

Retaining females in STEM²D



Partnered with Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies
and Griffith University



In 2018, Social Marketing @ Griffith conducted a formative study to address the issue of female undergraduates dropping out of STEM²D degrees. Key findings were that female dropout rates occurred because of a lack of confidence and social support. This led to a pilot project in 2019 that aimed to retain females in STEM²D programs at Griffith University. Two arms were piloted: Bias Literacy Workshops (BLW) and an electronic Communications Campaign (CC).

The goal was to enhance female STEM²D students' intentions to stay enrolled in their chosen degrees. BLW aimed to tackle gender bias and bolster self-efficacy. Workshops were successful in increasing students' self-confidence and awareness.

CC, the second arm piloted, involved an experimental approach that sent four different email messages with links to Griffith University's support services to 9,438 STEM²D students. This campaign yielded over 6,000 unique email opens. Among the services highlighted, social clubs garnered the most attention, followed by scholarships, Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programs, and bridging short courses. Positively framed messages notably increased students' perceived behavioural control.

BLW and CC achieved their objectives by boosting self-efficacy, social support, and service awareness. Moving forward, tailored workshops for different fields of study and integrated marketing communications to continue promoting support services are approaches universities should apply to retain women in STEM²D courses.

The pilot successfully increased self-efficacy and perceived social support among female STEM²D undergraduates through Bias Literacy Workshops and a Communication Campaign. BLW addressed biases and elevated confidence, while CC raised awareness about university services. The programs collectively contributed to retaining female students in STEM²D courses by 2% following pilot program implementation.

6,000+ unique email opens
and more than 1,000 click-throughs

**Increased self-efficacy,
social support, and service
awareness**

**Increased retention of
females in Griffith STEM²D
courses by 2%**

Read more in the [final report](#) and [scientific paper](#).