



Advancing futures

New senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems in Queensland

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A guide for parents

The Queensland Government is introducing new senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems.

The new systems will commence for students who enter Year 11 in 2019 (i.e. current Year 8 students).

Commencement in 2019 will ensure teachers, students and parents have time to understand and familiarise themselves with the new arrangements. Students and parents will be aware of new senior subjects and assessment arrangements as they plan their senior subjects and pathways.

What are the key changes?

The new systems will include:

- a new senior assessment model that combines school-based assessment developed and marked by classroom teachers, with external assessment set and marked by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA); and
- a move from the current Overall Position (OP) tertiary entrance rank to an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), as used by other Australian states and territories.

The reforms are the biggest change to senior education in more than 40 years.

Why change the current systems?

The senior assessment system in its current form began in the early 1980s, and the existing tertiary entrance system was introduced in 1992.

In 2014, a report by the Australian Council for Educational Research found that while the existing arrangements are serving Queensland students well, they will not be sustainable over the longer term.

What about current Year 9 students, who will now finish Year 12 under existing arrangements?

Families with students who will be completing school under the current system can be assured that their subject results and OP ranks are fair and reliable. The existing systems will in no way be compromised by the changes occurring from 2019.

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What will be different about senior assessment?

Year 12 students typically complete up to seven final assessments in each Authority subject. Under the new system, students will complete four assessments for each subject, leaving more time for teaching and learning.

In senior Authority subjects, three of these assessments will be school-based and one will be externally set and marked.

External assessments are designed to give an extra layer of information about what students have learnt and can do in a subject. They will generally contribute 25% towards a student's final result in most senior subjects. In mathematics and science subjects, they will generally contribute 50%.

New processes will also be used to strengthen the quality and comparability of school-based assessment. For example, under the new system, all school-based assessments will be endorsed by the QCAA before being used in the classroom.

What will be different about tertiary entrance?

Eligible students will be awarded an ATAR. The ATAR will replace the OP.

ATARs will be calculated by comparing student results using a process known as 'inter-subject scaling', as used in a number of other Australian jurisdictions. The current Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test will be discontinued, allowing more time for subject-based teaching and learning.

A broader range of learning will be able to contribute to the ATAR than the OP.

What's the difference between the OP and the ATAR?

The ATAR is a finer grained rank order of students than the OP and is commonly used in other states and territories. It's a number between 0.00 and 99.95 with increments of 0.05, whereas the OP

consists of 25 bands. The ATAR will be more useful in selecting students in very high demand courses in which most applicants hold the highest possible OP rank (an OP1).

How will ATARs be calculated?

ATARs will be based on five subjects, which can either be:

- five Authority subjects; or
- four Authority subjects, plus one vocational education and training qualification at Certificate III or above; or
- four Authority subjects, plus one Subject Area Syllabus subject.

Students will have to satisfactorily complete an English subject to be eligible for an ATAR, but their English result will not be a mandatory inclusion in the calculation of their ATAR.

How should students choose their subjects?

As in the current system, students should choose subjects according to their learning goals, and what they enjoy and are good at. They should pay close attention to the prerequisite requirements of the courses they are considering for tertiary study.

Will the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) continue?

The Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) will remain as Queensland's senior school qualification. All eligible Year 12 graduates will be awarded a QCE now and in the future.

More information

More information about the transition to the new systems is available online on the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority website at: www.qcaa.qld.edu.au