

Research Series

A policy options framework:

from the *Evaluation of stakeholder*

perceptions of TEPA information

materials



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1: BACKGROUND

One of TEPA's objectives is to listen and respond proactively to key stakeholder groups with respect to tertiary entrance procedures, processes, outcomes and related matters. With regard to its information materials, TEPA is responsible for facilitating the dissemination of information on tertiary entrance pathways and researching the use and effectiveness of tertiary entrance information materials. Evaluations of TEPA information resources have previously been undertaken on a regular basis and the recommendations of these evaluations have, where possible, been considered when revising existing materials and developing new materials.

Unfortunately, although prior evaluations of TEPA's information materials have targeted the perceptions of parents and school personnel, the response rates have typically been quite low. Such low response rates have necessarily meant that the information available when considering changes to current and future information materials has been limited. To remedy this problem, TEPA has recently undertaken the comprehensive *Evaluation of stakeholder perceptions of TEPA information materials*, which incorporated the views of all key stakeholder groups. Stakeholder groups included school principals, guidance officers, teachers, former Year 12 students, and parents of former Year 12 students.

Findings from the evaluation

The findings from the *Evaluation of stakeholder perceptions of TEPA information materials* show that, on average, stakeholder groups were satisfied with TEPA's information materials. It was, however, evident that not all TEPA publications were considered to be equally important by all participating groups. School principals and guidance officers stated that *From Year 10 to Tertiary Entrance* was the most important TEPA publication, while parents, teachers and former Year 12 students considered *Calculation of OPs and FPs* to be the most important TEPA information publication. All groups appeared to have a high regard for the *SEP* brochure, as all groups ranked it as one of the most important three TEPA publications. *Applying for visual and performing arts* was not perceived as an important TEPA information publication by any group. This was not unexpected given that the publication is only recommended for students considering entry to a performing arts course.

Despite the high levels of satisfaction with TEPA's information materials there were several recommendations which arose from the evaluation. Given the large number of recommendations and TEPA's commitment to providing all stakeholder groups with accurate and timely information about tertiary entrance matters, a policy options framework project was initiated to ensure that the best possible means of implementing each of the recommendations was carefully considered.

2: THE FRAMEWORK

Each of the recommendations arising from the *Evaluation of stakeholder perceptions of TEPA information materials* is discussed in this framework. Where a particular recommendation does not require any further research before its implementation, a brief explanation is provided. Those recommendations requiring further investigation of policy options include:

- the timing of distribution of TEPA information materials
- the distribution of TEPA information materials to school staff
- the distribution of TEPA information materials to parents
- the development of a pre-service teacher training module
- the provision of in-service tertiary entrance information for interested teachers
- the provision of Vocational Education and Training information relating to tertiary entrance.

The framework consists of an in-depth analysis of each of the policy options to be considered when implementing these recommendations. The implications surrounding the implementation of each of the options are also discussed in the context of the framework. In addition, the framework sets out a timeline detailing the optimal timing for implementing each of the preferred options.

The timing of distribution of TEPA information materials

Recommendation 1

The timing of distribution of all publications requires re-evaluation. While there can be no guarantee that schools will disseminate the information materials at the suggested times, further investigation as to the optimal timing for the majority of students and parents may improve both the recognition and reading rates of publications and, in turn, increase levels of satisfaction.

A feedback sheet and explanatory covering letter were sent to the principals of all Queensland senior secondary schools, asking them to indicate when they would prefer to receive each of TEPA's information publications and which group(s) of students the publications are distributed to in their school. Feedback sheets were completed and returned by the school principals or their representatives from 123 of the 337 (36%) senior schools in Queensland. As was expected, the responses showed some variety in the times when TEPA publications are required as well as the year levels to which they are distributed within each school.

Findings

For each TEPA publication the current timing of distribution to schools is noted in the tables below, along with the timing of distribution which most schools would prefer. Similarly the current Year level for which TEPA recommends the publication is

provided alongside the Year level to which schools most commonly distribute the publication.

What Now?

Current timing	Preferred timing	Target group	Preferred Year level
June	June/July	Year 10s	Year 10s

Calculation of OPs and FPs

Current timing	Preferred timing	Target group	Preferred Year level
June	Term 1	Year 12s	Year 12s

SEP

Current timing	Preferred timing	Target group	Preferred Year level
June	June/July	Year 10s	Year 10s

SEP: Facts for parents

Current timing	Preferred timing	Target group	Preferred Year level
March	Term 1	Parents of Year 12s	Parents of Year 10s

From Year 10 to Tertiary Entrance

Current timing	Preferred timing	Target group	Preferred Year level
March	June/July	Year 11s	Year 10s

Making good decisions on tertiary entrance

Current timing	Preferred timing	Target group	Preferred Year level
June	June/July	Year 12s	Year 12s

Applying for visual and performing arts

Current timing	Preferred timing	Target group	Preferred Year level
June	June/July	Year 12s	Year 12s

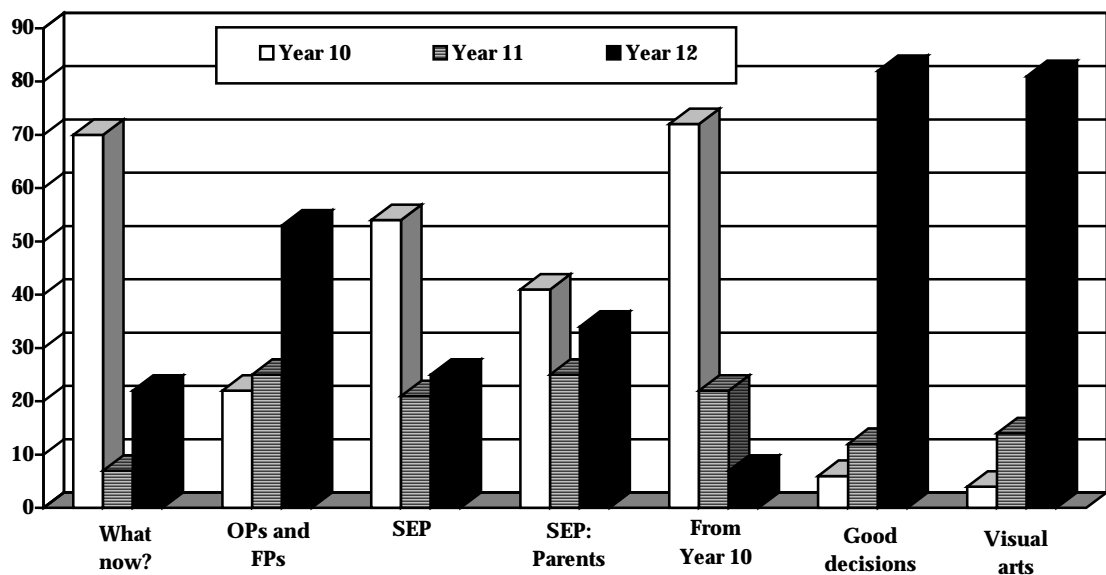
Discussion

It is apparent that most schools are satisfied with the majority of current distribution dates of TEPA information materials. The two publications which should be distributed at different times are *Calculation of OPs and FPs* and *From Year 10 to Tertiary Entrance*. It appears that schools require information for their students about the calculation of OPs and FPs early in the school year, while the publication *From Year 10 to Tertiary Entrance* is not required until June or July.

Similarly most schools appear to distribute most TEPA information materials to the year level group for which they are written. The obvious exceptions are *SEP: Facts for parents* which was distributed mostly to the parents of Year 10 students, and *From Year 10 to Tertiary Entrance*, which was chiefly distributed to Year 10 students. Should TEPA not want to alter the distribution dates and target group of *From Year 10 to Tertiary Entrance* this publication could be renamed *From Year 11 to Tertiary Entrance* and distributed in the current fashion.

It should be noted that not one of the publications was distributed to only one age group and often publications were distributed to different age groups at the same school. *Making good decisions on tertiary entrance* and *Applying for visual and performing arts* were the only two publications which were distributed to the majority of students for whom they were written. That is, all of the remaining publications were distributed to a mix of students in different year levels, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Distribution of TEPA information materials across Year level groups.



It is clear from Figure 1 that schools perceive each TEPA publication to be useful for a range of students. While this is not in itself problematic, there is some cause for concern in the high numbers of schools which report distributing *SEP* to students in Years 11 and 12. The information it contains is superfluous to the needs of Year 11 and 12 students who receive more detailed information about the Student Education Profile in other TEPA publications. It would appear that a label printed on copies of *SEP*, stating “For Year 10 Students” would be a cost effective means of alleviating this problem.

Equally problematic is the distribution pattern of *SEP: Facts for parents*. This publication is distributed most often to students in Year 10 (41%), followed by students in Years 11 (25%) and 12 (34%). The level of detail in the publication is

probably not of immediate interest to the parents of students in Years 10 and 11. It is recommended that either TEPA produce a simpler version for Year 10 parents or that *SEP: Facts for parents* be rewritten and recommended solely for distribution to the parents of Year 10 students.

Similarly, it appears that there is a need for information about the calculation of OPs and FPs at an earlier stage than Year 12. This matter is currently being addressed through the production of a less technical publication explaining OPs and FPs which is aimed predominantly at Year 10 students.

The distribution of TEPA information materials to school staff

Recommendation 2

Improved distribution strategies for school staff should be investigated as many teachers expressed a strong interest in receiving TEPA publications. The provision of current tertiary entrance information materials may also assist in addressing some of the misconceptions held by both teachers and students about tertiary entrance matters.

The feedback sheet sent to schools asking for details about the preferred timing of TEPA information materials also highlighted the fact that many teachers indicated that they would like to have better access to TEPA information materials. One hundred and twenty-three school principals or their representatives indicated which of a number of options they thought were the best ways of ensuring that teachers were aware of, and had access to, TEPA materials.

Findings

The options suggested to principals are listed below, in the preferred order nominated by the respondents.

Table 1: Preferred options for distribution of TEPA information materials to teachers.

Options	Frequency
Materials sent to principal/administration staff for distribution to all teachers	105
Copies of TEPA News and all TEPA information materials to include TEPA web site address (where materials can be viewed or downloaded)	42
Professional development sessions offered by TEPA Information staff	35
Materials included in Education Views to coincide with distribution of materials to students	29
Copies of TEPA News to contain a reminder about the availability of publications from TEPA	28
Materials sent to Heads of Department for distribution to teachers	10
Materials sent to principal/administration staff for teachers to collect from a central location (e.g. staff room)	8
Other suggestions	10

Respondents were able to indicate more than one preferred option.

Discussion

It is clear that the overwhelming majority of school principals perceive the school administration staff and/or themselves as providing the optimal means for ensuring that all teachers receive TEPA information materials. This option would prove reasonably cost-effective for TEPA as copies of publications intended for teachers could easily be distributed to schools at the same time as the copies for students, although there would be additional costs incurred in the printing of extra copies of each of the publications.

Other options which were perceived as practical ways of informing teachers of the availability of TEPA publications included reminders about TEPA's web site on the Internet (where TEPA information materials can be accessed). This is clearly a very cost-effective option which TEPA should pursue. TEPA's Information Officer should ensure that all future issues of *TEPA News* and TEPA information publications contain the TEPA web site address and a brief statement about the information available at the site.

The costs associated with providing professional development sessions for teachers is dealt with in more detail later in the framework (see section 2.5). Advertising costs in *Education Views*, *The Queensland Teachers' Union Journal* and *The Independent Teacher* are as follows:

- advertising in *Education Views*:
 - 1/4 page advertisement\$708
 - 1/2 page advertisement\$1398
 - full page advertisement.....\$2795
 - inserts.....\$5000
- advertising in *The Queensland Teachers' Union Journal*:
 - 1/4 page advertisement\$490
 - 1/2 page advertisement\$890
 - full page advertisement.....\$1350
 - inserts.....\$60 per 1000
- advertising in *The Independent Teacher*:
 - 1/4 page advertisement\$260
 - 1/2 page advertisement\$410
 - full page advertisement.....\$675

As the large majority of schools (86%) is interested in distributing TEPA publications to teachers themselves, the use of *Education Views* and other publications aimed at teachers to advertise or distribute TEPA materials is probably not necessary. Should future evaluations show that teachers are still not receiving the suite of TEPA information materials, the option of advertising should be given further consideration.

The distribution of TEPA information materials to parents

Recommendation 3

Improved distribution strategies for parents should be investigated as a number of parents have indicated that they did not remember receiving any of the publications and would have appreciated information on tertiary entrance.

Improving the distribution of TEPA information materials to parents is a complicated issue. The evaluation of TEPA information materials showed that a number of parents do not remember receiving any TEPA publications. As TEPA is reliant on schools (and, in turn, students) to distribute information materials to parents, it is imperative that parents are made more aware of the suite of TEPA publications which is available.

Findings

Possible options for increasing parental awareness of TEPA information materials include:

- advertising in *ExitLines*: a publication published by the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (BSSSS). *ExitLines* is distributed to all Queensland Year 12 students and is currently published twice a year. Costs of advertising are as follows:

strip ad (runs bottom of the page)	\$ 700
1/8 page (lengthways).....	\$ 1000
1/4 page full colour.....	\$ 2000
1/2 page full colour	\$ 4000
- advertising in *The Courier Mail*:

1/4 page advertisement (Sunday)	\$ 3474
1/4 page advertisement (Monday to Friday)	\$ 4507
1/4 page advertisement (Saturday).....	\$5064
- advertising in regional/local newspapers: costs associated with this option would include the advertising costs as well as the considerable time and effort required by TEPA’s Information Officer who would need to contact and liaise with all newspapers
- advertising in the *Queensland Tertiary Courses* booklet: the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) advised that it is their policy not to accept advertising in their publications. Should this policy change, this option should be considered
- including letters to all school guidance officers/other appropriate school personnel with TEPA publications when they are distributed to schools. The letter would need to emphasise the importance of informing parents that publications are being given to students to take home
- placement of a notice in *TEPA News* asking guidance officers to inform parents that TEPA publications are being sent home with students.

Discussion

The first two options are clearly the most expensive. Furthermore if many parents do not currently receive all TEPA publications it is likely that they also may not all receive copies of *ExitLines*. If the second option (advertising in *The Courier Mail*) were implemented it is likely not only to raise parents’ awareness of TEPA and TEPA publications, but also to raise TEPA’s profile in the general community. An advertisement could be placed once each year at a time when parents’ and students’ minds are on tertiary entrance matters, for example at the time of the QCS Test or when QTAC applications are due. *The Courier Mail* publishes supplements dealing with tertiary entrance matters in recognition of their importance to its target audience. TEPA’s Information Officer could provide copy for inclusion in these supplements at no cost, should this option be made available by the newspaper.

Possible problems associated with the final two options above are that they rely on parents hearing about TEPA publications through the schools, which the recent

evaluation has shown is not always effective. In fact, reminder notices about publications are already placed in *TEPA News* each year and to improve the effectiveness of this option the Senior Information Officer intends to include articles about TEPA publications in future issues of *TEPA News*.

Regardless of which option is implemented, there will be an additional cost to TEPA in terms of the printing of additional copies of publications for parents who request them. There are two possible means of producing extra copies of publications for parents. The first is to increase the number of copies printed each year for each publication while the alternative is to print more copies only when the need arises. It is impossible to provide details of the exact costs associated with each of these possible options (as printing costs involve many variables). The likely costs of each of these options should be investigated by TEPA's Information Officer at the time of printing.

The development of a pre-service teacher training module

Recommendation 5

To ensure that teachers entering the profession have a comprehensive and accurate understanding of tertiary entrance procedures and processes, TEPA should investigate the development of a pre-service training module, based on existing TEPA publications and presentations. This would also improve teacher recognition of TEPA information materials and understanding of tertiary entrance matters.

All of the seven universities in Queensland which currently offer a pre-service secondary teacher education course were contacted for a telephone interview. Interviews were conducted with the course convenors or the individual staff members who had responsibility for this area of the Education curriculum at each of the universities. The questions focussed on their awareness and use of TEPA information materials, as well as the information currently provided to Education students on tertiary entrance procedures and practices. As could be expected, each university differed in its handling of tertiary entrance matters with Education students and their awareness of TEPA information materials.

Findings

Contacts at three of the universities had connections with either TEPA, QTAC and/or BSSSS and stated that their students received adequate information about tertiary entrance procedures and practices. Each of these contacts also indicated that the information they provided was not as well integrated as it could be and that they would welcome the development of a concise package of materials by TEPA for use with their students.

The remaining four universities provided significantly less tertiary entrance information to their students. At two of these universities there was no formal instruction in this area and it was expected that students would gain information on tertiary entrance matters during their teaching practicum. Contacts at all four of these universities had not sighted any TEPA publications, although students did receive talks from representatives from either the Board of Teacher Registration or BSSSS. With only one exception, these universities also strongly welcomed the development of a pre-service teacher training module, in addition to copies of any current TEPA information materials.

Discussion

It would appear that the overwhelming majority of Queensland universities offering pre-service teacher education courses would welcome more information materials from TEPA, particularly in the form of a ready-to-use training module for their students. It is also clear that the module would need to include more than just an assortment of current TEPA publications. Those universities which currently feel that they have adequate information to distribute to their students were in agreement that what they needed was a concise means of presenting tertiary entrance information to students. Those universities which indicated their support for the development of a training module all noted how useful it would be to them and their students, and how they would incorporate it into a formal lesson highlighting tertiary entrance procedures and practices. The benefits to TEPA of developing and providing such a module would include:

- a strengthening of links with the tertiary sector
- a greater awareness of TEPA and TEPA information materials for all beginning teachers
- a more cohesive approach to tertiary entrance information dissemination being undertaken in Queensland universities
- the probability that myths and misconceptions relating to the tertiary entrance process would be increasingly dispelled.

After initial discussions with TEPA's Senior Information Officer it is recommended that a brief be prepared focussing on the development of a pre-service teacher training module. The module should incorporate current TEPA information materials, as well as information for use in a formal lecture situation. Furthermore, the project should be a joint one involving representatives from the universities as well as TEPA Information staff and the TEPA Research team. In addition, it is anticipated that after a briefing to the Publications Coordination Committee, committee members will also be invited to participate in the development and evaluation of the pre-service teacher training module.

The provision of in-service tertiary entrance information for interested teachers

Recommendation 6

As part of the TEPA community information program, the option of an in-service, tertiary entrance information update should be offered. This would ensure that all interested schools would have the opportunity to improve their understanding of the system and be made aware of alterations to tertiary entrance procedures and processes. Such a program would also contribute to the professional development of school staff.

It is current TEPA practice to advise schools at the beginning of each year that TEPA Information staff are available to provide information evenings for interested parents and students. The offer is publicised in *TEPA News* and it is up to schools to contact TEPA if they wish to have a TEPA staff member conduct such a presentation. At the time of contact schools are also advised that the TEPA Information staff will be available to conduct information sessions for teachers and/or Heads of Department should this be required.

Findings

As discussed in section 2.2 of the framework, it appears that schools are interested in TEPA providing information sessions to enhance the professional development of staff. Consulting with TEPA's Senior Information Officer has highlighted a number of ways in which these sessions could be advertised and managed. These options include:

- PowerPoint presentations: PowerPoint presentation disks have been produced and distributed to all schools
- professional development sessions for staff at their schools: the availability of such presentations could be highlighted in *TEPA News*, as is the case currently
- teacher information seminars: TEPA may like to consider offering tertiary entrance information sessions for interested teachers in its boardroom and in an appropriate location in regional areas of Queensland. These could be run solely by TEPA Information staff or with a panel of representatives from QTAC and BSSSS. The availability of such sessions could be advertised in *Education Views*, *TEPA News*, or other publications aimed at teachers (see section 2.2)
- development of a training package: a training package for use on pupil-free days could be developed explaining how best to use TEPA materials such as the videos and PowerPoint package with teachers.

Discussion

The preferred option for providing teachers with a professional development information session on tertiary entrance issues is not clear cut. There are different costs involved with each of the options in terms of staff availability and travel. The current budget allocation for information presentations in schools (with parents and students) is \$7000. It is hoped next year to be able to offer one information presentation per TEPA Information Officer per week.

The costs of implementing the first option (PowerPoint materials for schools to use in-house) have already been provided for in TEPA's budget. The costs of implementing the other options vary greatly and are detailed below.

- Providing professional development for staff at their schools: TEPA currently conducts information presentations for parents and students (and teachers where requested). The costs of visiting individual schools in this way depend on various factors. The approximate costs involved in visiting a school in the Cairns area are provided as an example. Given the distance between Cairns and Brisbane, these are the maximum costs that would be incurred on such a visit:

airfares:	\$800
car hire:	\$50
accommodation:	\$80
meal allowance:	\$45
travel allowance:	\$10
TOTAL:	\$985

- Teacher information seminars: the costs of offering teacher information seminars would (like the costs of professional development for staff at their schools) necessarily vary depending on their location. The costs of providing such a service to teachers in metropolitan Brisbane would be reasonably small, requiring only parking vouchers for those who attended and light refreshments (approximate costs per person are \$6 for parking and \$3 for refreshments). The costs of offering such a service in an area such as Cairns would be the same as those incurred in

providing information sessions at schools. It is not anticipated that extra costs would be incurred for parking or venue hire as TEPA's links with schools should enable a school hall to be used. Similarly, light refreshments could probably be catered for by the school tuckshop for minimal cost. There are currently 11 educational regions in Queensland. It would be necessary to offer one presentation at a central location in each of these regions.

- Development of a training package is probably the most cost effective option available. This would require the TEPA Information staff to produce a brief set of notes (probably no more than a double-sided A4 page) and distribute it to schools, possibly at the same time as *TEPA News*, to minimise postage costs.

Clearly the most cost-effective option in terms of providing teachers with tertiary entrance information as part of their professional development is the PowerPoint disks which have been produced. This method of information provision does not require the school to have any special computer software or hardware to run the program. One of the benefits of PowerPoint is that disks can be produced in various formats making them useful even for schools which do not have the PowerPoint package, as the images can be printed onto overhead transparencies and used in this way. The school principal would need to inform interested teachers of the availability of the disk and/or to recognise its potential for use with teachers.

The most equitable option for providing interested teachers with information is the introduction of teacher information seminars. This option would mean that teachers would not have to rely on the school principal to arrange for TEPA Information staff to visit the school in order to attend such a presentation. In addition, while the implementation of this option would necessarily use some of the funds allocated in the budget for information presentations to parents and students, these audiences could easily be accommodated. By holding a teacher information seminar in the late afternoon and a presentation for parents in the same location in the evening (which could be advertised in school newsletters and *TEPA News*), both of these groups could attend either session if they were interested. This option would also offer parents the option of attending such a meeting whether or not their school has requested a TEPA information presentation. School students in the surrounding area could also be catered for by offering visits to the schools before and after the teacher and parent sessions (during school hours before the meetings and the day following them). In this way TEPA could maximise limited funds for providing information sessions to the advantage of all stakeholder groups.

If the options discussed above are introduced, the provision of a training package to schools is probably not warranted at this stage. It is recommended that, as with the recent TEPA video, a feedback sheet regarding the PowerPoint disks be developed asking for comments from schools. Should the results of these questionnaires show the need for the provision of further assistance or information, a training package on how best to use TEPA materials with all groups (including teachers) could be considered.

The provision of Vocational Education and Training information

Recommendation 8

In light of recent changes in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector and their potential impact on issues relating to tertiary entrance, TEPA should seek to include relevant VET information in its publications, where appropriate. Information relating to tertiary entrance ranks and pathways for OP–ineligible students should form part of the materials intended for both Year 10 and Year 12 students.

As a means of gaining an overview of the current perceptions of school guidance officers in relation to the existing provision of VET information, a sample of 12 guidance officers was selected and asked to participate in a telephone interview. Guidance officers were selected from a range of schools in metropolitan and regional areas of the State, and approximately half of the guidance officers contacted had previously participated in TEPA research projects. A meeting was also held with TEPA's Senior Information Officer to discuss VET information already mentioned in TEPA publications.

Findings

The overwhelming opinion of the guidance officers was that there is a need for more VET information to be provided to students. The guidance officers differed in their views as to the exact nature of the information needed, however common points which they raised included the lack of information about:

- the types of traineeships and apprenticeships currently available and the means of contacting providers
- academic and other qualifications needed for entry to traineeships and apprenticeships
- changes to TAFE entry and courses
- the links between school, TAFE, traineeships and apprenticeships, university study, and the workforce (pathways)
- an explanation of what ranks are and how they are used
- how OP–ineligible students can access tertiary courses.

Guidance officers also noted the need for information to be made available in a simple and easily accessible format. Many suggested the production of a one page summary of common VET terms and issues.

Discussion

It is outside TEPA's current brief to provide all of the information for which these guidance officers have indicated a need. However, the recent initiatives of the State and Federal governments have served to highlight the need for more VET information in schools. The Department of Training and Industrial Relations has recently published a booklet for Queensland secondary school students which outlines the vocational education and training options now available, as well as providing details of how to access such courses, qualifications available, and who to contact for more information. This publication appears to cover a number of the areas referred to by the guidance officers contacted. In addition, Education Queensland has recently produced a PowerPoint presentation which contains information about

vocational education. The PowerPoint disk and an accompanying glossary have been distributed to all secondary schools in Queensland.

For a number of years the QTAC booklet *Pathways* has been available to interested students. This publication provides information about the tertiary entrance pathways options which are available to OP–ineligible students, as well as detailed information relating to ranks. Unfortunately, this booklet is not available free of charge and the information it contains is relatively complex.

The Senior Information Officer noted that many of TEPA’s information publications are in the process of being rewritten and updated. It is likely that more information relating to VET will be included in them. If this is not the case a summary, as suggested by the guidance officers, could be a useful addition to the suite of TEPA information materials.

A proposal for a joint TEPA—VET research project investigating the information needs of students contemplating, or participating in, vocational education and training initiatives is currently being developed. In the absence of any research being undertaken into VET by either Training Queensland or Education Queensland, it is envisaged that a qualitative survey of VET students in their final years of schooling be implemented. This would provide TEPA with, among other things, the data needed to revise the VET information in its publications.

Additional recommendations arising from the evaluation of TEPA information materials

For a variety of reasons the following recommendations did not require an investigation of the options available in considering their implementation. The recommendations detailed below are followed by a brief explanation of the most appropriate means of implementation.

Recommendation 4: The importance of all TEPA information materials to parents and students

Based on both the rankings and ratings made in relation to TEPA publications, it appears to be the case that not all groups equally value the suite of information materials. It may be necessary, for example, to highlight to guidance officers the fact that information about OPs and FPs is seen to be very important by students and parents.

It is recommended that with each package of TEPA information materials sent to schools a separate letter is included for the school principal to distribute to the guidance officer (or another relevant staff member). The letter should point out the need for the materials to be distributed to all students and that the possibility of reminding parents of their issue, through the school newsletter, also be considered.

Recommendation 7: The provision of simpler information about the calculation of OPs and FPs

While “Calculation of OPs and FPs” is viewed by students and parents to be the most important TEPA publication, it is also rated as the most difficult to understand. The possibility of providing a shorter document in which to convey the basics of the OPs and FPs, in addition to the current information sheet should be investigated.

The Senior Information Officer has already arranged for the production of a briefer version of *Calculation of OPs and FPs*. This document is currently being written by the author of the original publication, Dr Graham Maxwell. It is anticipated that the shorter version will be the size of a double-sided A4 page and will direct interested students and parents to the original, more detailed version if they require further information on this subject. It is hoped that the new publication will provide information which is more accessible and readily understandable to parents and students, possibly even Year 10 students.

Recommendation 9: The coordination of tertiary entrance information publications

The coordination of tertiary entrance information publications must continue to ensure that all stakeholder information needs are met, as most of the additional information requested by survey respondents is already provided by other organisations.

A Publications Coordination Committee has recently been established with members representing QTAC, BSSSS, TAFE Queensland, Career, Course and Guidance Information Services (CCGIS), TEPA, Queensland universities and other interested parties. The committee has received a briefing from TEPA's Research Officer and the Senior Research Officer about the findings from the *Evaluation of stakeholder perceptions of TEPA information materials*. Another briefing will be provided to ensure committee members are aware of the outcomes of this project.

Recommendation 10: Re-evaluating the need for new technology as a means of disseminating information

As the full range of TEPA information materials is already available at the TEPA web site on the Internet, and an information video for students is currently being produced, it is recommended that a watching brief should be maintained to consider the use of emerging technologies as the need arises. An extensive investigation of such technology currently appears unnecessary, given the relatively low degree of importance most respondents attached to the use of alternative methods of information dissemination.

After consultation with the relevant TEPA Information Staff it has been agreed that technological methods of information dissemination be monitored, e.g. the evaluations of the video and PowerPoint disks. The rate and impact of technological change cannot easily be pre-determined and it is suggested that changes to the presentation of tertiary entrance information be considered as part of any subsequent TEPA evaluations.

3: RECOMMENDATIONS

After a thorough investigation of each of the policy options available to TEPA in implementing the recommendations from the *Evaluation of stakeholder perceptions of TEPA information materials*, the following options have emerged as the most appropriate and cost effective. It is recommended that the following options be implemented according to the attached timeline.

1. Changes should be made to the timing of distribution of the following TEPA information materials:
Calculation of OPs and FPs: to be distributed to schools during the first term of the school year.
From Year 10 to Tertiary Entrance: to be distributed to schools in June each year for Year 10 students. Alternatively this publication could be renamed *From Year 11 to Tertiary Entrance* with continued distribution to Year 11 students.
2. Changes to the suite of TEPA publications:
SEP: this publication needs to have a bright 'label' on its cover page printed "For Year 10 students".
SEP: Facts for parents: TEPA's Senior Information Officer should arrange for modifications to be made to this publication. It should be re-written for the parents of Year 10 students or another publication should be provided for these parents.
Calculation of OPs and FPs: a suitable publication aimed at Year 10 students is already being written on this subject.
3. TEPA's Information Officer should contact *The Courier Mail* to discuss the possibility of providing copy for inclusion in any tertiary entrance supplements which the paper may be planning. The placement of advertisements in such supplements should also be encouraged, subject to budgetary constraints.
4. TEPA's Research Officer should liaise with the Publications Coordination Committee and representatives from interested universities to produce a proposal on the development of a pre-service teacher training module, for the consideration of the TEPA Research Committee.
5. A joint TEPA-VET research project investigating the experiences of a group of senior students undertaking VET programs will allow TEPA to make an informed decision on the need for another publication covering only VET information. At present, particularly given the information being provided to schools by other sources and the revision of many current TEPA resources, the development of further TEPA materials on this subject is not yet warranted.

In addition, it is recommended that the following two options be considered further by TEPA's Advisory Council:

- Extra copies of all TEPA publications should be sent to schools in addition to those provided for students, for distribution by principals and administration staff to teachers.
- The provision of professional development tertiary entrance information to teachers will most effectively occur through the distribution of the PowerPoint disk.

Information Staff: Timeline for implementation of recommended policy options

Term 4 1997	Term 1 1998
(2) Arrange for modifications to <i>SEP: Facts for parents</i>	(1) Distribute <i>Calculation of OPs and FPs</i>
(3) Contact <i>The Courier Mail</i> to discuss inclusion of copy in supplements	(2) Design label for cover page of <i>SEP</i> before printing

Research Staff: Timeline for implementation of recommended policy options

Term 4 1997	Term 1 1998
(4) Develop research proposal for teacher training module	(4) Undertake research into module development
	(5) Undertake joint TEPA/VET research