

EDITORIAL

Introducing the *Journal of Pathways Education and Research*

Jonathan H. Green, Editor-in-Chief

Julia Goodman, Journal Manager

Published online 24 July 2026

Pages i–ii

How to cite Green, J. H., & Goodman, J. (2026). Introducing the *Journal of Pathways Education and Research*. *Journal of Pathways Education and Research*, 1(1), i–ii.

Open access CC BY-ND 4.0

The *Journal of Pathways Education and Research* was formally launched at the 2025 Pathways Education and Research Colloquium, Advancing the Agenda, held at the University of Southern Queensland's Springfield campus on 24 October 2025. The colloquium brought together researchers, educators, program leaders and sector representatives from across pathways education. Many of the contributions to this inaugural issue grew from papers presented at the event and from the discussions that followed.

The journal arose from a practical need. Pathways education is now a substantial area of provision, but its scholarship remains dispersed across disciplines, sectors and publication outlets. Research on enabling and foundation education, university preparation, vocational pathways, articulation, alternative entry and academic preparation often appears in journals whose principal concerns lie elsewhere. Work addressing related questions can consequently remain separated by program type, institutional setting or sector tradition.

The *Journal of Pathways Education and Research* provides a dedicated scholarly forum for research on the routes through which students enter, move between and progress through tertiary education. Its focus extends beyond student experience after admission to include the programs, policies, curricula and institutional arrangements that make educational movement possible.

This scope includes enabling and foundation programs, university preparation and bridging programs, diploma pathways, alternative admission routes, articulation agreements and other forms of preparatory or transitional provision. It also includes vocational education and training, including TAFE, where qualifications may provide direct entry to higher education or form part of a longer educational journey.

Pathways frequently cross institutional and sector boundaries. Their effectiveness may depend on how curriculum, assessment, admissions, credit, recognition of prior learning and qualification structures connect. These arrangements are not always coherent. Students may encounter unnecessary duplication, inconsistent credit decisions or pathways that appear straightforward in institutional documents but are difficult to navigate in practice. Questions of alignment and harmonisation are therefore part of the field, although the aim is not to make sectors or qualifications interchangeable. It is to understand how they can connect more effectively while retaining their different purposes.

The design of a pathway has direct consequences for students. It affects the time and cost of study, the recognition given to prior learning and the ease with which students can move between programs and institutions. Formal access alone does not ensure a coherent educational route. Pathways must also provide appropriate preparation, meaningful progression and a clear relationship to the programs or qualifications into which they lead.

For this reason, the journal is concerned with more than admission. Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are central to the quality of pathways education, as are the institutional and policy settings in which it operates. Research in the field may therefore move between classroom practice, program design, institutional decision-making, sector relationships and wider systems of funding and regulation.

The journal welcomes empirical studies, conceptual and theoretical work, policy analysis, program evaluation, reviews and critical accounts of practice. It is particularly interested in research that examines points of transition and connection: between vocational and higher education, between enabling programs and undergraduate study, between institutional policy and teaching practice, and between formal access and meaningful educational participation.

Much of the knowledge in this field is produced by those who design, teach, coordinate and evaluate pathways. Their experience is an important source of scholarship, but accounts of practice must still show what was done, under what conditions and with what evidence. The purpose is not to promote particular programs, but to establish what can reasonably be learned from them and how far those lessons may apply beyond their original setting.

The journal's editorial approach is grounded in scholarly rigour, constructive peer review and respect for the different forms of expertise found across the field. It welcomes varied methodological and disciplinary approaches, provided that claims are supported by appropriate evidence and that educational contexts are represented with care.

This approach also requires attention to the language used to describe pathways students. Students do not enter these programs as collections of deficits. They bring prior study, employment, family responsibilities, cultural knowledge, professional experience and varied educational histories. Research should examine the demands placed on students while also considering how institutions recognise, translate or disregard the knowledge and experience they already possess.

This inaugural issue is being published progressively. Articles will be added as they complete the editorial and production process rather than being held until the issue is complete. This continuous-publication model allows work arising from the 2025 colloquium, together with other contributions, to be made available promptly while retaining a conventional volume and issue structure.

The establishment of the journal has relied on the work of many people. We acknowledge the presenters and participants in the 2025 colloquium, the authors and reviewers contributing to this issue, and the editorial, institutional and sector colleagues who have supported the journal's development.

The *Journal of Pathways Education and Research* begins with a clear purpose: to provide a scholarly home for research on how pathways are designed, how they operate across educational settings and how they might be strengthened. We hope it will bring related areas of research into closer conversation and contribute to better-informed policy and practice across the field.

Copyright © 2026 The Authors. Published by the *Journal of Pathways Education and Research*.

Licence Creative Commons
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International
(CC BY-ND 4.0)
creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0

