

Frequently asked questions – senior assessment and reporting

The QTU has been receiving many queries from members in school and at branch and area council meetings about implementing the new QCE. The QTU are working closely with the Department of Education and the QCAA to ensure that timely advice and information is available. Schools are encouraged to go directly to the QCAA and the department for assistance and advice as required.

Below are the answers to some of the frequently-asked questions that we have been receiving from members.

Q. How do I make judgements for year 11 students using the new senior syllabuses?

A. For units 1 and 2 of general subjects, schools may choose to use either instrument specific standards matrixes (ISSMs), derived from the reporting standards, or instrument specific marking guides (ISMGs).

For units 3 and 4 of general senior subjects, syllabuses require the use of ISMGs only.

More information is provided in the QCAA handbook, and further advice is available from the relevant QCAA officer.

Q. Is there help available for teachers of senior secondary subjects in terms of making judgements?

A. Yes, the QCAA delivered “*Online Webinars – Making judgments in Unit 1 and 2*” for each learning area from 25-28 March. The webinar program indicated that the purpose of the webinar is to establish shared understandings about making judgments in general subjects in the learning area, and to consolidate understandings about reporting to the QCAA. These webinars were recorded and should be available for future viewing. Please contact the QCAA for further information about their availability.

Q. How do I know I am making the correct judgment when determining an A-E score?

A. It is important to remember that, no matter what system is in place, there is no mechanistic process to determine an assessment outcome.

Assessment decisions are professional judgments, and the syllabus reporting standards provide the point of reference for these decisions. Professional conversations between teachers to develop shared understandings, and experience in enacting the new system, will support teachers’ confidence to make judgments over time.

To assist in developing this shared understanding, it may be useful to develop an informal network with other teachers of your subject.

Q. Are we expected to progressively report to parents of year 11 students outside of reporting periods?

A. The department’s P-12 Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework expectation is for formal academic reporting to parents twice yearly at the end of each semester, at a minimum.

Any additional reporting is a school-based decision.

Teachers can choose to provide informal feedback to parents in a progressive way using formative assessment and professional judgment, however the QTU does not support formal progressive reporting to parents as the additional expectation creates significant workload issues.

Should schools choose to proceed with formal progressive reporting to parents against this advice, approved school data plans must specifically authorise the collection and use of data for this purpose.

Q. Our year 11 students have not completed an assessment item this term. Do we still need to report A-E?

A. If no assessment has been completed and teachers do not have enough evidence to make an A-E judgment, schools may consider using other types of feedback to provide an update of student progress to parents/carers.

Q. What sort of feedback should we provide to parents if we decide not to do a formal academic report to parents?

A. Schools determine what is appropriate for their school context. The department has provided advice in the document *“Communication with parents/carers about student academic performance in Years 11 and 12”*.

In addition to providing written reports at least twice a year, schools are required to offer parents opportunities to discuss their child’s educational performance at the school with their child’s teacher(s). Each school has established procedures in place for parent-teacher interviews.

Consideration should be given to the additional workload that might arise from schools choosing any additional required feedback mechanisms. The school data plan should clearly reflect agreed expectations for collection and reporting of data, including:

- assessment results for individual tasks in both formative and summative units of work
- mock examination information
- diagnostic testing data
- tracking information
- observation of student work beyond the scope of the subject assessment plan
- collaborative task observations
- anecdotal evidence based on observations of class activities.

There is an expectation that parents are informed, however workload implications should be considered if a school is to determine formal requirements for parent communication beyond the formal parent-teacher interviews. These should be negotiated through the LCC. This includes any formal expectations around:

- phone calls to parents/carers
- teacher notes to parents in student workbooks or student diaries
- required email communications

Q. Our school is looking to purchase a learning management system to allow us to progressively report to parents, as this functionality is not currently available on OneSchool.

A. The QTU recommends that individual schools should not waste resources intended to support student learning on the purchase of learning management systems. The department is currently consulting with a range of schools to ask teachers to identify preferred changes to OneSchool which will be in place for the start of 2020.

Q. Our school is wondering if there are any samples of students' work that we can view to compare our judgements?

A. The QTU have been advised that during term 2, the QCAA will commence a sampling project which will involve seeking samples of student work from schools implementing unit 1 so that these samples of work can be annotated and published. The idea of this work will be to show schools a range of assessment instruments and how they meet the relevant standard. Schools are encouraged to participate in the project and share de-identified samples of student work.

Q. Our school has asked us to moderate student scripts, and there is an expectation that after we have marked them, we need to get together with other teachers from our school who teach the same subject, or if there are no other dance teachers for example, you need to go to another school and moderate with a teacher from a neighbouring school. My question is: do we have to do this in our own time?

A. The P-12 CARF states that moderation is a school-based decision, as there is no departmental requirement for inter-school moderation of student work. The QTU recognises that professional dialogue and sharing with teachers of the same subject is valuable professional learning and could prove very valuable in assisting teachers to adjust to the new system. Schools can choose to provide time for teachers to engage in moderation, or informal sharing, in recognition of the complexity of adapting to a new system. Alternatively, a school may choose to consider these activities as a component of your required continuing professional development hours, which you would complete in lieu of attending another school based professional development activity.

If moderation would cause additional work outside of rostered duty time, it would then be considered voluntary. Members should meet to discuss the implications of such activities within their school and work with the LCC to reach agreement on reasonable expectations.

If moderation is in relation to senior syllabus, then members should also seek advice from the QCAA or attend a webinar on making judgements to ensure they fully understand the requirements.

Q. Our school will be doing an interim report to parents, but we are unsure of what it should contain, as our teachers have indicated that they do not have the evidence they require to report A-E.

A. Ultimately, the content of the interim report is the subject of a school-based decision which should be agreed upon following consultation with all members. Members may decide after discussion and consultation, to use the code 'N' for 'not rated at this time' in the A-E column if they do not think that they can make a judgement based on work completed. A decision like this should be clearly communicated to parents.

Q. With the introduction of the new SATE subjects, it is a requirement to send certain pieces of student assessment digitally when they are requested. Our school has instructed teachers of year 11 subjects that ALL assessment for EVERY student must be scanned in and stored digitally. For exams, this means un-stapling the papers, scanning them in and then re-stapling, for every

single student. Obviously, this has huge implications for the workloads of these teachers. Is this something that would be an LCC issue for our school?

A. The scanning of year 11 students' work is a new QCAA requirement for this year, and therefore is a change to work practice in schools. Any change to work practice which has the potential to increase member workload should be considered by the LCC to determine if additional resources are required.

Administrative tasks such as scanning and electronic storage can often be done by other staff members, such as teacher-aides, following consultation.

There is no systemic requirement to scan every year 11 assessment item, however student work must be retained in accordance with the department's Retention and Disposal Schedule. The operationalisation of this policy in relation to the location and storage of student work is a school-based decision and should be the subject of consultation with members.

Q. Why can't we just use assessment items that have already been developed by another school for that subject? This would save a lot of time and effort.

A. All internal assessment items need to be developed at the school level, as has always been the case. The QCAA has produced sample assessments for all general subjects (these are available on the QCAA portal and the QCAA website), however these samples are public documents and cannot be repurposed as school-based assessments without compromising academic authenticity.

Schools are encouraged to work together to share ideas in a community of practice.

Replicating assessment from another setting (in its entirety) carries significant risk for a school, in that a) assessment security and academic integrity cannot be guaranteed; and b) context and student need may not be accounted for.

As part of a long-term work plan, the QCAA is examining the development of an assessment item bank (as compared with a bank of wholly complete assessment) which would allow teachers to peruse items as they develop an entire assessment.

Q. What happens if an assessment piece is not endorsed?

A. Information about endorsement of assessment items is available in the QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook. If an item is submitted and not endorsed, schools can review the 'Endorsement decision' on the QCAA portal. The endorsement decision outlines timelines for re-submission, directives that must be followed by the school to meet the endorsement criteria and contact details for the lead endorser. Schools may wish to contact the lead endorser should they require further clarification about endorsement directives.

If a school's second application for endorsement is unsuccessful, schools will be supported to meet the requirements of endorsement.

Q. Do schools need to submit multiple versions of assessment instruments for endorsement to be used when a student is absent on the scheduled day of testing?

A. Schools only submit one version of each of the summative assessment instruments and the QCAA portal only allows for this. In most cases, students affected by illness or misadventure should be able to complete the endorsed assessment instrument.

If a school determines that the integrity of an endorsed assessment item has been compromised for one or more students, schools may develop and use a comparable assessment instrument. The QCAA advised that the following adjustments are acceptable without seeking further endorsement, including replacement of or changes to:

- stimulus material
- text within items
- numerical values within terms
- parameters within short response items.

Schools must notify the QCAA of these adjustments when submitting provisional marks for confirmation.