

Review of Senior Assessment and Reporting and Tertiary Entrance Terms of Reference

Background

- Queensland's system of senior secondary school assessment and reporting (school-based assessment) has been in place since the early 1970s, with progressive changes in the 1980s resulting in its current form. The current system of tertiary entrance (the OP [Overall Position] system) has been in place since 1992.
- Over the last decade or more, these systems have been impacted by significant social and educational changes, such as:
 - greater participation in the senior secondary and tertiary phases of education, and the strong commitment of Australian governments to this direction;
 - proliferation of senior phase pathways, in particular vocational education and training (VET);
 - introduction of the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE), which recognises a greater range of these pathways, as well as other learning;
 - increasing proportions of Year 12 completers opting to enter tertiary education through alternatives to the OP system;
 - adoption of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) for tertiary entrance across Australia except in Queensland; and
 - implementation of the Australian Curriculum (forthcoming for senior secondary)
 - a changing national context with respect to curriculum, assessment, and tertiary entrance.

Terms of Reference

1. The Queensland Government is commissioning a review of the Queensland systems of senior secondary assessment and reporting and of tertiary entrance for students completing Year 12.
2. The review will consider the effectiveness of the systems and identify ways to improve, revitalise or reform them.
3. With respect to the Queensland system of senior secondary school assessment and reporting, the review will consider:
 - comparability across schools of student standards of achievement in the same subject, including review and moderation processes;
 - the appropriateness, validity and reliability of various types of assessment instruments used for senior secondary school subjects;
 - the adequacy of the current exit levels of achievement;
 - the form and content of reports to students and parents, including the Senior Education Profile; and
 - implications of the Australian Curriculum for the Queensland model.
4. With respect to the Queensland tertiary entrance system, the review will consider:
 - impacts of tertiary entrance processes outside the OP system being used by Year 12 completers and offered by the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) and tertiary providers;

- the inclusiveness of the system for all students completing Year 12, including the full range of achievements recognised by the Queensland Certificate of Education and alternatives such as the International Baccalaureate;
 - the range of student achievement information provided as the basis of tertiary selection of Year 12 completers;
 - the effectiveness of the OP system in ranking Year 12 students for tertiary entry, including the use of Field Positions (FPs);
 - the role and effectiveness of the Queensland Core Skills Test (QCST) and the associated Common Curriculum Elements;
 - the potential usefulness and implications of more fine-grained ranking, and alignment with the ATAR; and
 - governance of the tertiary entrance process by the Queensland Studies Authority and the QTAC, and their respective roles and functions.
5. The review will also consider essential messages and effective strategies to improve the understanding of senior secondary assessment and reporting and tertiary entrance procedures by parents, students, employers, the mass media and the broader community.
 6. The scope of the review will not include revision of the Queensland Certificate of Education.
 7. The review is to take account of:
 - issues and findings from previous reviews;
 - assessment, reporting and tertiary entrance models in other states and territories;
 - the cost efficiency of alternative models;
 - information from relevant agencies such as the Queensland Studies Authority and the QTAC; and
 - impacts of relevant national and state initiatives and educational environments.
 8. The Queensland Government will engage an independent reviewer or reviewers identified through a tender process to undertake the review.
 9. The review process will be finalised by 31 July 2014.
 10. The review will engage in broad public consultation and may seek public submissions. Consultation will include the following:
 - State and non-state schooling sectors;
 - Queensland Studies Authority;
 - QTAC;
 - Department of Education, Training and Employment;
 - Universities and other higher and tertiary education providers;
 - Secondary school principals' associations;
 - Parents' associations; and
 - Teachers' unions and university staff associations.
 11. The review may call on technical research and advisory expertise.