

Reporting student achievement and progress in Prep to Year 10

Advice on implementing the Australian Curriculum

April 2012

This paper is a component of the Queensland implementation strategy 2011–2013 (June 2011) for supporting the transition to the Australian Curriculum.

The advice builds on the proposals described in the report *Assessment, standards and reporting: Implementing the Australian Curriculum P–10* (September 2011).

The P–2 advice and guidelines in this paper replicates and builds on the information in the following interim information statements:

- *Planning learning in P–2: Advice on implementing the Australian Curriculum P–10* (November 2011)
- *Assessment in P–2: Advice on implementing the Australian Curriculum P–10* (November 2011)
- *Reporting in P–2: Advice on implementing the Australian Curriculum P–10* (November 2011)

During 2012, the *P–2 curriculum, assessment and reporting: Advice and guidelines* will replace the information statements.

A complementary paper — *Standards and assessment in Prep to Year 10: Advice on implementing the Australian Curriculum* (February 2012) — completes the information needed for schools and school sectors to effectively implement (teach, assess and report) the Australian Curriculum in 2012.

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Introduction

Reporting refers to the act of communicating information on student learning to a range of audiences in differing forms for a variety of purposes. Reporting is part of a cooperative relationship between schools and teachers, students, parents/carers and the community, and involves mutual responsibility, respect and trust.

This paper presents advice that aligns with the Australian Government requirements for reporting practices for schools to promote consistency of twice-yearly reporting about student achievement using a five-point scale (A–E or equivalent). It includes draft reporting standards for P–2¹ and Years 3–10 that succinctly describe levels of student achievement. The draft standards are constructed so that teachers can report, in summary, how well students have achieved in relation to the Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards, the *Essential Learnings and Standards*, and the *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines (EYCG)*. The reporting standards will remain in draft during 2012. Consultation on the draft standards will be included in the validation process for the learning area standards descriptors.

Throughout this paper the terminology of “intended curriculum”, “curriculum content” and “achievement standards” is used and applied to both the Australian Curriculum and to the Queensland curriculum.

The *National Education Agreement* (SCRGSP 2010) and the *Schools Assistance Act 2008* (updated September 2011) require schools to provide parents/carers with plain-language reports twice a year that:

- are readily understandable to those responsible for the student and give an accurate and objective assessment of the student’s progress and achievement
- include an assessment of the student’s achievement against any available national standards
- include, for learning areas studied, an assessment of the student’s achievement:
 - reported as A, B, C, D and E (or an equivalent five-point scale), clearly defined against specific learning standards²
 - relative to the performance of the student’s peer group.

This ensures that students and their parents/carers receive a timely summary about achievement and progress. In most schools, this takes place at the end of each semester. See Appendix 1 for the requirements of the national agreements about reporting.

In 2012, schools will be required to report student achievement in all learning areas or subjects offered as part of a school’s curriculum program across P–10. This will include curriculum developed using:

- Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards
- Queensland *Essential Learnings and Standards*
- *EYCG*.

¹ Prep (P) in Queensland is the Foundation Year (F) of the Australian Curriculum and refers to the year before Year 1. Children beginning Prep in January are required to be five years of age by 30 June. P–2 represents the early phase of learning in the Australian Curriculum.

² Currently, a modification to the *National Education Agreement* exists for reporting in the Prep Year. This allows for reporting twice-yearly using a four-point scale aligned to the *EYCG* phases of learning: Applying, Making connections, Exploring and Becoming aware.

The advice in this paper relates to only one source of information on student achievement and progress. Schools have scope to report on other aspects of schooling such as:

- student participation and skills in school-based extracurricular activities
- student attributes such as effort, punctuality, and social and behavioural skills
- student attendance
- other school or system priorities.

Reporting student achievement and progress can take many forms, for example:

- report cards
- assessment feedback
- interviews and conversations
- phone calls
- digital portfolios
- internet access to student records.

Teachers and administrators are encouraged to reflect on the range of reporting practices that best serve the needs of students, parents/carers and other interested parties, and make informed decisions to modify their practices where necessary.

Principles underpinning reporting practice in P–10

A school report is a summary statement (electronic or paper) that records the achievements of an individual or a group of students at a point in time. Teachers make a judgment based on their shared professional knowledge about how evidence in student work matches the achievement standards.

Students need regular, quality feedback on their achievement and progress to:

- know what they have achieved in relation to the achievement standards
- know specific areas in which they need to improve
- make choices about their future learning goals.

Parents/carers need regular reports to:

- help understand how well their children are performing in relation to the learning expectations of the Year level they have been taught
- help them make choices about their child's future learning goals.

Teachers and schools need systematically collected and meaningful information about student achievement and progress to:

- plan future teaching and learning
- make decisions about continuous improvement of their curriculum.

Schools and teachers have a professional and legal obligation to provide these reports.

This paper is underpinned by the premise that the key purpose of reporting student achievement and progress is to improve student learning. The principles and practices of a

school-based, standards-based approach to assessment and reporting are central to achieving improved student learning. These principles, listed below, underpin a framework for reporting:

- purposes of assessment
- alignment of teaching, learning, assessment and reporting
- a collection of evidence or folio of student work
- on-balance judgments
- moderation.

Purposes of assessment

The main purposes of assessment are to:

- promote, assist and improve teaching and learning
- help students to achieve the highest standards they can
- provide parents/carers with meaningful information on students' achievements and information for reporting and certification.

Schools and education systems often use the following classifications to describe the purposes of their assessment programs.

Table 1: Examples of assessment frameworks in P–10

Diagnostic assessment	Assessment for learning
Provides opportunities to use assessment to determine the nature of students' learning difficulties as a basis for providing feedback or intervention	Enables teachers to use information about student progress to inform their teaching
Formative assessment	Assessment as learning
Focuses on monitoring to improve student learning	Enables students to reflect on and monitor their own progress to inform their future learning goals
Summative assessment	Assessment of learning
Can indicate standards achieved at particular points for reporting purposes	Assists teachers to use evidence of student learning to assess student achievement against goals and standards

This paper focuses on summative assessment and on assessment of learning, and suggests guidelines for reporting to assist schools with providing aligned and meaningful information on students' achievements.

Alignment of teaching, learning, assessment and reporting

Teachers develop assessment that is directly aligned to what students have had an opportunity to learn based on the intended curriculum. They align what has been assessed to what is reported to students, parents/carers and other teachers.

Alignment is integral to the development and maintenance of a high-quality education system that caters for a diverse range of students and schools. To produce the best learning outcomes for students, alignment means that:

- what is taught (curriculum) must inform how it is taught (pedagogy), how students are assessed (assessment) and how the learning is reported (reporting)
- what is assessed must relate directly to what students have had an opportunity to learn
- what is reported to students, parents/carers and other teachers must align with what has been learnt from the intended curriculum and assessed.

The Australian Curriculum, *Essential Learnings and Standards* and the *EYCG* are based on the assumption that every child and young person can learn. In 2012, schools and teachers will develop and implement appropriate programs that suit their local context for:

- English, Mathematics and Science, using the P–10 Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards
- Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE), The Arts, Technology, Health and Physical Education (HPE) and Languages other than English, using the *Essential Learnings and Standards* in Years 1–9 and the Year 10 Guidelines
- the early learning areas — Social and personal learning, Health and physical learning and the aspects in Active learning processes not covered in the Australian Curriculum — using the *EYCG*.

Schools and teachers make decisions about how they plan and deliver challenging and engaging programs of learning that match the learning needs of their students so the students can demonstrate achievement of the learning expectations — that is, the curriculum content and achievement standards.

Student achievement will be reported against the achievement standard for the Year level they are taught.

Teachers make reasonable adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment to support the learning of students with disabilities. In most instances, the required curriculum content, achievement and reporting standards will be used for these students³.

School sectors and schools make decisions following negotiation with parents/carers about the provision of modified or accelerated learning and assessment programs to meet the learning needs of some students. Reporting achievement for these students should clearly indicate the Year level of the curriculum content and the achievement standards against which judgments about student achievement have been made.

A collection of evidence or folio of student work

Teachers make summative judgments for reporting purposes based on a planned and targeted selection of evidence of student learning collected over the reporting period.

The folio of student work is a planned approach to make defensible judgments about student achievement and involves gathering sufficient and targeted evidence of student learning over the reporting period.

For summative purposes, the school and groups of teachers use the curriculum content and achievement standards to make informed decisions about what will constitute a collection of evidence or folio of student work.

³ QSA has developed a series of resources on adjustments for students with special educational needs. See: www.qsa.qld.edu.au/18307.html

A balanced school-based assessment program has opportunities for students to demonstrate their achievement from a range of learning (curriculum content), in a variety of ways (assessments techniques) and in a range of situations (assessment conditions) over the reporting period.

In the context of the Australian Curriculum and the Queensland curriculum, a balanced assessment program involves gathering evidence to make judgments about student achievement in relation to the curriculum content and achievement standards.

On-balance judgments

On-balance judgments are professional decisions made by teachers about the overall quality of a student's work that best matches the achievement standards.

Teachers make on-balance judgments about the evidence in student work:

- in individual assessments for monitoring, formative or summative purposes
- based on a collection of evidence or folio of student work that has been planned to provide sufficient evidence of achievement in relation to the curriculum content and achievement standards selected for summative purposes.

An on-balance judgment does not involve averaging a grade across different assessments.

When reporting, teachers use the collection of evidence or folio of selected student work to make an on-balance judgment about how well the evidence in student responses to the range of assessments best match the valued features of a learning area described in the achievement standards. The on-balance judgment represents the student's achievement *at the time of reporting*.

Moderation

Moderation occurs when teachers engage in focused professional dialogue to discuss and analyse how closely the evidence in student work matches the achievement standards.

Moderation assists teachers to make judgments about individual assessments and collections of evidence or folios of student work.

For the purposes of reporting, moderation procedures ensure that teacher judgments of standards achieved by students are consistent and comparable.

Consistency of teacher judgments is important both within schools and between schools. Making consistent judgments about students' achievements within and between schools occurs when teachers develop shared understandings of the curriculum content and achievement standards.

Moderation provides students and their parents/carers with confidence that the awarded grades are an accurate judgment of achievement and that the report is meaningful, professional and consistent.

Schools and school sectors make decisions about moderation processes within and between their schools⁴.

⁴ Moderation processes may have a range of formats, including information and communication technologies and face-to-face meetings.

Draft reporting standards in P–10

The draft reporting standards for P–2 and Years 3–10 use a five-point scale to succinctly describe levels of student achievement for twice-yearly reporting to parents/carers, based on a planned collection of evidence or folio of student achievement collected over the course of study.

The draft reporting standards are a summary statement constructed so that teachers can report how well the child or student has achieved or progressed in relation to knowledge, understanding and skills and can be applied to:

- the Australian Curriculum achievement standards
- Queensland's *EYCG, Essential Learnings and Standards* and Year 10 Guidelines.

The draft reporting standards are aligned to the requirements in Australian Government funding agreements. School sectors will provide sector-specific reporting requirements.

The reporting standards will remain in draft during 2012. Consultation on the draft reporting standards will be included in the validation process for the learning area standards descriptors.

P–2 draft reporting standards

In the early phase of learning⁵, P–2 teachers use a planned and targeted collection of evidence or assessment folio of the child's achievement over the reporting period to formally report to parents/carers. The collection of evidence is predetermined and planned by administrators and teachers with reference to the curriculum content and the achievement standards.

Written reports

The P–2 draft reporting standards have been developed to be applied across the early phase of learning. The standards can be used to report achievement in the Australian Curriculum and Queensland's *EYCG* (in Prep) or *Essential Learnings* (in Years 1 and 2). The standards give parents/carers and teachers a common and consistent language to describe a child's achievement and progress.

The P–2 draft reporting standards are for twice-yearly reporting. The standards are to be used with a collection of evidence or assessment folio. The collection of work is planned to include evidence of the child's achievement and demonstrates a pattern of achievement within the child's learning for the reporting period. The reporting standards:

- use a common language for reporting that provides an objective summary of the child's progress and achievement that is readily understandable
- use a five-point scale aligned to the Australian Curriculum achievement standards
- is pitched to reflect the expected achievement described in the achievement standards
- use, in name only, the *EYCG* phase descriptors. The reframing of the descriptors to the Australian Curriculum achievement standards is a reminder to view and discuss a child as a capable and changing learner who is connected to their prior experience and at the start of their first phase of schooling.

⁵ The Australian Curriculum design frames the early phase of learning as P–2. In Queensland, the early phase of learning has included Year 3. During the transition to the Australian Curriculum, schools and school sectors will make decisions about how this phase of learning is framed, which Year levels are included, and subsequently what reporting processes are used.

Prep teachers report children’s achievement and progress in:

- Australian Curriculum learning areas, using the P–2 reporting standards (or school-sector equivalent framework) aligned to the requirements in the Australian Government funding agreements
- other early learning areas of the *EYCG*, using written comments guided by the *EYCG* phase descriptors.

Years 1 and 2 teachers report children’s achievement and progress in Australian Curriculum learning areas and *Essential Learnings and Standards*, using the P–2 reporting standards (or school sector equivalent framework) aligned to the requirements in Australian Government funding agreements.

Table 2: P–2 draft reporting standards describing children’s achievement using a five-point scale

Across the reporting period, the patterns of evidence typically demonstrate:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying (AP)
The child applies the curriculum content and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the required knowledge. The child demonstrates a high level of skill that can be transferred to new situations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making connections (MC)
The child makes connections using the curriculum content and demonstrates a clear understanding of the required knowledge. The child applies a high level of skill in situations familiar to them, and is beginning to transfer skills to new situations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with (WW)
The child can work with the curriculum content and demonstrates understanding of the required knowledge. The child applies skills in situations familiar to them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring (EX)
The child is exploring the curriculum content and demonstrates understanding of aspects of the required knowledge. The child uses a varying level of skills in situations familiar to them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming aware (BA)
The child is becoming aware of the curriculum content and demonstrates a basic understanding of aspects of required knowledge. The child is beginning to use skills in situations familiar to them.

Reporting conversations

In P–2, parent/carer–teacher formal reporting conversations are an opportunity to provide a fuller picture of learning for both parent/carer and teacher. Engaging in conversations assists with knowing and understanding the diverse backgrounds of children that is essential for teachers to support children’s learning.

Reporting conversations indicate the teaching and learning focus required to extend the child’s learning. In these formal reporting conversations, teachers may have opportunities to offer reflections on the child as a learner and relate this to the general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum.

Years 3–10 draft reporting standards

In Years 3–10, teachers use a planned and targeted collection of evidence or folio of student work gathered over the reporting period to formally report to parents/carers.

The folio of student work is a collection of assessment evidence that is predetermined by teachers and is planned to demonstrate a student's achievement from a range of learning (curriculum content), in a variety of ways (assessments techniques) and in a range of situations (assessment conditions).

The Years 3–10 draft reporting standards are for twice-yearly reporting. The reporting standards:

- use a common language for reporting the quality of a student's work and achievement within a reporting period across all learning areas in Australian Curriculum learning areas and the *Essential Learnings and Standards*
- succinctly describe typical performance at each of the five levels (A–E) for knowledge and understanding of facts, concepts and procedures, and application of skills. The curriculum and standards constructs are common to both the Australian Curriculum and the Queensland curriculum.

Table 3: Years 3–10 reporting standards describing students' achievement using a five-point scale

A
Evidence in a student's work typically demonstrates a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the content (facts, concepts, and procedures), and application of skills.
B
Evidence in a student's work typically demonstrates a high level of knowledge and understanding of the content (facts, concepts, and procedures), and application of skills.
C
Evidence in a student's work typically demonstrates a sound level of knowledge and understanding of the content (facts, concepts, and procedures), and application of skills.
D
Evidence in a student's work typically demonstrates a limited level of knowledge and understanding of the content (facts, concepts and procedures), and application of skills.
E
Evidence in a student's work typically demonstrates a very limited level of knowledge and understanding of the content (facts, concepts and procedures), and application of skills.

Appendix 1: National requirements for reporting

The following national requirements underpin the reporting frameworks in P–2 and Years 3–10.

National Education Agreement

Student reports

Schedule E, E3

Provision to parents and carers by all schools of plain language reports twice a year that:

- a) are readily understandable to those responsible for the student and give an accurate and objective assessment of the student's progress and achievement;
- b) include an assessment of the student's achievement against any available national standards; and
- c) include, for subjects studied, an assessment of the student's achievement-
 - i. reported as A, B, C, D and E (or an equivalent five-point scale), clearly defined
 - ii. against specific learning standards; and
 - iii. relative to the performance of the student's peer group.

National Education Agreement, accessed 31 October 2011, www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/national_agreements/education/education_agreement.pdf

Schools Assistance Act 2008

Act No. 153 of 2008 as amended

This compilation was prepared on 24 October 2011 taking into account amendments up to Act No. 122 of 2011.

Funding agreements — reporting to parents etc.

Part 3, Division 3, Subdivision B, Item 20

Scope

1. This section applies in relation to a student who attends a non-systemic school, or a school that is a member of an approved school system.
2. Reports about student attending school
3. A funding agreement for the school or system must require the relevant authority for the school or system to give each person responsible for the student a report (or reports) concerning the student that complies with this section.
4. A report complies with this section if the report:
 - a. uses plain language, and is readily understandable by each person responsible for the student; and
 - b. gives an accurate and objective assessment of the student's progress and achievement; and

- c. includes an assessment of the student's achievement:
 - i. against any available national standards; and
 - ii. relative to the performance of the student's peer group at the school; and
- d. meets any other requirements that are specified in the regulations; and
- e. is given to each person responsible for the student:
 - iii. in a way prescribed by the regulations; and
 - iv. with the frequency prescribed by the regulations.

Schools Assistance Act 2008, accessed 31 October 2011, www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2011C00862

Schools Assistance Regulations 2009

Select Legislative Instrument 2009 No. 132 as amended

This compilation was prepared on 3 September 2011 taking into account amendments up to SLI 2011 No. 161.

These Regulations specify the performance and transparency requirements in accordance with relevant sections of the *Schools Assistance Act 2008* and gives effect to the data collection and reporting requirements in the National Education Agreement agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), including the national assessments and performance measures set out in the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) Measurement Framework for National Key Performance Measures.

Student reports

Part 5, Item 5.1

1. For paragraphs 20 (3) (d) and (e) of the Act, and subject to sub-regulation (2), a report of a student's achievement must include, for subjects studied, an assessment against achievement levels defined by the education authority or school, being levels:
 - a. labelled as A, B, C, D or E (or on an equivalent 5 point scale); and
 - b. clearly defined against specific learning standards.
2. The Minister may approve a different form of student report for this regulation.
3. The report must be provided at least twice in a program year.

Note: A relevant authority or school may have obligations under the Privacy Act 1988 in providing information.

School Assistance Regulations 2009, accessed 31 October 2011, www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2011C00744

Definitions

Achievement: The extent to which a student has demonstrated knowledge, skills, values and attitudes as the result of the teaching/learning process.

Assessment (noun): The purposeful and systematic collection of evidence about students' achievements.

- *continuous*: The process of gathering evidence about students' achievements throughout a course of study.
- *diagnostic*: Used to determine the nature of students' learning difficulties as a basis for providing appropriate feedback or intervention.
- *formative*: Assessment that occurs during the teaching and learning process that provides feedback to students and teachers about the progress of student learning.
- *school-based*: Assessment that is devised, administered and marked by teachers as part of the school curriculum.
- *summative*: Indicates the achievement status or standards achieved at particular points of schooling.

Comparability: The consistent application of standards across Queensland so that student performances of equivalent standards are recognised as such.

Consistency (of teacher judgment): The common interpretation by teachers over time, at both an individual and collective level, of the match between evidence in student work and the achievement standards.

Curriculum: A selection of what explicit knowledge (factual, conceptual and procedural) will be taught and learned.

- *intended curriculum*: Documented statements of what students are expected to learn as a result of their educational experiences.
- *enacted curriculum*: The decisions teachers make about learning experiences for students.

Folio of student work: A targeted collection of assessment evidence gathered over a course of study, consisting of student responses to the assessment instruments.

- *assessment folio*: In Prep, an assessment folio is a targeted collection of work predetermined by administrators and teachers to demonstrate a pattern of achievement within a child's learning.

Moderation: Procedures to ensure that teacher judgments of student achievement are consistent and comparable.

Monitoring:

- *teachers*: The process of checking the students' learning progress to make ongoing decisions about teaching and learning.
- *students*: The process of checking their own progress and using feedback to plan the next steps for their learning.

On-balance judgment: A teacher's professional decision as to the standard that best matches the quality of a student's work overall, either for a single assessment instrument or across the entire course of study.

Report: A summary statement (electronic or paper) that records the achievements of an individual or a group of students at a point in time.

Standard (of achievement): Describes the expected qualities of student work and provides a basis for judging how well students have demonstrated what they know, understand and can do.

Summative judgment: Major purpose is to indicate achievement at particular points of schooling. It is geared toward reporting.

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