

Assessment, standards and reporting

Implementing the Australian Curriculum P–10

September 2011

This report is a component of the Queensland Implementation Strategy 2011–2013 (June 2011) for supporting the transition to the Australian Curriculum.

The proposals in this report describe advice and guidelines for using the Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards, based on information available in August 2011:

- Section 1 focuses on planning teaching learning, assessment and reporting in Prep to Year 2
- Section 2 focuses on assessment, standards and reporting for Year 3 to Year 10.

During 2011, ACARA is trialling and validating the Australian Curriculum achievement standards. Any refinements to the curriculum content and achievement standards will be completed by October 2011 for the approval of Australia's education ministers.

The advice and guidelines will remain in draft during the validation processes. They will be updated with the national developments and may be amended throughout 2011–2012.

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Introduction

This report brings together the proposals to support Queensland teachers to implement the Australian Curriculum and use the Australian Curriculum achievement standards in their classroom practice. The proposals are outlined in two papers:

- *Planning, assessment, standards and reporting: Implementing the Australian Curriculum in P–2* approved by the Queensland Studies Authority Governing Body in June 2011
- *Assessment, standards and reporting: Implementing the Australian Curriculum in Years 3–10* approved by the QSA Governing Body in May 2011.

The two papers have a number of proposals in common. However, the Prep to Year 2 (P–2) paper contains additional proposals about planning for teaching and learning in the early phase of learning.¹

The proposals are based on information available in August 2011 and may be subject to change following the validation processes for the Australian Curriculum achievement standards being undertaken by the ACARA in partnership with the states and territories.

Background

The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) has legislated functions to support all Queensland schools in the areas of assessment, reporting, testing, certification and tertiary entrance. This includes QSA syllabuses and guidelines that typically include four key elements:

- content
- achievement standards
- assessment advice and requirements
- reporting guidelines.

The Australian Curriculum, developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) provides two of these key elements:

- content descriptions
- achievement standards.

Australian Education Ministers have agreed that the next stage towards achieving substantial implementation of the Australian Curriculum by 2013 will include establishing a nationally consistent approach to achievement standards across all states and territories, and trialling and validating that approach. In the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum v2.0* (2010, p. 22), the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has also stated that jurisdictions are to use current approaches to assessment and reporting.

¹ Prep (P) in Queensland represents 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.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to bring together the proposals outlined in the two approved reports for P–2 and Years 3–10. These proposals will support teachers to plan assessment programs that promote, assist and improve teaching and learning, and provide information about student achievement.

The proposals will provide the advice and guidelines that complete the required information needed by teachers to implement the Australian Curriculum. The approach described in the proposals will replicate the information typically available in QSA curriculum and assessment documents.

The implementation of the Australian Curriculum is an opportunity to strengthen current best practice across the Prep Year to Year 2 (P–2) phase and continue building an assessment culture across Prep to Year 12 (P–12).

Overview

In this report there are four common proposals for P–2 and Years 3–10 with some specific variations to these proposals for the early phase of learning (P–2). There is an additional proposal for P–2 that outlines a series of activities related to planning curriculum programs. The full set of proposals follow.

Advice and guidelines for planning teaching and learning in P–2

Advice on issues specific to P–2 will include:

- the continuation of a balanced teaching, learning and assessment program that encompasses the five contexts for learning and development currently in the *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines (EYCG)*, including the place of “play-based” curriculum in the early phase of learning
- planning for resource development to support learning in P–2
- relationships and connections between the *Queensland kindergarten learning guideline (QKLG)*, the *EYCG* and the Australian Curriculum.

Advice and guidelines for planning a balanced P–2 teaching and learning program will include:

- guidelines for quality practices in early years education across the P–2 phase using elements of the *EYCG* as a starting point, outlining early years perspectives, contexts, active learning, equitable and deep learning, and extending the learning focus through the general capabilities
- information statements on managing P–2 learning areas, assessment and reporting and the general capabilities.

Advice and guidelines for assessment

The assessment advice and guidelines will build on Queensland’s approaches to assessment and teachers’ capacity to use standards to inform evidence-based judgments about student achievement. These will include guidelines for each year level in each learning area for:

- planning a balanced assessment program using a variety of assessment as part of an overall teaching and learning program

- the components of an assessment folio for making an on-balance judgment
- assessment techniques, formats and conditions appropriate for developing quality assessment *for learning, as learning and of learning*
- monitoring student achievement and providing feedback.

The proposed advice and guidelines will be aligned to the QSA's *P–12 assessment policy*.

Advice and guidelines for applying the Australian Curriculum achievement standards

Strategies to assist teachers when applying the draft Australian Curriculum achievement standards in their classroom practice will include:

- learning area standards descriptors developed for each learning area that:
 - distinguish between the degrees of quality evident in student work using an A–E scale that links to the reporting standards
 - identify the assessable elements or valued features for:
 - Knowledge and understanding
 - Skills
 - use the organisation of the Australian achievement standards for Mathematics and English to inform the descriptors:
 - Number and algebra, Measurement and geometry, and Statistics and probability in Mathematics
 - Writing and shaping, Speaking and listening, and Reading and viewing (the receptive and productive modes or strands) in English (ACARA 2011, p. 5)
 - support material identifying how the assessable elements or valued features are evident in the Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards for each year level
- unchanged Australian Curriculum achievement standards (including annotated work samples) as reference points for developing the learning area standards descriptors.

In addition, P–2 advice will be provided to support teachers when using the *EYCG* phase descriptors to make judgments and inform comments for reporting in learning areas not included in the Australian Curriculum content.

Assessment resources

The assessment resources will include:

- Assessment Bank packages
- exemplar assessment resources showing how concepts are developed at different year levels
- tools for developing quality assessment
- guidelines for:
 - recording student achievement
 - monitoring student achievement (to support teachers to discuss and analyse student work)

- making judgments about the evidence of achievement in individual assessments and in a collection or folio of student work
- a review of P–2 monitoring frameworks currently in use across the early phase. This will inform planning for a cohesive monitoring process aligned to the content of the Australian Curriculum.

Reporting framework

The reporting framework will describe A–E student achievement using a collection or folio of evidence for reporting twice yearly.

For P–2, this framework will:

- use a common language for reporting twice yearly
- use an equivalent five-point scale based on levels of quality in a child’s work. The scale will be described using the terminology of *EYCG*’s four phases of learning and development, with the addition of Working with at the mid-level to extend to a five- point scale
- include additional advice for describing learning developmentally for midyear and end-of-year reporting. A targeted folio of evidence will demonstrate a child’s learning and achievement.

Planning teaching, learning, assessment and reporting in P–2

Focus

This section focuses on planning for teaching, learning and assessment; the application of the Australian Curriculum achievement standards; and reporting across the Foundation Year to Year 2 phase of the Australian Curriculum in Queensland schools.

In this section the Queensland term “Preparatory Year” (Prep or P) is used to describe the Foundation Year. The P–2 phase typically includes children in the age band of five to eight years, which is highlighted as the first of the four overlapping bands of the Australian Curriculum. In this section, the “P–2 phase” represents a change from the more commonly used “P–3 phase” in Queensland.

This section also builds a context for the P–2 phase in Queensland, examines two influencing issues and makes five proposals about implementing the Australian Curriculum in P–2. Specifically, this section proposes the provision of advice and guidelines on:

- planning a balanced program of teaching and learning in P–2
- P–2 assessment
- applying the P–2 Australian Curriculum achievement standards
- reporting in the P–2 phase and the development of reporting frameworks
- the transition to the P–2 Australian Curriculum and supporting resources.

The proposals apply the Australian Curriculum achievement standards and:

- focus on assessment *for* learning, as learning and *of* learning
- assist teachers to plan teaching, learning and assessment programs for the intended curriculum and to improve learning and teaching
- clarify for children, parent/carers and teachers what is expected for each reported level of achievement on an equivalent five-point scale with alternate modifications in the Prep Year at midyear
- support consistency of teacher judgments within and across learning areas and promote comparability from school to school
- support teachers to use a folio of learning documentation to make on-balance judgments about children’s achievement for twice-yearly reporting
- provide tools to support teachers to make judgments about individual assessments and a folio of work to provide feedback to children about how they can improve their learning
- include exemplars that model formative and summative assessment *for* learning, as learning and *of* learning

- build on children's, parent/carers' and teachers' understanding of standards and assist teachers to discuss standards and folio reviews with parents/carers when reporting children's achievements
- strengthen alignment between teaching and learning, assessment and reporting
- support teachers in all Australian Curriculum and Queensland curriculum learning areas.

These proposals put teachers' professional knowledge and practice at the heart of aligning what is taught, how it is taught, how children's learning is assessed and how learning is reported.

P–2 background

The implementation of the Australian Curriculum is an opportunity to strengthen current best practice across the P–2 phase and continue building an assessment culture across P–12. In 2012 and 2013 teachers and children will be using the Australian Curriculum resources in four learning areas (English, Mathematics, Science and History) and the Queensland *Essential Learnings* and *Standards* and the *EYCG* for the other learning areas. A consistent approach in teaching, assessment and reporting will be important for teachers, schools and school sectors.

The proposals in this report advocate the development of advice and guidelines on using Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards in teaching, assessment, standards and reporting. The advice and guidelines, as bridging strategies, will develop continuity and quality practices across P–2 to provide stability to teachers as they begin to engage with and implement the Australian Curriculum.

These proposals, if adopted, will provide teachers in P–2 with the advice and guidelines to plan teaching and assessment programs that promote, assist and improve learning, and provide information about children's achievement. This will enable the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and the use of the Australian Curriculum achievement standards in classroom practice.

Assumptions

The P–2 proposals are based on the following assumptions.

- Quality early years characteristics of teaching, learning and assessment need to be balanced across the whole phase.
- Equity of prior learning at the entry to the Prep Year of schooling across Queensland needs to be considered.
- An agreement exists between Queensland and the Commonwealth Government that the Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards will be used for teaching, assessing and reporting.²
- Existing requirements that all Australian schools are to provide parents/carers with plain-language reports twice a year will continue.

² In Queensland different school sectors have negotiated variations to the agreement for Prep-age children.

Context

National overview

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has been charged with developing the Foundation Year to Year 12 Australian Curriculum, guided by *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008). The Australian Curriculum for P–2 builds on the *Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (EYLF) (2009) ideal that “... all children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life”.

The Australian Curriculum acts on the EYLF ideal, valuing the varied levels of learning and the social and cultural experiences that children bring to their engagement with learning. It promotes learning that is embedded in active learning processes that allow children to connect with and begin to challenge knowledge as they engage with curriculum (ACARA 2010, p. 12).

In 2012, the Australian Curriculum will be implemented across the P–2 phase in the learning areas of English, mathematics and science. History will be implemented from 2013.³

Queensland overview

Kindergarten Year

In Queensland, the Kindergarten Year is the year prior to Prep. Kindergarten in Queensland is informed by the EYLF and guided by the *Queensland kindergarten learning guideline* (QKLG). The aim of the Kindergarten Year is to enrich children’s learning.

Kindergarten teachers use purposeful observation to map learning and development on a continuum. The continuum is organised in three phases: emerging, exploring and extending, which are differentiated by the familiarity with the learning and the level of support required to demonstrate the learning. Summaries of learning during the Kindergarten Year are developed as transition statements which parents may choose to share with other school settings and teachers in the Preparatory Year (QSA 2010).

Preparatory Year

The Preparatory Year in Queensland is a non-compulsory year of schooling in the year prior to Year 1. Children beginning Prep (P) in January are required to be five years of age by 30 June. Curriculum development in Prep can be informed by the EYCG and the P–3 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators.

When using the EYCG, Prep teachers make judgments about children’s learning and development in relation to four phases — becoming aware, exploring, making connections and applying. Teachers document learning over time through a folio of evidence. Teachers make judgments on the learning by matching the ways the phases are described and the level of support required to demonstrate the learning. The Early Learning Record (ELR) is used to document judgments made about a child’s learning and as a focus for communication with parents. The ELR can be a record of learning for Year 1 teachers and informs a planned transition between Prep and Year 1.

³ In Queensland, “implementation” refers to teaching, assessing and reporting using the Australian Curriculum.

Years 1–3

In Queensland, Years 1–3 commonly represent the first phase of compulsory schooling. This phase continues to build the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to access learning and develop strong foundations in literacy and numeracy. Continuity and transition remain a focus in supporting the needs of children and families in this phase. The principles that guide Prep teachers' practices (outlined in the *EYCG*) may also be used to inform practice and decision making across Years 1–3. Curriculum development, assessment and monitoring in Years 1–3 can be informed by the *EYCG*, the *Essential Learnings by the end of Year 3*, the *Year 1 Learning Statements* and the P–3 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators.

Progress and achievement is aligned to standards which describe the quality indicated within the child's work. Judgments are made over a broad range of assessments and include moderation to support consistency of judgment. Judgments are reported in a summative manner twice yearly on a five-point scale. In Years 1–3, the scale is often represented by Very High, High, Sound, Developing or Support Required. The Year 2 Diagnostic Net is used over Years 1–3 to monitor literacy and numeracy skills and diagnose individual learning needs in reading, writing and number. In addition, the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is administered in Year 3.

Issues

Two transitional tensions influence and underpin the proposals in this report. These tensions arise from the perception of play in the early years and the continuity of the early years phase. The following describes how the QSA will address these tensions and assist Queensland teachers to use the Australian Curriculum achievement standards to assess and report on the Australian Curriculum in P–2.

The perception of play in the early years

The Australian Curriculum for P–2 recognises the importance of foundational knowledge but also values additional skills that enhance opportunities for continued learning such as communication, relationships, physical activity, healthy personal practices and the opportunity for young learners to develop their sensory, cognitive and affective appreciation of the world around them through exploratory and creative learning. The Australian Curriculum outlines active learning, including play, as a platform to construct and review learning (ACARA 2010, p. 12). Queensland curriculum documents also value active learning and understand that applying it effectively gives the best opportunities to acquire the foundational and additional knowledge that are highlighted as important aspects of early learning in the Australian Curriculum.

The principles that guide Queensland teachers' practice in P–2 are outlined in the QSA's *Learning P–3: Overview* (2009) and draw on contemporary theory about young children, teaching, learning and assessment in early childhood education. *Learning P–3* outlines eight principles for practice in the early years. Specifically, Principles 1–3 draw on the understanding that children are capable active learners who learn best through interacting, exploring and experimenting. The *EYCG* promotes purposeful, planned and collaborative active learning as the method of engaging in curriculum across five contexts: play, real-life situations, investigations, routines and transitions, and focused learning and teaching. Active learning occurs across the P–2 phase, being the most explicit in Prep. In Queensland, this child-responsive approach to early years curriculum is often called “play-based learning”; however, it refers to the many active learning processes that occur across all five contexts of learning.

Play-based learning is subject to many different perceptions and interpretations that create tension around the term “play” and its use in the education context. The potential for

misrepresentation of play-based learning when considering teaching and learning in the P–2 phase has been affected by several factors. The first is the recent focus on the early years as a high-level influencer of overall student success (Brown, 2007). Second, is an increased focus on accountability in teacher practice. The third, concerns the transition to the learning area specific to the Australian Curriculum. When transitioning to the Australian Curriculum, P–2 teachers will require advice and guidance to support the important and continued use of quality active learning processes across the P–2 phase.

Continuity across the early years

The Australian Curriculum indicates that it takes into account the diversity, changeability and complexity of students who are shaped by their learning and their social and cultural backgrounds (ACARA 2010, p. 14). The Australian Curriculum also indicates that the curriculum content builds on previous learning and is designed to ensure continuity of learning.

Learning P–3 and its subsection “Principles for practice in the early years, draw on research to show continuity and transition as influencing factors on children’s learning. *Learning P–3* recognises that early childhood programs are most effective when they value and build upon the cultural and social experiences of children. As children move from prior-to-school settings and onward through the P–2 phase, teachers and schools must consider prior learning, changeability, diversity and complexity of individual children to make transitions positive (MacNaughton, 2004). In Queensland, the advice and guidelines to schools for continuity and transition over the P–2 phase is provided through a set of resources designed to meet the specific learning needs for young children. The resources have a common set of underpinning principles; they include the *EYCG*, *Year 1 Learning Statements*, *Essential Learnings by the end of Year 3*, and the P–3 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators. These documents are further strengthened by the introduction of the *QKLG* with its focus on positive transitions.

The predominant use of the *EYCG* in Prep and the different monitoring and reporting requirements across the phase has seen the commonality of these documents overlooked. In the P–2 phase, a tension has developed where Prep is often perceived to be different and in opposition to continuity. The tension increases when the transition to the Australian Curriculum creates a perception of a top-down change, with Prep changing to align with the requirements of Years 1 and 2. When transitioning to the Australian Curriculum, teachers in the P–2 phase will require advice and guidelines that continue to acknowledge the importance of influencing factors, including diversity and prior experience that have significance for children and teaching at transition points across the phase. The advice and guidelines should facilitate the development of a connected P–2 phase.

Proposals for P–2

The following proposals describe how the QSA will assist Queensland P–2 teachers to use the Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards to teach, assess and report in the transition phase of the Australian Curriculum.

Proposal 1: Advice and guidelines for planning a balanced teaching and learning program in P–2

“In every day discourse there is a distinction made between play on the one hand (trivial, optional, not assessable) and learning on the other (serious, compulsory, assessable) and the construction of these two as opposites can have a complicating effect on the way the early years curriculum is constructed and read” (Munn 2010, pp. 183–184).

In the early phase of learning there has been a move away from the developmental progressions of Piaget where development is seen to lead learning. Instead, there has been a move towards a Vygotskian view where learning leads cognitive development. In this view, learning is a social act with capable others (Hatch 2010). In contemporary classrooms, play and learning are not oppositional; play is active learning. It is where teachers intentionally use sustained shared thinking with children as they collaborate in learning. Teachers plan for and lead learning that is rich with exploration, experimentation and imagination and has opportunities for children to apply and practice their learning in multiple contexts. As Queensland transitions to a P–2 curriculum framed by learning area constructs, it is important to support teachers develop a clear understanding of how teaching for learning is promoted through the quality practices of early years education.

Proposed inclusions

The provision of advice will reflect the QSA’s interrelated principles of informed prescription and informed professionalism. The proposal suggests:

- the development of guidelines (to be published online) to inform quality practices in early years education including an update of *Learning P–3* to reflect the P–2 focus of the Australian Curriculum and the changes indicated in the transitional phase of the Australian Curriculum. The guidelines will use elements of the *EYCG* as a starting point to inform a document for the whole P–2 phase. Specifically the guideline will outline:
 - perspectives that shape curriculum, including a learner-centred perspective
 - how to use the *EYCG*’s valued five contexts for learning across P–2
 - active learning and its application across P–2
 - information on teaching for equitable and deep learning including discussion on multiple and integrated opportunities for learning over a range of contexts
 - information to extend the focus of general capabilities and valued foundational skill areas across P–2.
- the *EYCG* will remain a valuable reference for teaching and learning in the P–2 phase
- advice and guidelines for managing the Australian Curriculum learning areas in the transition to the Australian Curriculum. These will be published as information statements for teachers and will include:
 - an overview of the similarities and differences between the existing curriculum materials and the Australian Curriculum including:

- advice on teaching in two frameworks (*Essential Learnings–EYCG* and the Australian Curriculum) with explicit directions about content areas not yet covered by the Australian Curriculum for Prep and Years 1–2
 - mapping of the similarities and differences between the existing Queensland curriculum materials and the Australian Curriculum
 - strategies for engaging with and planning for the content not yet covered by the Australian Curriculum
 - advice on the use of the general capabilities and valued foundational skill areas pertinent to P–2
- assessment and reporting in P–2
- advice on developing planning templates and resources for using the Australian Curriculum content — to promote continuity in children’s learning across P–2 and ease the transition between year levels and phases.

These will be interim proposals and will need to be modified and adjusted as the Australian Curriculum moves into full implementation.

In the transition to the Australian Curriculum, teachers will require professional development to ensure deep content and pedagogical knowledge. Specifically the proposal is for the:

- development of online resources and professional development workshops to support teachers to address unfamiliar content including the specific content of Science and History and the higher level of content knowledge that may be indicated in English and Mathematics across P–2
- provision of online resources and professional development demonstrating how active learning can be developed across the P–2 phase.

Proposal 2: Advice and guidelines for assessment in P–2

Providing assessment and reporting advice and guidelines is a state responsibility and, in Queensland, it is typically provided in syllabuses and guidelines.

The provision of P–2 assessment advice reflects the principles articulated in QSA’s *P–12 assessment policy* which positions assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process and follows a cycle of monitoring, diagnosing and intervening. The main purposes of an assessment program are:

- promoting, assisting and improving teaching and learning
- helping children achieve the highest standards they can
- providing parents/carers with meaningful information on children’s achievements and information for reporting and certification.

This approach is consistent with the *Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians* which commits to assessment of child achievement that is rigorous and comprehensive, and national and school-level assessment that focuses on:

- assessment *for* learning — enabling teachers to use information about children’s progress to inform their teaching
- assessment *as* learning — enabling children to reflect on and monitor their own progress to inform their future learning goals

- assessment of learning — assisting teachers to use evidence of child learning to assess achievement against goals and standards (MCEETYA 2008, p. 14).

This approach to assessment has resulted in Queensland teachers working in partnership with the QSA to develop high-quality assessment that aligns teaching, learning, assessment and reporting so that what is taught informs what is assessed, and what is assessed forms the basis of what is reported. Teachers are supported by the development of exemplar assessment instruments and annotated samples of children's responses. Teachers' professional dialogue is promoted to develop consistency of teacher judgments through discussion and analysis of the connections between standards and student work.

Proposed inclusions

The proposed assessment advice and guidelines aligned with QSA's *P–12 assessment policy* will assist teachers to plan quality teaching and learning by continuing to support the development of teachers' assessment capabilities. The following components will be included:

- planning a balanced assessment program that provides opportunities to collect evidence of children's learning using a variety of quality early years assessment techniques
- making overall judgments about the quality of children's performances, products, learning and development for the purposes of twice-yearly reporting. (Note the modification to the Prep Year in Proposal 3)
- planning and implementing assessment techniques, formats and conditions appropriate for developing assessment for each learning area at particular year levels in the P–2 phase
- monitoring learning and development and providing feedback
- specific information about assessment in particular year levels or learning areas, where appropriate.

Proposal 3: Advice and guidelines for applying the Australian Curriculum achievement standards in P–2

The advice and guidelines within this proposal will be developed with the understanding that:

- advice is interim pending ACARA's establishment of a more nationally consistent approach to assessment that may have implications for P–2 in Queensland
- P–2 judgment on child achievement currently occurs differentially across the phase. The Prep Year is aligned to the *EYCG* using phase descriptors to highlight a continuum of learning. Judgments are made by matching phase descriptors and the level of support required to demonstrate the learning. Years 1–2 align to a standards framework that describes the quality of student work
- advice and guidelines propose to support teachers in a time of transition by maximising continuity across P–2
- the proposal will focus on the application of achievement standards across P–2 with additional alternative advice for the Prep Year in making judgments at the midyear point and in areas not included in the Australian Curriculum.

In Queensland, a modification to the *National Education Agreement* (SCRGSP 2010) has been applied and has relevance to the P–2 phase. This would be subject to future renegotiation with the renewal of the agreement in 2014 (see Proposal 4).

The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* (2010, p. 21ff) defines the Australian Curriculum achievement standards as an expectation of the depth of understanding, the extent of knowledge and the sophistication of skills that children should typically demonstrate at the end of a period of teaching. The nature of the Australian Curriculum achievement standards is described further in the revised position report *Assessment and reporting of the F–10 Australian Curriculum*. In this description, achievement standards:

- define what students should understand and be able to do at different levels of schooling
- emphasise the depth of conceptual understanding, the sophistication of skills, and the ability to apply knowledge expected of students
- deliberately avoid reference to specific knowledge unless this is intrinsic to conceptual understanding and skills (ACARA 2011, p. 3).

However, the Australian Curriculum achievement standards do not articulate “how well” children achieve within each year level and, as such, do not provide information to assist teachers and schools to articulate specific levels of child achievement or the specific learning needs of children.

ACARA has stated that state and territory jurisdictions may decide to provide elaborations for the A–E descriptions or equivalent five-point scale which will assist teachers to use the Australian Curriculum achievement standards in their classroom practice. This is prior to establishing a more nationally consistent approach to assessment and reporting, which ACARA states will be at least several years, given the period of implementation for the first and subsequent phases of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2011, p. 5).

Proposed inclusions

To provide elaborations for A–E descriptions or equivalent, it is necessary to specify the valued features of learning for which assessment evidence must be gathered and the levels of achievement in the valued features for each grade on the five-point scale. It is proposed that for each learning area, P–2 Learning area standards descriptors are developed that:

- distinguish between the degrees of quality evident in student work using an A–E scale that links to the reporting framework
- identify the assessable elements or valued features for Knowledge and understanding and Skills
- use the organisation of the Australian achievement standards for Mathematics, English, Science and History to inform the descriptors:
 - Number and algebra, Measurement and geometry, and Statistics and probability in Mathematics
 - Writing and shaping, Speaking and listening, and Reading and viewing (the receptive and productive modes or strands) in English (ACARA 2011, p. 5)
 - Science Understanding, Science as a Human Endeavour, and Science Inquiry Skills
 - Historical Knowledge and Understanding, and Historical Skills
- support material identifying how the assessable elements or valued features are evident in the Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards for each year level

- draw upon unchanged Australian Curriculum achievement standards (including annotated work samples) as reference points for developing the learning area standards descriptors.

The Learning area standards descriptors will describe the qualities in children’s work and assist teachers to make on-balance judgments about the Australian Curriculum achievement standards at the end of a specified set of learning, such as the end of a term or end of the semester. The Learning area standards descriptors will be developed using the validation processes consistent with QSA practices. This model of standards provides the additional information required so that:

- children and teachers know how each level of achievement will be awarded
- children, teachers and parents/carers have a common and consistent language to describe the quality of children’s achievement and to discuss standards when reporting children’s achievements
- teachers have a tool for:
 - developing task-specific guides to making judgments that give children specific feedback highlighting their strengths and areas for further development
 - making consistent judgments about individual assessments that make up each child’s folio of work and promote comparability from school to school.

Prep-specific inclusions




In 2012, the Prep Year will have learning areas in the *EYCG* that have no correlation to content areas supported in the standards framework. Table 1 shows the *EYCG* learning areas of Social and personal learning, Health and physical learning, Active learning processes, and Oral language that are in this category. The general capabilities and the cross-curriculum priorities go some way to providing additional correlation; however, making judgments in these areas will require the alternative framework of the *EYCG*.








The proposal makes provision for advice to:

- support the use of the *EYCG* phase descriptors to make judgments and inform comments that describe learning in the areas not supported in the Australian Curriculum. Phase descriptors will transfer to achievement standards as the Australian Curriculum content areas are implemented and standard descriptors are developed by the QSA. Modification of advice may be required as ACARA refines the general capabilities
- manage the learning areas not supported in the Australian Curriculum and to specifically provide:
 - advice and guidelines for the collection of a manageable, targeted and balanced folio of evidence demonstrating a child’s learning and development over time
 - advice and guidelines for a continuous cycle of monitoring, diagnosing and intervening to support learning, where evidence is being analysed and used in an ongoing manner aligned to the principles of assessment, *for* learning, *as* learning and *of* learning
 - support for evidence to be gathered through a variety of assessment and monitoring techniques and used to support teachers in making on-balance judgments aligned to the phase descriptors of the *EYCG* at the end of a specified set of time such as the end of a term or, particularly, at the end of Semester 1
 - advice and guidelines for Prep teachers to use social moderation processes to develop consistency of judgment aligned to the phase descriptors of the *EYCG*.

Table 1: Correlation between EYCG and Australian Curriculum — Phase 1, 2012

Key

Early Years Curriculum Guidelines (current)	Australian Curriculum Phase 1 — 2012
Early learning area Specific focus	Learning area: Learning area strands
	General capabilities Cross-curriculum priorities
	No early learning area correlation to the Australian Curriculum — Phase 1
	Early learning area supported by a general capability or cross-curriculum priority
	Early learning area correlation to the Australian Curriculum learning area (varying degrees)
*	Foundational skill area requiring focus in the Prep Year

Social and personal learning	Learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities
*Sustaining relationships	 Intercultural understanding Ethical behaviour Personal and social competence
Understanding diversity	 History  <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures</i> <i>Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia</i>
Positive sense of self	 Personal and social competence
Health and physical learning	Learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities
Making healthy choices	 Personal and social competence
*Gross-motor	
*Fine-motor	

Language learning and communication	Learning areas and general capabilities
*Oral language	<p data-bbox="799 208 1367 241">English: Language, Literature, and Literacy</p> <p data-bbox="799 264 1367 309">Literacy</p>
Reading and viewing	<p data-bbox="799 320 1367 353">English: Language, Literature, and Literacy</p> <p data-bbox="799 376 1367 421">Literacy</p>
Writing and shaping	<p data-bbox="799 432 1367 465">English: Language, Literature, and Literacy</p> <p data-bbox="799 488 1367 533">Literacy</p>
Early mathematical understanding	Learning areas and general capabilities
Number	<p data-bbox="799 600 1367 633">Mathematics: Number and Algebra</p> <p data-bbox="799 656 1367 689">Numeracy</p>
Patterns and algebra	<p data-bbox="799 701 1367 734">Mathematics: Number and Algebra</p> <p data-bbox="799 757 1367 801">Numeracy</p>
Measurement and space	<p data-bbox="799 813 1367 846">Mathematics: Measurement and Geometry</p> <p data-bbox="799 869 1367 913">Numeracy</p>
Chance and data	<p data-bbox="799 925 1367 958">Mathematics: Statistics and Probability</p> <p data-bbox="799 981 1367 1014">Numeracy</p>
Active learning processes	Learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities
Investigating the natural world	<p data-bbox="799 1104 1367 1205">Science: Science Understanding, Science as a Human Endeavour, and Science Inquiry Skills</p> <p data-bbox="799 1227 1367 1272"><i>Sustainability</i></p>
Investigating environments	<p data-bbox="799 1283 1367 1350">History: Historical Knowledge and Understanding, and Historical Skills</p> <p data-bbox="799 1373 1367 1406"><i>Sustainability</i></p>
Investigating technology	<i>Information and communication technology (ICT) competence</i>
Thinking	<i>Critical and creative thinking</i>
Imagining and responding	

Proposal 4: Assessment resources for P–2

The QSA will need to develop targeted resources to support application of the Australian Curriculum achievement standards and the assessment advice.

Monitoring of learning progress to inform teaching and improve learning for children is an essential component of assessment in the early years. The *EYCG*, P–3 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators, *Year 1 Learning Statements* and the *Year 2 Diagnostic Net* currently support monitoring over P–2. However, these tools are not aligned to the Australian Curriculum content. The P–2 phase of learning requires quality resources to underpin monitoring that improves children’s learning.

The current monitoring processes, including the *Year 1 Literacy and Numeracy Checkpoint Assessments*, will undergo review to inform planning and consultation for developing cohesive and aligned monitoring processes in the early years phase.

The Planning for implementing project has already developed curriculum planning advice, templates and exemplars for P–2 English, Mathematics, Science and multiple year level classes and is developing similar resources for History. These resources highlight the importance of assessment planning and include suggestions for assessment tasks in the context of the curriculum intent.

Proposed inclusions

- The whole school and year level curriculum and assessment planning templates and exemplars will provide tools to inform assessment scope, balance and timing.
- The year level and unit overview exemplars will provide the basis for the development of exemplars for quality assessment and application of the standards, including Assessment Bank assessment packages that:
 - elaborate on the suggested assessment in the exemplar year level plans and unit overviews
 - model quality assessment using task-specific guides to making judgments developed from the Learning area standards descriptors for each of the learning areas of the Australian Curriculum
 - include annotated student sample responses to build consistency of teacher judgments.
- The resources for concepts will be developed at different year levels to assist teachers to assess in multiple year level classes.
- Tools for developing quality assessment will have an early years focus.
- Guidelines for recording information about performance on assessment will be undertaken periodically or throughout the term or semester.

These resources will be reinforced by strategies that support teachers’ discussion and analysis of children’s work to:

- build understanding and use the standards to make consistent judgments based on the evidence of children’s learning
- make comparable judgments for reporting results
- use assessment data to review teaching and assessment practices.

The templates and exemplars refer to moderation and feedback, flagging the need to plan for monitoring during the term or semester. These resources will illustrate a range of ways that teachers can participate in focused discussions to consider the task-specific

descriptors and how closely the evidence in the child's work matches them at the school or district level.

Proposal 5: Reporting framework for P–2

The *National Education Agreement* (SCRGSP 2010) requires all schools to provide parents/carers with plain language reports twice a year that:

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

Modification to the *National Education Agreement* has been presented at ministerial level and applied in Queensland to maximise equity and allow teachers to respond to the diverse needs of children in their first years of schooling. The modifications include:

- Years 1–3 — an A–E scale to be recorded as Very High, High, Sound, Developing, or Support Required
- Prep Year — reporting twice yearly through interviews with parent/carers where learning and development are discussed through a folio of evidence aligned to the *EYCG's* phases of learning: Applying, Making connections, Exploring, or Becoming aware.

Proposed inclusions

The proposed P–2 reporting framework will assist with continuity across the P–2 phase and support teachers to use the Australian Curriculum achievement standards to make judgments about student achievement for twice-yearly reporting to parents using a folio of evidence of student achievement. The reporting framework will offer a choice of an alternate midyear framework for Prep that assists with monitoring children's learning and gauging their level of development over time. The proposed framework will:

- use a common language for reporting across all learning areas in P–2
- succinctly describe typical performance at each of the five grade levels for knowledge and understanding and application of processes and skills
- use an equivalent five-point scale across P–2 based on the terminology used in *EYCG's* phases of learning (see Table 2)
- suggest a P–2 framework based on the achievement standard applied twice yearly:
 - The reporting format will include comments (Prep) or the P–2 scaled grade for learning areas outside the content of the Australian Curriculum at both the midpoint and the end point
 - At the end of the year, it will provide transitional information to inform the next year level and align to the achievement standard
 - Expanded examples of each scale area, showing a developmental picture of a child typically operating in that phase, will be developed to assist teachers in developing full discussions with parents/carers

- suggest additional advice for describing learning developmentally for midyear and end-of-year reporting:
 - At midyear, teachers will analyse a targeted folio of evidence collected over time for reporting purposes. The folio will show evidence of learning and development over the *EYCG* learning areas and consider the Australian Curriculum achievement standard
 - Teachers will use consistency of judgment practices to match the learning and development to examples of *EYCG* phase of learning. Judgments will be applied across five levels, recorded for teacher use, and used to inform portfolio conversations with parents/carers and children
 - Phase descriptors will not be adjusted to a five-point scale but teachers will use moderation processes and professional judgment to allocate the new level. The current phase descriptor “Applying” will approximate the achievement standard at the end of a year level.

Table 2: Draft P–2 reporting framework

Applying (AP)
The patterns of evidence in the child’s folio typically demonstrate application of curriculum content and an understanding of concepts facts and procedures that can be readily applied in new situations. The patterns of evidence in the child’s folio reflect a very high level in the application of skills that can be transferred to new situations.
Making Connections (MC)
The patterns of evidence in the child’s folio typically demonstrate an informed connection to curriculum content and a thorough understanding of concepts, facts and procedures. The patterns of evidence in the child’s folio reflect a high level of application of skills in most situations with beginning transference to new situations.
Working With (WW)
The patterns of evidence in the child’s folio typically demonstrate they are working with the curriculum content and a sound level of understanding of the required of concepts facts and procedures. The patterns of evidence in the child’s folio reflect an adequate application of skills in most situations.
Exploring (EX)
The patterns of evidence in the child’s folio typically demonstrate an exploration of curriculum content and a basic understanding of some of concepts facts and procedures. The patterns of evidence in the child’s folio reflect a variable application of skills in familiar situations
Becoming Aware (BA)
The patterns of evidence in the child’s folio typically demonstrate a beginning awareness of curriculum content and a basic understanding of a few concepts facts and procedures. The patterns of evidence in the child’s folio reflect a beginning application of skills and processes in familiar situations.

Assessment, standards and reporting in Years 3–10

Focus

This section focuses on proposals for assessment and reporting and advice about applying the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards in Years 3–10. Specifically, the report proposes the provision of:

- assessment advice and guidelines to support teachers to implement the Australian Curriculum in Queensland
- learning area-specific A–E standards descriptors to assist teachers to make consistent judgments about student achievement
- assessment resources to continue to build teacher assessment capability and apply standards consistently
- a reporting framework that succinctly describes students' A–E achievement over a course of study using a folio of evidence.

The proposals apply the Australian Curriculum achievement standards and:

- focus on assessment *as learning*, *of learning*, and *for learning*
- assist teachers to plan assessment programs for the intended curriculum and improve teaching and learning
- clarify for students, parents/carers and teachers what is expected for each reported level of achievement A–E
- support consistency of teacher judgments within and across learning areas and promote comparability from school to school
- support teachers to use a folio of student work to make on-balance judgments about student achievement for twice-yearly reporting
- provide tools to support teachers to make judgments about individual assessments and provide feedback to students about how they can improve their learning
- include exemplars that model assessment *for learning*, *as learning* and *of learning*
- build on teachers', students' and parents'/carers' understanding of standards and assist teachers to discuss standards with parents/carers when reporting student achievements
- strengthen alignment between teaching and learning, assessment and reporting
- support teachers in all learning areas in both the Australian Curriculum and Queensland curriculum.

These proposals put teachers' professional knowledge and practice at the centre of aligning what is taught, how it is taught, how student learning is assessed and how learning is reported.

Proposals for Years 3–10

The following proposals describe how the QSA will assist Queensland Years 3–10 teachers to use the Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards to teach, assess and report in the transition phase of the Australian Curriculum.

Proposal 1: Advice and guidelines for assessment in Years 3–10

Assessment and reporting advice and guidelines is a state responsibility and, in Queensland, is typically provided in syllabuses and guidelines.

The provision of assessment advice for Years 3–10 reflects the principles articulated in QSA's *P–12 assessment policy* which positions assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process and states that the main purposes of an assessment program are:

- promoting, assisting and improving teaching and learning
- helping students achieve the highest standards they can
- providing parents/carers with meaningful information on students' achievements and information for reporting and certification.

This approach is consistent with the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* which commits to assessment of student achievement that is rigorous and comprehensive, and national and school-level assessment that focuses on:

- assessment *for* learning — enabling teachers to use information about student progress to inform their teaching
- assessment *as* learning — enabling students to reflect on and monitor their own progress to inform their future learning goals
- assessment *of* learning — assisting teachers to use evidence of student learning to assess student achievement against goals and standards (MCEETYA 2008, p. 14).

This approach to assessment has resulted in Queensland teachers working in partnership with the QSA to develop high-quality assessment that aligns teaching, learning, assessment and reporting so that what is taught informs what is assessed, and what is assessed forms the basis of what is reported. Teachers are supported by the development of exemplar assessment instruments and annotated samples of student responses. Teachers' professional dialogue is promoted to develop consistency of teacher judgments through discussion and analysis of the connections between standards and student work.

Proposed inclusions

The proposed assessment advice and guidelines aligned with QSA's *P–12 assessment policy* will assist teachers to plan quality teaching and learning programs for improved student learning by continuing to support the development of teachers' assessment capabilities. The following components will be included:

- planning a balanced assessment program that provides opportunities to collect evidence of student learning using a variety of assessment techniques as part of an overall teaching and learning program
- making overall judgments about the quality of students' work for the purposes of twice-yearly reporting

- planning and implementing assessment techniques, formats and conditions appropriate for developing assessment for each learning area at particular year levels
- monitoring student achievement and providing feedback
- specific information about assessment in particular year levels or learning areas, where appropriate.

Proposal 2: Advice and guidelines for applying the Australian Curriculum achievement standards in Years 3–10

The Shape of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2010, p. 21ff) defines the Australian Curriculum achievement standards as an expectation of the depth of understanding, the extent of knowledge and the sophistication of skills that students should typically demonstrate at the end of a period of teaching.

The nature of the Australian Curriculum achievement standards is described further in the revised position report *Assessment and reporting of the F–10 Australian Curriculum*. In this description, the achievement standards:

- define what students should understand and be able to do at different levels of schooling
- emphasise the depth of conceptual understanding and the sophistication of skills and the ability to apply knowledge expected of students
- deliberately avoid reference to specific knowledge unless this is intrinsic to conceptual understanding and skills (ACARA 2011, p. 3).

However, the Australian Curriculum achievement standards do not articulate “how well” students achieve within each year level and as such, do not provide information to assist teachers and schools to articulate specific levels of student achievement or the specific learning needs of students. ACARA has stated that state and territory jurisdictions may decide to provide elaborations for the A–E descriptions or equivalent five-point scale which will assist teachers to use the Australian Curriculum achievement standards in their classroom practice. This is prior to establishing a more nationally consistent approach to assessment and reporting, which ACARA states will be at least several years, given the period of implementation for the first and subsequent phases of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2011, p.5).

Proposed inclusions

To provide elaborations for A–E descriptions, it is necessary to specify the valued features of learning for which assessment evidence must be gathered and the levels of achievement in the valued features for each grade on the five-point scale. It is proposed that for each learning area, Years 3–10 Learning area standards descriptors are developed that:

- distinguish between the degrees of quality evident in student work using an A–E scale that links to the reporting standards
- identify the assessable elements or valued features for Knowledge and understanding and Skills
- use the organisation of the Australian achievement standards for Mathematics and English, Science and History to inform the descriptors:
 - Number and algebra, Measurement and geometry, and Statistics and probability in Mathematics

- Writing and shaping, Speaking and listening, and Reading and viewing (the receptive and productive modes or strands) in English (ACARA 2011, p. 5)
- Science Understanding, Science as a Human Endeavour, and Science Inquiry Skills
- Historical Knowledge and Understanding, and Historical Skills
- support material identifying how the assessable elements or valued features are evident in the Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards for each year level
- unchanged Australian Curriculum achievement standards (including annotated work samples) as reference points for developing the learning area standards descriptors.

The Learning area standards descriptors will describe the qualities in students' work and assist teachers to make on-balance judgments about the Australian Curriculum achievement standards at the end of a specified set of learning, such as the end of a term or end of the semester. The Learning area standards descriptors will be developed using the validation processes consistent with QSA practices. This model of standards provides the additional information required so that:

- students and teachers know how each level of achievement will be awarded
- students, teachers and parents/carers have a common and consistent language to describe the quality of student achievement and to discuss standards when reporting student achievements
- teachers have a tool for:
 - developing task-specific guides to making judgments that give students specific feedback highlighting their strengths and areas for further development
 - making consistent judgments about individual assessments that make up each student's folio of work and promote comparability from school to school.

Proposal 3: Assessment resources for Years 3–10

The QSA will need to develop targeted resources to support application of the Australian Curriculum achievement standards and the assessment advice.

The Planning for implementing project has developed curriculum planning advice, templates and exemplars for Years 3–10 English, Mathematics, Science and multiple year level classes and is developing similar resources for History. These resources highlight the importance of assessment planning and include suggestions for assessment tasks in the context of the curriculum intent.

Proposed inclusions

- The whole school and year level curriculum and assessment planning templates and exemplars will provide tools to inform assessment scope, balance and timing.
- The year level and unit overview exemplars will provide the basis for the development of exemplars of quality assessment and application of the standards including Assessment Bank packages that:
 - elaborate on the suggested assessment in the exemplar year level plans and unit overviews
 - model quality assessment using task-specific guides to making judgments developed from the Learning area standards descriptors for each of the learning areas of the Australian Curriculum

- include annotated student sample responses to build consistency of teacher judgments.
- The resources for concepts will be developed at different year levels to assist teachers to assess in multiple year level classes.
- Tools for developing quality assessment will be provided.
- Guidelines for recording information about performance on assessment will be undertaken periodically or throughout the term or semester.

These resources will be reinforced by strategies that support teachers' discussion and analysis of student work to:

- build understanding and use the standards to make consistent judgments based on the evidence of students' learning
- make comparable judgments for reporting results
- use assessment data to review teaching and assessment practices.

The templates and exemplars refer to moderation and feedback, flagging the need to plan for monitoring during the term or semester. These resources will illustrate a range of ways that teachers can participate in focused discussions to consider the task-specific descriptors and how closely the evidence in the student work matches them at the school or district level.

The Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs) currently in English, Mathematics and Science in Years 4, 6 and 9 aim at building the culture of school-based assessment in the middle years of schooling and are a source of professional development for teachers. Future QCATs aligned to the Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards will provide models of quality assessment tasks and an opportunity for focused discussion that builds understanding of the standards.

Proposal 4: Reporting framework for Years 3–10

The *National Education Agreement* (SCRGSP 2010) requires all 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 standards
 - relative to the performance of the student's peer group.

Proposed inclusions

The proposed Years 3–10 reporting framework will assist teachers to use the Australian Curriculum achievement standards to make judgments about student achievement for twice-yearly reporting to parents, using a folio of evidence of student achievement. The proposed framework will:

- use a common language for reporting across all learning areas for Years 3–10

- succinctly describe typical performance at each of the five grade levels (A–E) for knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts, procedures, and application of processes and skills.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Australian Curriculum is an opportunity to continue building an assessment culture across P–12, strengthen current best practice and provide advice to ACARA.

Given that in 2012 and beyond teachers and students will be using the Australian Curriculum resources from ACARA in four learning areas and the Queensland *Essential Learnings* and *Standards* for the other learning areas, it is important that there is consistency of approach.

The proposals in this report advocate an approach to assessment, standards and reporting that provides advice and guidelines to use the Australian Curriculum achievement standards. It does this through the continued use of familiar constructs to provide some stability to teachers as they begin to engage with the Australian Curriculum. These proposals, if adopted, will provide teachers in P–10 with the advice and guidelines to plan assessment programs that promote, assist and improve teaching and learning, and provide information about student achievement. This will enable the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and the use of Australian Curriculum achievement standards in classroom practice.

The P–2 section of this report has been developed in consultation with school sector stakeholders and early years educators to provide bridging strategies as Queensland educators begin the transition to the Australian Curriculum. The proposals within this report outline opportunities for investigating renewal of practice, for strengthening current best practices to continue building an assessment culture, and for creating continuity across the new P–2 phase of learning that aligns to the Australian Curriculum.

During 2011 ACARA will trial and validate the Australian Curriculum achievement standards. Any adjustments and refinements that may need to be made to the achievement standards and the curriculum content are to be completed by October 2011 for Australian education ministers' approval. The materials to support assessment, standards and reporting developed in line with the proposals in this report will remain in draft during the validation processes.

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Queensland Studies Authority

154 Melbourne Street, South Brisbane

PO Box 307 Spring Hill

QLD 4004 Australia

T +61 7 3864 0299

F +61 7 3221 2553

www.qsa.qld.edu.au
