

During Term 3 2020, the QTU and the Department of Education took part in a series of discussions on teacher workload issues, which culminated in the publication of an agreed statement (<https://www.qtu.asn.au/agreedstatement17sep20>) outlining a series of workload reduction strategies, both immediate and future, designed to create more space for teachers to teach and for school leaders to lead.

To help members understand the impact of these measures in their workplaces, the QTU has produced the following resource, which explains what the agreement's headline measures will mean in practice, and perhaps more importantly, what they will not mean.

Planning

The workload associated with planning has grown in recent years, with the introduction of formulaic templates and increased expectations regarding levels of differentiation. The Joint Statement on Planning, Preparation, Differentiation and Planning for Individual Students, including Individual Curriculum Plans (2015) provides a guide. Using the joint statement as the basis for effective planning will reduce workload.

This looks like:

- requirements of the P-12 CARF - school curriculum, assessment and reporting plan with three levels of planning:
 - provision of whole curriculum (school responsibility)
 - year and/or band plans for each learning area and/or subject (curriculum leader/teacher responsibility)
 - unit plans (teacher responsibility)
- a common approach to the format of these long-term planning documents (whole curriculum/year level) following consultation at the school level
- lesson plans and teaching notes/resources are individualised (i.e. they are at the teacher's discretion and are not required to be provided for review)
- evidence of differentiation for students within planning
- ICPs are only required for a small number of students significantly above or below a whole learning area/subject – not a small part of the curriculum.

This does NOT look like:

- overly detailed lesson plans
- ICPs for every student or students who received a D level of achievement for a single semester
- daily or weekly lesson plans submitted to the HoD-C/DP or uploaded in a digital format to shared drive
- tracking formative progress for individual lessons
- using a class dashboard to complete "class/subject" differentiated placemats
- detailed class timetables (primary) outlining learning area/literacy and numeracy times submitted to HOD-C/DP/principal etc.

P-12 Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework (CARF)

Teacher and school leader workload is reduced by clarifying and following the curriculum implementation requirements of the P-12 CARF.

This looks like:

- systematic curriculum delivery
- differentiated teaching and learning – three levels (students with disabilities, gifted and talented, English as an additional language or dialect)
- implementation of the Australian Curriculum
- school homework policy
- redefining models of inclusion (including clearer definitions)
- marking guides developed and aligned to Australian Curriculum achievement standards
- clear guidelines to support implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Queensland State Schools P-6 Curriculum planning model used as a resource
- Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) used as a resource only.

This does NOT look like:

- planning expectations that exceed the minimum three levels of planning and that are used as a compliance measure
- homework expectations that do not support classroom learning, and that impact on the health and wellbeing of teachers and students
- individual classroom teachers required to plan and resource for inclusion without support
- mandated use of C2C resources for teaching and assessing.

Australian Curriculum review

The workload associated with implementing new or revised curriculum is irrefutable, yet largely unseen by parents, and now another review of the Australian Curriculum P-10 is underway. Once the review is finalised, the department will, through consultation, determine a timeline for rollout and implementation of the new curriculum, taking into account existing demands on schools.

This looks like:

- continued advocacy for the decluttering of the Australian Curriculum
- protecting the depth and breadth of the curriculum provided in Queensland
- inclusion of teacher voices in the consultation around curriculum content
- timely consultation with the QTU regarding the implementation of the new curriculum to be available from 2022.

This does NOT look like:

- establishing curriculum review groups in schools to meet and discuss improvements to the current Australian Curriculum
- implementing new or revised curriculum ahead of agreed timelines
- rewriting planning documents as new curriculum is released
- rewriting assessment in anticipation of new and revised curriculum.

COVID-19 Operating Guidelines

In response to the global pandemic, the Queensland Government and the Department of Education instituted a set of restrictions and operating guidelines to ensure the health and wellbeing of employees, students, and the broader community. In recognition of the disruption to teaching and learning experienced in state schools, the department published adjustments to the reporting expectations for 2020 (Semester 1 & Semester 2).

This looks like:

- reduced number of assessment items
- limited range of subjects reported on in some year levels/phases of schooling, eg early years
- revised scope and timing of academic reports
- optional reporting comments
- minimal adult visitors on site
- facilitation of flexible work arrangements for vulnerable employees
- support of the wellbeing of staff and students
- adjustments to assessment modes where necessary, i.e. exams delivered as assignments.

This does NOT look like:

- semester reporting in other years
- additional planning and reporting requirements to make up for those missed due to COVID-19
- increased workload outside of school hours
- actioning emails outside of work hours.

Reporting

Changes to reporting requirements in schools are necessary to reduce workload while maintaining appropriate reporting on student progress to parents. A review will be undertaken, in consultation with the QTU as a major stakeholder, to identify elements of the reporting policy that can be modified to embed workload reduction.

This looks like:

- reporting to parents in writing required only twice per year, with two opportunities per year for parent-teacher interviews, as per the Education Act (and therefore the P-12 CARF)
- clear and transparent consultation (including through the LCC) with consideration of the principles of effective workload management
- a review of reporting policy will consider reducing the frequency of reporting on learning areas in primary and special schools, the use of comments etc., as well as "no surprises" reporting
- using digital technology to enable parent teacher interviews
- parents to use QParent (or other school-purchased apps like ClassDojo and Daymap) to check student progress and results (A-E for achievement)
- effort and behaviour indicators on report cards
- ensuring students in senior secondary have access to comprehensive achievement information through learning accounts prior to commencing external exams.

This does NOT look like:

- being required to report to parents in writing each term
- being required to provide parent teacher interviews each term
- contacting parents prior to the report's release to indicate a student's poor result
- providing weekly updates in the QParent app
- regular use of digital technology to update parents on student progress between reporting periods
- compulsory comments.

Regional and systemic initiatives

Proposed new initiatives at the regional and system levels will be subject to consideration of workload impact and consultation with the QTU, in accordance with the certified agreement. These include regional pedagogical frameworks, models of collegial engagement, and data collection.

This looks like:

- change management through consultation with the QTU at all levels of the department
- principals asking ARDs and teachers asking principals how new initiatives will be implemented without adding to workload
- QTU members working with their school QTU Representatives, branches, area councils, and QTU officers to ensure their industrial right to wellbeing, work-life balance, and a safe work environment is recognised.

This does NOT look like:

- collecting and reporting data in addition to mandatory data requirements
- adopting a pedagogical framework or model of collegial engagement without consultation and agreement
- planning and moderation practices in addition to the department's P-12 Curriculum, Assessment, and Reporting Framework
- professional development, aside from that required centrally by the Department of Education
- additional work to satisfy the requirements of regional officers.

Workload impact

Consultation with QTU members during Semester 1 led to the development of the QTU's Position Statement on Workload. The statement says: "To mitigate incremental workload creep, the QTU calls on central office of the Department of Education to ensure that variations or additions to Department of Education procedures, prescribed by regions, are developed in consultation and agreement with the teaching profession and QTU at the local level." Through the workload reduction negotiations, the department has agreed that the workload impact of proposed new initiatives at the regional or systems level will be subject to consultation with the QTU, in accordance with the certified agreement.

This looks like:

- any changes being effectively managed in accordance with industrial instruments
- evidence of consultation with the QTU and/or the QTU Reps on your school's local consultative committee
- demonstration of the principles of good workload management, contained in schedule 6 of the certified agreement.

This does NOT look like:

- regional or systemic change being imposed without notice
- regional or systemic change being imposed without consultation
- regional or systemic change being imposed without agreement on measures to mitigate workload (e.g. release time).

Pedagogical frameworks

The Department of Education is currently reviewing the requirements related to pedagogical decision making, and a new set of requirements will be published in 2021. Decisions about pedagogies can provide a lens through which to examine the teaching and learning in a school. However, pedagogical frameworks that are imposed on schools or adopted without proper consultation can create additional workload for everyone. In accordance with the department's current policy, school communities must be consulted about the pedagogical framework used in a school, and it is considered best practice to monitor and review it on an ongoing basis to ensure it meets the needs of members in schools.

This looks like:

- local consultation around the choice of pedagogical framework, including a review of the current model
- professional autonomy in schools, enabling them to collaboratively determine their appropriate pedagogical framework
- no system-imposed pedagogical frameworks
- no school-imposed pedagogical frameworks without consultation and agreement
- the framework forms part of the forward yearly agenda of LCCs for consultation.

This does NOT look like:

- pedagogical frameworks that are imposed rather than agreed to
- pedagogical frameworks that are no longer fit for purpose
- pedagogical frameworks that are not monitored and reviewed through local consultation
- pedagogical frameworks that drive unnecessary additional collegial engagement, such as walk-throughs, checking that learning goals are written on the board.

Assessment

By ensuring clear messaging about the nature and purpose of formative and summative assessment and that the requirements and advice of the P-12 CARF align with these messages, workload can be significantly reduced. It is essential that all schools develop, retain, and maintain an assessment plan for each year level or band of learning areas/subjects that specifies the range of summative assessments, covering all aspects of the relevant achievement standard. The purpose of assessment is to support continuous improvement in student learning.

This looks like:

- using effective formative assessment that is always task-based and has improving student learning as its purpose
- using a range of summative assessment techniques/tasks (exam, assignment, practical etc.) as appropriate
- summative assessment aligned to the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards
- marking guides for all summative assessments using the relevant achievement standards and assessable elements, to judge the quality of the evidence of student achievement
- effective storage of assessments
- appropriate resourcing to support teachers and students, i.e. allocation of teacher-aides to support implementation of Early Start
- support and resourcing for differentiation of assessment tasks (e.g. ICP development and reasonable adjustments).

This does NOT look like:

- excessive and overly frequent summative assessment
- formative assessment administered frequently as "formal tasks"
- assessment results published as league tables of students, classes etc.
- high stakes, standardised assessments used as summative assessments and reported on
- non-negotiated sprint cycles.

OneSchool

The workload-saving capacity of OneSchool is considerable; however, in its present form OneSchool requires data duplication and multiple inputs where third-party software is involved. By implementing operational improvements to OneSchool, significant workload reduction can be achieved for teachers and school leaders.

This looks like:

- consistent use of mandatory aspects of OneSchool, i.e. reporting, student behaviour and student attendance
- appropriate resourcing (i.e. additional NCT, time dedicated during staff meetings) when members are directed to make OneSchool entries
- non-teaching staff entering data.

This does NOT look like:

- individual lesson plans on OneSchool
- classroom teachers contacting parents and logging on to OneSchool regarding daily student absence
- teachers having to enter all data.

Annual performance review

The current annual performance review (APR) process adds to workload but offers little value to teachers, heads of program, and school leaders. The Public Service Commission requires a new process to be developed in accordance with the principles of the new Positive Performance Management Directive, to be negotiated by the QTU and the department. Here is what members in schools can expect as a result of the QTU's workload reduction negotiations.

This looks like:

- APR during school time
- a streamlined, less workload intensive process
- a new joint statement that reflects the true purpose of the APR, to make it meaningful and not just a compliance exercise
- PD opportunities that reflect personal development objectives.

This does NOT look like:

- APR after school or during NCT
- pre-populated performance development plans (PDPs)
- PDPs completed and not looked at again during the school year
- professional development that is unrelated to APR objectives
- a requirement to include lesson observations in a PDP
- managing unsatisfactory performance (MUP) by stealth.

Moderation

Effective pedagogy and assessment methods should be quality assured, and Queensland has a long and proud history of school-based assessment and statewide moderation practices. Moderation is a requirement of the P-12 CARF, but the department does not prescribe any particular processes, frequency or approaches. The current departmental resources on moderation encourage professional conversations and meaningful collaboration as a core part of any moderation strategy. Moderation occurs across all phases of schooling. Establishing a systematic and consistent approach to moderation across state schools is a valuable way to ensure equality of workload and consistency of standards of achievement awarded to students.

This looks like:

- moderation is used to ensure consistency in standards of achievement across a learning area, not as a matter of compliance
- the number of assessment items to be moderated is determined and agreed (through consultation) at a school level (not prescribed by region)
- school-based decisions (following consultation) about the type of moderation to be undertaken and the timing for moderation for P-10, including signposting across three levels of planning (unit, yearly and curriculum) and what will be moderated and when
- a common approach to how moderation is conducted is determined by the teachers in the cohort, i.e. prior to marking to establish expectations or after marking to ensure consistency of standards – cognisant of workload
- time is provided for the moderation to occur – faculty or staff meeting time, additional NCT.
- intra-regional moderation is optional and voluntary.

This does NOT look like:

- every piece of student work is marked multiple times by different teachers
- publication of league tables of teachers (based on student results)
- meetings during lunch breaks, NCT or outside rostered duty hours to undertake moderation activities
- unrealistic timelines determined without consultation
- moderation used to assess teacher performance.