

International Student Program Spotlight

Meet Kathia: International Student Coordinator at Elanora State High School

EQI understands student support is a big part of the international study experience—which is why we offer a network of support people throughout the journey.

Kathia Faranda knows what it's like to study in a different country—as a teenager, she was an international student in the UK, and has lived in several countries since. So it's fitting she holds the role of International Student Coordinator at Elanora State High School on Queensland's Gold Coast, where she supports international students studying one of Australia's most loved destinations. Here, she shares her story.

What led you to working with international students?

Having once been an international student myself in the UK, I developed a deep appreciation for both the opportunities and challenges that come with

the experience. Combined with my genuine enjoyment of cultural diversity, this inspired me to support and work with international students. Growing up in Brazil and having lived in several countries has further shaped my perspective, allowing me to see myself as a true global citizen and strengthening my passion for helping students navigate their own international journeys.

What does a typical day look like?

I support international students academically and personally to ensure they feel safe, included, and able to succeed. My days include meeting with students to check on their progress, liaising with parents, agents and homestay providers, and coordinating support. I also manage arrivals, orientations and departures, and support students with accommodation, wellbeing and academic performance. Each day is different, but the focus is always on providing consistent support and guidance.



What makes Elanora SHS a great place for international students?

Our school, wider community, and host families provide a welcoming, supportive and inclusive environment where international students can truly feel at home. Our international team are very caring, approachable, and dedicated. Our school's location offers a lifestyle with a unique balance of quality education and outdoor experiences, with a safe environment, beautiful beaches, and a relaxed atmosphere. This, combined with the cultural diversity within our school, allows students to build meaningful connections, improve their English, and gain a well-rounded international experience.

What challenges or growth have you seen in your international students during their time in Queensland?

One of the most rewarding aspects is witnessing students' personal and academic growth over time. Many students arrive feeling nervous but gradually develop confidence, independence and resilience as they adapt to a new environment.

Academically, they improve their English skills and become more engaged. Socially, they build friendships across cultures becoming more open-minded and globally aware.

How does living with a homestay family impact a Queensland study experience?

It plays a significant role in their development. Students learn to 'adult' in a supportive environment, becoming more responsible, contributing to household routines, and developing a better understanding of family dynamics and daily life.

By the end of their journey, students often leave as more mature, self-assured individuals, with a broader perspective of the world and a strong sense of achievement. It's incredibly rewarding to see how much they grow - not just as students, but as people.

What makes Queensland a fantastic study destination?

What truly sets Queensland apart is the lifestyle it offers - beautiful natural surroundings, a warm climate, and opportunities for outdoor activities all year round. This creates a balanced experience where students can focus on their studies while also enjoying everything the region has to offer, as well as the easy-going way of life.

Best thing about your job?

For me, the students are the most rewarding part of the role — their growth, and their unique stories make every day meaningful. It's not just about their achievements, but also the moments of fun, the emotional connections we build, and the trust that develops over time.

For students, it's a chance to develop lifelong friendships, broaden their global perspective, and grow in confidence and independence. Ultimately, it's about connection, growth, and creating memorable experiences that stay with you long after the program ends.