

# The new QCE system

A guide for parents of students completing Year 12 from 2020



**QCAA**

Queensland Curriculum  
& Assessment Authority

*For all Queensland schools*





## About the QCE

Senior schooling is an exciting time for Queensland students. They can choose what to study from a wide range of subjects and courses that count towards their Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE).

The QCE is Queensland's internationally recognised senior schooling qualification. Achieving one is a sign of academic and personal success.

The QCE is flexible and allows students to design the pathway that's right for them — whether that's heading to university, skilled work, TAFE or other training. This approach supports engagement in learning and helps students to develop skills for success in the future.

To achieve a QCE, students must complete the set amount of learning, at the set standard, in the set pattern, and meet literacy and numeracy requirements.

Your child will be awarded a QCE when they meet all these requirements. This usually occurs at the end of Year 12. Students who haven't achieved a QCE by then can continue to work towards one after they leave school.

## Changes to senior schooling

In response to national and international research and the advice of education experts, the Queensland Government has invested \$70m in the new QCE system to prepare Queensland students for the challenges of tomorrow.

After more than three years of trials as well as training for nearly 17,000 teachers, Queensland schools are ready for a new era that started with Year 11 students in 2019.

- QCAA senior syllabuses have been reviewed and redeveloped. Some subjects were renamed, some combined and some new ones introduced. The new ones include Design, Food & Nutrition, Literature, and Psychology.
- Authority and Authority-registered subjects have been replaced by General and Applied subjects.
- Students will complete fewer formal assessments in the new system.
- There will be statewide external exams as well as internal (i.e. school-designed) assessments in General subjects.
- From 2020, Year 12 students will no longer sit the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test, which has been in place since 1992.
- New processes will strengthen the quality and comparability of internal assessment.
- From 2020, the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) will replace the Overall Position as the way to rank Queensland school leavers for tertiary entrance.
- The Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) will calculate students' ATARs based on their subject results.

### Preparing students for a changing world

New senior syllabuses give students the opportunity to develop the skills they need for success in work and life in the 21st century:

- critical thinking
- creative thinking
- communication
- collaboration and teamwork
- personal and social skills
- ICT skills.





## Subjects and courses

Students in the new QCE system can still choose what to study from a wide range of subjects and courses:

- QCAA subjects (General subjects, Applied subjects and Short Courses)
- Vocational education and training (VET) courses offered by schools and external providers
- School-based apprenticeships and traineeships
- Other courses, e.g. university subjects completed while at school and/or certificates and awards such as those issued by the Australian Music Examinations Board or Duke of Edinburgh programs.

### Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) subjects

**General subjects** prepare students for tertiary study, further education, training and work. General subjects may contribute up to four credits per subject towards a QCE. They may also contribute to your child's ATAR. Examples include English, General Mathematics, Ancient History, Biology, and Music Extension.

**Applied subjects** focus on practical skills and prepare students for further education, training and work. They may contribute up to four credits per subject towards a QCE. One Applied subject may also contribute to your child's ATAR when combined with four General subjects. Examples include Essential English, Essential Mathematics, Business Studies, Industrial Technology Skills, and Tourism.

**Short Courses** provide a foundation for further learning in a range of areas. Short Courses may contribute one credit per course towards a QCE. They do not contribute to the ATAR. Examples include Short Course in Literacy, Short Course in Numeracy and Short Course in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Languages.

You can find the list of 97 senior subjects on the QCAA website.

### QCE pathway planning

In Year 10, schools work with students and their parents to develop a Senior Education and Training (SET) Plan or similar.

Your child's SET Plan will help them:

- structure their learning in Years 11 and 12 around their abilities, interests and ambitions
- decide which subjects and courses they should choose to achieve their learning, further education and training, and career goals.

In Year 10 students complete the final year of the Prep–Year 10 Australian Curriculum, which provides the foundation knowledge and skills required for senior schooling.

## Assessment

How students are assessed in Years 11 and 12 in the new QCE system depends on what they are studying.

### General subjects

In General subjects, students' final results are based on their achievement in three internal assessments (set and marked by schools) and one external assessment (set and marked by the QCAA).

In most subjects, internal assessment contributes 75% and external assessment 25% towards a student's final result. In Mathematics and Science subjects, internal assessment and external assessment each contribute 50%.

Internal assessment results are not scaled by external assessment results when calculating students' final subject results.

Final results in General subjects are reported to students as a mark out of 100 and a grade of A–E.

### Applied subjects

In Applied subjects, students' final results are based on four internal assessments (set and marked by schools).

In Essential English and Essential Mathematics, one of these internal assessments is a common internal assessment (developed by the QCAA and marked by your child's school).

There is no external assessment in Applied subjects.

Final results in Applied subjects are reported to students as a grade of A–E.

### External assessment

Starting in 2020, students taking General subjects will sit external assessments (set and marked by the QCAA) in Term 4 each year.

Students in each subject will sit these pen and paper exams at the same time in schools across Queensland. Most students will sit the exams when they are in Year 12.

Practice papers will be available in Term 3, 2019 to help teachers prepare students for external assessment.

The 2020 external assessment timetable will be published on the QCAA website in Term 4, 2019.

### Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA) — formerly known as special provisions — are for students who may have disability, impairment and/or medical conditions, or experience other circumstances that may be a barrier to their performance in assessment. If you think your child may need AARA to complete assessments, please talk to their school.





## Vocational education and training (VET)

VET remains an important part of senior schooling and will continue in its current form. It's an area in which Queensland leads the country. About 60% of Queensland senior students study for VET qualifications that count towards their QCE. In recent years the most popular courses have been in business, ICT, hospitality, construction, fitness, and sport and recreation.

How students are assessed in VET depends on the course. Typical ways include:

- observation
- written assessment
- questioning
- work samples
- third-party feedback.

## Results and reporting

A student's final subject results and QCE will be released in their learning account on the myQCE website in December — at the end of Year 12.

Learning accounts for students in the new QCE system will be available later in 2019.

## Tertiary entrance

The Overall Position (OP) has been the main tertiary entrance rank for Queensland school leavers since the early 1990s. It will be used for the last time with Year 12 students in 2019.

The ATAR will be the tool used to select school leavers for tertiary entrance from 2020.

The OP and ATAR are both equally fair and reliable methods for ranking students who have studied different combinations of subjects. But because the ATAR is a finer-grained rank it gives universities greater scope for making decisions about student entry to high-demand courses.

Queensland ATARs will be based on a student's:

- best five General subject results, or
- best results in four General subjects, plus one Applied subject, or
- best results in four General subjects, plus one VET qualification at Certificate III or above.

The Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) will calculate and issue students' ATARs. You will find more information on its website: [www.qtac.edu.au](http://www.qtac.edu.au).

### Post-school pathways

The Queensland Government's Next Step survey tells us that over 85% of Year 12 graduates in 2018 were engaged in education, training or employment six months after completing school.

- Around 58% had started some form of further education or training
  - 39% were enrolled in an undergraduate degree
  - 19% had started a VET qualification, including a traineeship or apprenticeship.
- About 28% were employed.
- Approximately 11% were seeking work.
- About 3% were not in the labour force, education or training.

## More information

[myqce.qcaa.qld.edu.au](http://myqce.qcaa.qld.edu.au)

The myQCE website for Years 10 and 11 students provides information about the new QCE system, including subjects and courses, assessment and results, study tips and more. Talk to your school about the subjects and courses it offers.

[qcaa.qld.edu.au](http://qcaa.qld.edu.au)

More information about senior secondary curriculum and assessment, including syllabuses for QCAA subjects, is available on the QCAA website.