

# QACI Outreach: Learning, Connecting, Contributing

An important part of QACI life



## Madeleine Brookes, HoD Outreach Highly Capable Learners

What happens when QACI students step outside the classroom and help someone else learn? QACI Outreach was created to provide enrichment opportunities for highly capable younger learners, but we are increasingly seeing the impact it has on our QACI students too. Supporting the learning of others can be a powerful learning experience of their own.

Now in its second year, QACI Outreach continues to grow, with more than 220 young learners across our Bright Minds (Years 5–6) and Brilliant Futures (Years 7–8) programs. This means dozens of learning engagements throughout the year, typically supported by six to eight QACI students, and often more. As Outreach grows, so too does our team of QACI students joining us as Ambassadors and Mentors.

QACI Outreach gives students across Years 10–12 authentic opportunities to put the five IB approaches to learning skills (ATLs) into practice: social, self-management, communication, thinking and research. These five ATLs provide a useful lens for exploring what our QACI students gain from their involvement. For our DP students, Outreach can also contribute to Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS), a core part of the Diploma Programme focused on personal growth through meaningful experiences beyond the classroom.

## **Social: Building relationships, collaborating effectively and understanding others.**

For some of our younger learners, walking into a workshop full of unfamiliar faces can be daunting. Our QACI students understand this. Many remember arriving at QACI in Year 10 and discovering their own tribe, and they draw on that experience to help younger students feel welcome, connected and part of the group. It reflects an important part of QACI culture: like geese flying in V formation, we go further when we support one another and share the journey.

As active participants in our workshops, QACI students mentor and support younger learners while drawing on strategies from their own learning. They share skills, encourage collaboration and critical thinking, and help students navigate challenges and new experiences. In doing so, they also develop their own ability to listen, communicate, build relationships and work effectively with others.



## **Self-management: Managing time and responsibilities, setting goals and developing resilience.**

With so many QACI Outreach opportunities, students choose when they can contribute and learn to balance Outreach with schoolwork, part-time jobs and other commitments. This might mean organising transport after an after-school workshop, attending a lunchtime planning session or joining a Saturday activity or camp.

Once they put their hand up, they learn to plan ahead, communicate early if circumstances change and, where possible, find someone to step into their role. They also show initiative by volunteering at short notice when extra support is needed.

**Communication: Expressing ideas clearly, listening to others and adapting communication to different audiences.**



QACI students communicate directly with younger learners in many ways, from presenting to a whole group to supporting students one-to-one during workshops and extended experiences such as Brilliant Futures Camp. They learn to explain, listen, encourage and adapt their communication to different people and situations.

We are also beginning to extend these connections through Toddle, our Brilliant Futures learning management system.

By joining weekly conversations and challenges, QACI students can build their communication skills while helping to strengthen our online community of learners between face-to-face engagements.

Students also communicate with the QACI Outreach team through Teams, providing a responsive space to share opportunities, coordinate support and adapt quickly when plans change.

**Thinking: Questioning, considering different perspectives and making thoughtful decisions.**

QACI students are constantly thinking about how best to support and challenge the young learners they work with. What question might move their thinking forward? When should they offer a suggestion, challenge an idea or let a student work it out for themselves? In helping others think, our QACI students are developing their own thinking skills too.



### **Research: Finding, evaluating and using information purposefully.**

QACI students often need to learn something new in order to help someone else learn, whether programming Micro:bits, exploring 3D modelling software, investigating business strategies for a Cupcake Marketing Challenge or working out how to teach Ukulele to students with different levels of experience. They research, select and adapt what they learn for the young learners they support.

Together, these experiences show the impact Outreach can have on our QACI students, giving them opportunities to apply their learning, develop new skills and grow through supporting others.



### **Supporting your student's involvement**

Many QACI students are already contributing to Outreach as Ambassadors and Mentors. Parents and carers provide consent for their student's involvement each semester, while students choose which learning engagements they can support. We hope this article gives families a little more insight into what that involvement looks like, what our students contribute and what they gain from the experience.



## About QACI Outreach

QACI Outreach comprises two extra-curricular enrichment programs for highly capable young learners. Bright Minds brings together principal-selected Years 5 and 6 students from Queensland state schools, while Brilliant Futures is a two-year selective-entry program open to Years 7 and 8 students from all schools. Both provide challenging and creative learning experiences shaped by QACI's approaches to teaching and learning, with an emphasis on inquiry, collaboration, and creative and critical thinking.

QACI Outreach brings to life a simple idea: you can't be what you can't see. Alongside providing enrichment opportunities for highly capable learners, Outreach gives younger students a genuine experience of learning at QACI. They connect with our students, experience our learning environment and begin to imagine future pathways, including whether QACI might be the right next step for them.



[Find out more about Brilliant Futures](#)



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