

Background

Year 12 students in approved secondary schools and non-school-based applicants who have previously completed Year 12 or who are at least 18 years of age (through private entry) are given the opportunity to sit for the Queensland Core Skills Test (QCS) Test. The QCS Test is:

- a common statewide test for Queensland Year 12 students
- an achievement test, not an intelligence test, nor an aptitude test
- grounded in the Queensland senior curriculum
- accessible to all Year 12 students regardless of individual differences in subject patterns
- a standardised test requiring reading and writing in Australian English.

Attendance

Students who are eligible for an Overall Position (OP) or equivalent-OP are required to sit for the QCS Test. Students who are ineligible for an OP or equivalent-OP are not required to sit for the test but may elect to do so.

Table 1: QCS Attendance

| Year | Senior Certificates | OP-eligible | Sat QCS | QCS Exempt | | OP-ineligible who sat | Otherwise eligible but did not sit |
|------|---------------------|-------------|---------|------------|------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | | | Eligible | Ineligible | | |
| 2004 | 38471 | 27235 | 29233 | 442 | 39 | 2436 | 406 |
| 2003 | 38721 | 27973 | 30297 | 426 | 38 | 2743 | 331 |
| 2002 | 38820 | 27749 | 30534 | 393 | 20 | 3178 | 257 |
| 2001 | 37837 | 27303 | 29976 | 340 | 33 | 3008 | 260 |
| 2000 | 38211 | 27839 | 30632 | 407 | 36 | 3195 | 237 |

Table 2: QCS Attendance For Visa Students¹

| Year | Senior Certificates | OP-eligible | Sat QCS | QCS Exempt | | OP-ineligible who sat | Otherwise eligible but did not sit |
|------|---------------------|-------------|---------|------------|------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | | | Eligible | Ineligible | | |
| 2004 | 778 | 677 | 709 | 9 | 0 | 41 | 8 |
| 2003 | 664 | 573 | 589 | 6 | 1 | 22 | 9 |
| 2002 | 510 | 423 | 464 | 3 | 0 | 44 | 6 |
| 2001 | 604 | 509 | 548 | 1 | 0 | 40 | 13 |
| 2000 | 518 | 454 | 472 | 6 | 0 | 24 | 9 |

¹A visa student is a student who is not a citizen or permanent resident of Australia. They may qualify for an equivalent-OP. Visa students are not included unless indicated.

Figure 1: OP-eligibility and QCS Attendance

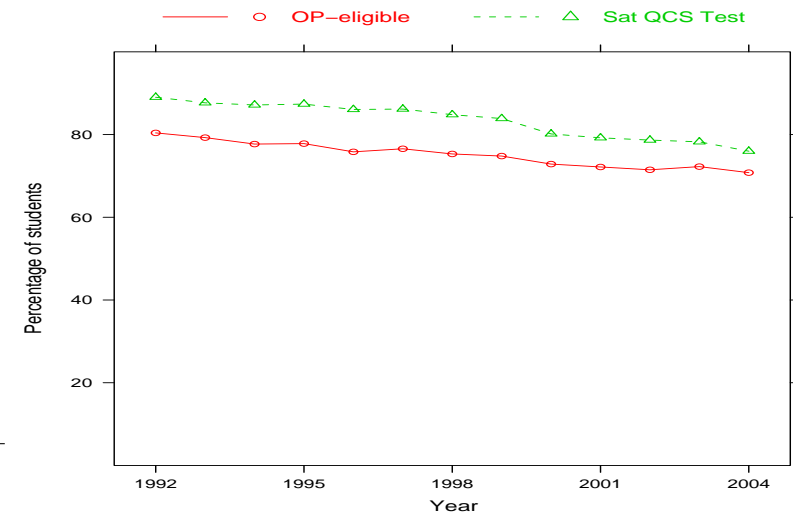
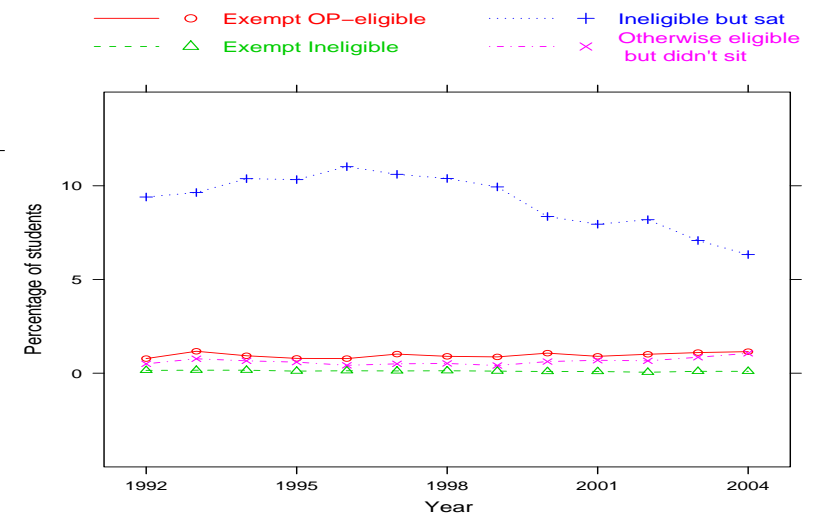


Figure 2: QCS Attendance



Grades Awarded

A student's individual QCS result is expressed as a grade from A (highest) to E.

Table 3: Numbers of students per QCS Grade awarded, by OP-eligibility and gender

| | Gender | A | B | C | D | E | Total | Per cent |
|---|--------|------|------|-------|------|-----|-------|----------|
| OP-eligible | Female | 2355 | 4438 | 5380 | 2539 | 59 | 14771 | 55.1 |
| | Male | 2276 | 3671 | 4048 | 1943 | 84 | 12022 | 44.9 |
| | All | 4631 | 8109 | 9428 | 4482 | 143 | 26793 | |
| OP-ineligible | Female | 10 | 74 | 378 | 662 | 111 | 1235 | 50.7 |
| | Male | 4 | 60 | 322 | 664 | 150 | 1200 | 49.3 |
| | All | 14 | 134 | 700 | 1326 | 261 | 2435 | |
| Equivalent OP-eligible (Visa students) | Female | 8 | 24 | 77 | 161 | 38 | 308 | 46.1 |
| | Male | 5 | 30 | 80 | 180 | 65 | 360 | 53.9 |
| | All | 13 | 54 | 157 | 341 | 103 | 668 | |
| Equivalent OP-ineligible (Visa students) | Female | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 6 | 14 | 34.1 |
| | Male | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 16 | 27 | 65.9 |
| | All | 0 | 0 | 1 | 18 | 22 | 41 | |
| All students who sat | Female | 2373 | 4536 | 5835 | 3371 | 214 | 16329 | 54.5 |
| | Male | 2285 | 3761 | 4451 | 2797 | 315 | 13609 | 45.5 |
| | All | 4658 | 8297 | 10286 | 6168 | 529 | 29938 | |

Figure 3: 2004 distribution of QCS Grades by gender

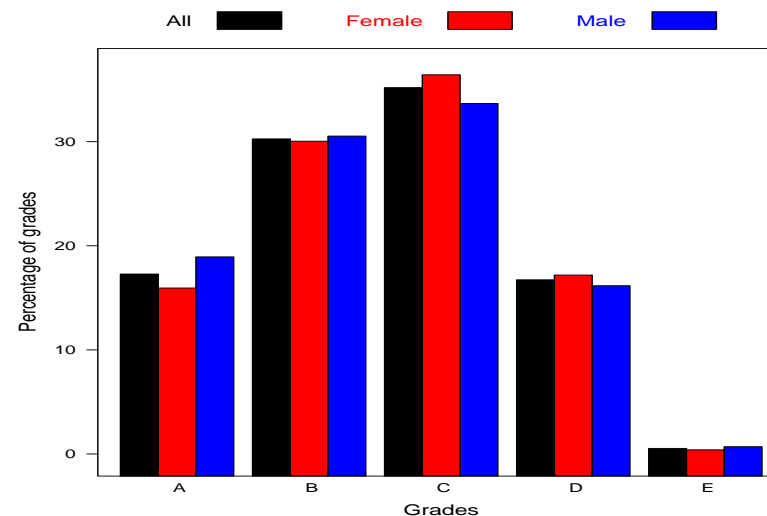
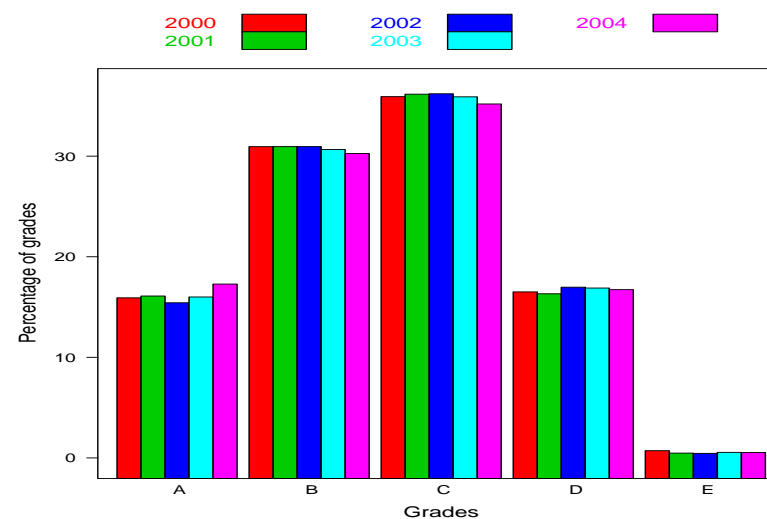


Figure 4: Distribution of QCS Grades by year



The QCS Test

The test is dual-purpose: it produces a result for each candidate, and it provides information for the calculation of OPs. However, individual results in the test are not used directly in the calculation of a student's OP.

It tests the 49 assessable common elements that are the threads of the Queensland senior curriculum. These elements are called Common Curriculum Elements (CCEs), see <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/testing/cross-curric/cce.html>. The test consists of four papers – Writing Task (WT), Short Response (SR), and two Multiple Choice (MC) papers. Candidates are expected to respond to a variety of stimulus materials, such as prose passages, poetry, graphs, tables, maps, mathematical and scientific data, cartoons and reproductions of works of art.

While the level of sophistication demanded by the test is appropriate to Year 12 students, particular knowledge of specific Year 12 subjects is not tested. However, the test assumes basic levels of general knowledge and vocabulary and a Year 10 knowledge of mathematical operations. The test, being cross-curriculum, provides useful supplementary information to the subject results and is an important component of the Student Education Profile.

The **WT paper** tests candidates' command of the written English language. It requires the composition of an extended piece (about 600 words) of continuous prose, which allows students to demonstrate their expressive and productive skills. Each Writing Task script is marked in six aspects, with each aspect marked twice. At least three markers assess each script, each in four of the six aspects and they work independently. The trained and registered markers mark according to predetermined standards developed for a set of criteria. There is a process for monitoring marker consistency.

The **SR paper** requires candidates to respond to a command or to answer a question by writing a sentence or paragraph, drawing a diagram, performing a calculation, etc. The responses are marked by trained and registered markers who are given detailed instructions and a specific marking scheme for each test item. Each candidate response is marked at least twice by different markers working independently. A referee marking occurs when markers disagree. There is a process for monitoring marker consistency.

For each item on the **MC papers** there are four options (A, B, C, D). Candidates are asked to select the best option, given the context set by the stimulus material and the conditions specified in the item. The response sheets are marked electronically. Each correct answer scores one mark, each incorrect answer scores zero, each unattempted item scores zero and an item that has more than one response scores zero.

Test items are grouped under different criteria according to how they test a student's ability to:

- comprehend and collect
- structure and sequence
- analyse, assess and conclude
- create and present
- apply techniques and procedures.

Contact Us

For further information about this document contact:

Analysis and Evaluation Unit
Queensland Studies Authority
Phone: (07) 3864 0256
Email: analysis_evaluation@qsa.qld.edu.au