment details**

- A short updated **welcome and orientation video** is created and shared by the teacher by the end of week 1

- At least one way for **students to interact and collaborate** is available online e.g., discussion forum

- All **course materials and teaching of content**, regardless of mode of delivery, are designed to facilitate **active learning** with segments no longer than 20 minutes

- A **formative or summative assessment** item is provided **within the first three weeks of the course** to enable students to obtain early **feedback on their learning**

Educational Technology

- Robust Learning Management System (LMS) using the Moodle platform
- A range of tools to support both synchronous and asynchronous learning modes for:
  - Connection
  - Communication
  - Collaboration
  - Creation and Co-Creation of knowledge

Design for flexible learning

- More than just a learning mode, learning environment or learning approach
- A value that all learning and teaching design may aspire to
- A continuum from very flexible to very inflexible

Designed flexibility in learning enables:

- Learner customisation to individual needs and circumstances
- When, where and how learners choose to study
- Pedagogical change
- Reimagining of assessment

How UniSQ ensures quality online learning

- Systematic approaches to learning modes (synchronous and asynchronous) - with an **emphasis on fostering better teaching and learning capacity in asynchronous mode**

- Strategic use of **learning environments** (physical and virtual)

- Embedding **educational technologies** to enhance learner engagement, autonomy and empowerment

- A **'digital first'** approach to learning design

- Design of **'flexible' learning environments** for **equivalent** learning experiences and opportunities

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