

**DEBORAH BROWN**, faculty at University of Queensland

# 'Humanities degrees give you a global edge'

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Deborah Brown is an associate professor in philosophy at the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry. She is also on the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Queensland in Australia, and is director of the University's Critical Thinking project. Brown is the author of *Descartes and the Passionate Mind* (Cambridge, 2006) and many other research articles.

On a recent visit to India, she spoke to HT Education about the scope of humanities and why studying at the University of Queensland is a good option.

**What are the new courses in humanities and social sciences at University of Queensland?**

We are one of the top providers for many humanities courses.

In our Bachelor of Arts course, there are 40 disciplines. New specialist courses like Bachelors in Advanced Humanities and Bachelors in Criminology And Justice are gaining popularity worldwide.

We also have a collaborative programme of politics, philosophy and economics, that is a hit.

**Many students are considering Australia for their higher education. What are the programmes in the University they should opt for?**

If a student wants to become a global player in the future, they need to have a lot of cultural knowledge and they are not going to get it just by pursuing a technical course. They must improve their cognitive skills through our philosophy and critical-thinking courses.

Students should take advantage of our dual-degree programmes. For

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instance, if you add in one extra year, you can have degrees in both Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Engineering.

There are 15 dual degrees that include the humanities and social sciences.

**How lucrative are the placements provided to the students after the courses?**

In the case of humanities, we have partnerships with museums, libraries and other organisations and the faculty pushes for work-integrated learning.

Students are encouraged to take up internships. In the social sciences, there is lot of interaction with government sectors. We also have partnership with the Red Cross Society. And there are several opportunities for social science research along with sociologists, political scientists and criminologists.

**How strong is the presence of the university online?**

We have an exclusive division that produces MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) called UQx, which is part of the EDx platform.

There are courses representing every faculty at the college. We have blended these

MOOCs with our offline curriculum too.

Some courses can be taken entirely online. But most often, we conduct face-to-face lectures, supported by online classes.

**Why would a student choose University of Queensland?**

Brisbane is a beautiful and safe city. It has pristine beaches, rainforests and is nestled on the banks of a river with parkland.

Students should know that a treat is awaiting them. All the courses at the university focus on the students' capacity to develop their own points of view and exhibit their capabilities.

So the assessment criteria for the courses include critical thinking, logical structure, the quality of their arguments and their ability to find weaknesses in the textbooks.

Therefore, just pooling in information and recalling it and studying what is in the books is not going to be sufficient in the long run.

We want to create knowledge makers who can contribute their learning through articles, talks and research.

This has been the university's core motive.

