

Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) Framework

December 2008

Guidelines for Reporting

*Guidelines for school sectors — reporting
student achievement in Queensland schools*

Contents

<i>Rationale</i>	1
<i>The seven Guidelines for Reporting</i>	2
<i>Guideline 1</i>	3
<i>Guideline 2</i>	4
<i>Guideline 3</i>	5
<i>Guideline 4</i>	6
<i>Guideline 5</i>	8
<i>Guideline 6</i>	9
<i>Guideline 7</i>	11
<i>Appendix 1: Commonwealth and State Government reporting requirements</i>	12
<i>Appendix 2: Overview of the QCAR Framework</i>	13
<i>Appendix 3: Overview of the reporting process</i>	15
<i>Bibliography</i>	17

Guidelines for Reporting: Guidelines for school sectors — reporting student achievement in Queensland schools

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Rationale

The *Guidelines for Reporting* are one of the five core components of the Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) Framework. They identify the elements that need to appear in every student report and provide advice to school sectors to underpin reporting policies for Years 1–9.

The *Guidelines for Reporting* provide school sectors with guidance on reporting student achievement and progress for Years 1–9. “Reporting” in this context refers to the communication of information on the results of assessments of student achievement to students, parents/carers and teachers for the primary purpose of improving student learning. Reporting is a responsibility of school sectors in collaboration with the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) and schools.

The *Guidelines for Reporting* support the implementation of the QCAR Framework, a Queensland Smart State initiative (The State of Queensland, DEA 2005).

They refer specifically to a schools’ responsibility to report student achievement information to parents/carers, and not to schools’ responsibilities to report to government and the wider community. In this regard, these guidelines do not impinge upon previous advice provided to schools through Schools reporting guidelines for state and non-state schools (The State of Queensland, DEA 2004) and systemic policies, but should inform sector policies on reporting.

The *Guidelines for Reporting*:

- ✦ provide a common framework for twice-yearly reporting to parents/carers to support clarity and consistency of communication about student achievement
- ✦ provide a process for reporting student achievement on the Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs) in Years 4, 6 and 9
- ✦ enhance and support school-based reporting practices.

The *Guidelines for Reporting* were developed within the parameters of government regulations, as outlined in Appendix A. The advice in this document is confined to:

- ✦ the use of the A–E *Standards* for twice-yearly reporting
- ✦ the reporting of individual student achievement on the Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs)
- ✦ the dissemination of a qualitative report to teachers on the findings from the administration of QCATs annually.

The underlying intent of the *Guidelines for Reporting* as a component of the QCAR Framework is to enhance consistency of reporting practices and reported student achievement across the state.

School sectors will implement the components of the QCAR Framework as a strategy to improve student learning outcomes and enhance the consistency of what is learned, what is taught, assessed and reported in Queensland schools. School sectors make determinations about the implementation of the QCAR Framework for their schools as they transition from previous practices to implementing the QCAR Framework.

The *Guidelines for Reporting* provide school sectors with a broad framework within which to establish policies and practices that support schools to report student achievement and progress. The QSA will continue to support the implementation of the QCAR Framework by providing information on the QSA website.

The seven Guidelines for Reporting

Guideline 1

A set of principles should underpin school-based reporting practices.

Guideline 2

Schools report student achievement in Years 1–3 using the QCAR Framework *Standards* as a guide.

Guideline 3

Schools report individual student achievement for Years 4–9 twice-yearly using the QCAR Framework *Standards*.

Guideline 4

Schools report individual student achievement on Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs) at the end of the semester in which they are undertaken, using a format provided annually by the QSA.

Guideline 5

Schools implement strategies for access and equity when reporting the Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs).

Guideline 6

Twice-yearly student reporting should include information about student achievement and progress including as a minimum:

- › student achievement on the *Essential Learnings*
- › other school-identified learning
- › results achieved on the Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs) undertaken in that semester.

Guideline 7

The QSA will make available to schools a qualitative report on the trends emerging from the implementation of the Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs).

These *Guidelines for Reporting* are elaborated in the following sections.

Guideline 1

A set of principles should underpin school-based reporting practices.

During the development of the QCAR Framework, research and consultation affirmed the principles to underpin the reporting of student achievement and progress first promulgated by the *Schools Reporting Consultation* (The State of Queensland, DEA 2004), which received strong support from parents/carers and school communities. The outcomes of that consultation were reported in terms of a number of actions, one of which was the proposed introduction of a number of school reporting principles. Six principles have been adapted for the QCAR Framework *Guidelines for Reporting*.

The principles

Six principles have direct relevance to the reporting of individual student achievement and progress. These principles ideally underpin school-based reporting practices:

1. School reporting is part of a cooperative relationship between school staff, parents/carers, students and the community, which involves mutual responsibility, respect and trust.
2. All students and parents/carers are entitled to confidential formal and informal school reporting that is responsive to individual needs and used to plan future learning.
3. School reporting acknowledges student achievement and progress over the reporting period.
4. School reporting identifies students' strengths and areas for improvement across a broad range of indicators including curricular, other activities and social development within the school context.
5. All parents/carers should have the opportunity to be involved in the development, implementation and review of reporting practices at their school.
6. All parents/carers should receive regular and clear reports on their child's progress and have opportunities to discuss their child's progress with teachers from early in the school year.

Guideline 2

Schools report student achievement in Years 1–3 using the QCAR Framework *Standards* as a guide.

Preparatory Year

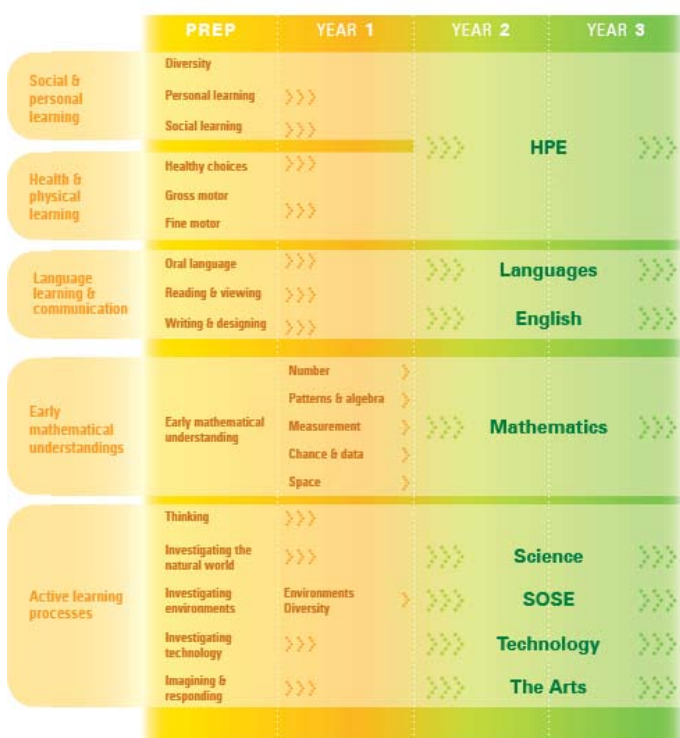
Reporting of student achievement and progress in the Preparatory Year is beyond the remit of these *Guidelines for Reporting*.

Years 1–3

Effective reporting in the early years of compulsory schooling is vital for children’s early learning development. Parents/carers expect quality information about how their child is progressing and how they are achieving in relation to the standards expected for their age group and year level. The QCAR *Standards* provide a five-point scale that reflects the standards for each juncture of schooling. The *Essential Learnings* describe the Knowledge and understanding and the Ways of working for each of the key learning areas (KLAs).

Schools are required to provide students with a curriculum in the early years which will build their capacity in each of the KLAs. The Prep Early Learning Areas connect to *Essential Learnings* for KLAs.

Diagram 1: Relationship of Prep Early Learning Areas to *Essential Learnings*



Schools and school sectors make policy decisions about how teachers might organise the learning for students, e.g. through KLAs, early learning areas, rich tasks or other curriculum organisers. Teachers report the achievement of students for the learning undertaken by the student twice-yearly in each year of schooling.

The *Essential Learnings* provide a comprehensive statement of what students should have opportunities to learn by the end of Year 3. They have been developed for each of the KLAs. Teachers of Prep to Year 3 transition from using the early learning areas to the *Essential Learnings* for Years 1–3.

The QCAR *Standards* guide reporting of student achievement and progress in Years 1–3. They are as follows:

- A Evidence in a student’s work typically demonstrates a very high level of knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts and procedures, and application of processes.
- B Evidence in a student’s work typically demonstrates a high level of knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts and procedures, and application of processes.
- C Evidence in a student’s work typically demonstrates a sound level of knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts and procedures, and application of processes.
- D Evidence in a student’s work typically demonstrates a limited level of knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts and procedures, and application of processes.
- E Evidence in a student’s work typically demonstrates a very limited knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts and procedures, and application of processes.

Sectors may wish to provide additional policy support using the QCAR *Standards* as a guide. In order to provide more meaningful detail for parents/carers, school sectors may consider providing strategies for developing and maintaining consistency of reported results.

Guideline 3

Schools report individual student achievement for Years 4–9 twice-yearly using the QCAR Framework *Standards*.

Reporting student achievement in Years 4–9 has two components:

- reporting individual student achievement on the school-based curriculum drawn from the *Essential Learnings* and other school-identified curriculum
- reporting individual student achievement on the QCATs in Years 4, 6 and 9 in English, Mathematics and Science.

Reporting individual student achievement on the National Literacy and Numeracy Tests in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (NAPLAN) is coordinated by the Australian Government and managed separately from reporting of school-based assessment requirements.

Reporting student achievement twice-yearly

For reporting, schools are expected to report student achievement for Years 4–9 using the QCAR Framework *Standards*. These *Standards* are:

- A Evidence in a student’s work typically demonstrates a very high level of knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts and procedures, and application of processes.
- B Evidence in a student’s work typically demonstrates a high level of knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts and procedures, and application of processes.
- C Evidence in a student’s work typically demonstrates a sound level of knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts and procedures, and application of processes.
- D Evidence in a student’s work typically demonstrates a limited level of knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts and procedures, and application of processes.
- E Evidence in a student’s work typically demonstrates a very limited knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts and procedures, and application of processes.

These *Standards* descriptors are the same for each of the KLAs and describe the levels of achievement that can be assigned to a collection of evidence provided by the student. Reporting student achievement in this way will enhance consistency of reporting practices and consistency of reported results. School sectors are encouraged to provide teachers with effective strategies

for developing consistency of teacher judgment using *Standards*.

Reporting student achievement on the QCATs to students and parents/carers

The QCATs are performance-based assessments designed to support student learning, and provide schools and teachers with information about the quality of student learning, what is working well and what needs improving.

Guideline 4

Schools report individual student achievement on Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs) at the end of the semester in which they are undertaken, using a format provided annually by the QSA.

QCATs are intended to provide teachers and students with information about the depth and breadth of student learning in relation to targeted *Essential Learnings*. They are designed to:

- provide schools with an assessment model to support and improve, over time, consistency of teacher judgments of student achievement
- model quality assessments linked to the *Essential Learnings* and *Standards*
- provide parents/carers with information on how well their child is achieving in the assessment of a selection of *Essential Learnings* compared to expectations for that point in schooling
- provide feedback to students
- support school planning by providing information about student achievement in QCATs.

Teachers will assess student responses to the assessments using a marking guide, the *Guide to making judgments*. This guide will highlight the task-specific assessable elements and task specific descriptors and will be made available to students. Teachers are encouraged to explain the task-specific descriptors to students to ensure transparency in the process and help students understand what is being assessed and what is required to improve their work.

Teachers use the *Guide to making judgments* to arrive at an overall judgment of the level of achievement on the assessment. Teachers make on-balance judgments by considering the quality of the overall performance across the assessable elements.

Teachers report to parents/carers using levels of achievement at the end of the semester in which the task is undertaken. This means that Years 4 and 6 English, Mathematics, and Science will be reported annually at the end of Semester 1, while Year 9 English, Mathematics, and Science will be reported at the end of Semester 2.

Consistent reporting of student achievement on the QCATs

Each year, the QSA will make available concise and clear descriptions of the QCATs being implemented in Years 4, 6 and 9. These descriptions will help teachers explain to parents/carers the nature of the targeted selection of the *Essential Learnings* and the contents and operation of each QCAT.

The descriptions will be in a format suitable for inclusion in school report cards. The descriptions will:

- identify the targeted *Essential Learnings* and assessable elements assessed in each task
- be updated annually to describe the nature of each QCAT
- help schools to develop the individual student report by describing student achievement on the QCAT using the same *Standards* as those on the school's twice-yearly report
- explain the range of performance on a five-point scale (A–E).

The report to parents/carers will provide a summary of the level of performance achieved on each of the QCATs. An overall grade using the five-point scale is assigned to the student work by the class teacher. Ideally teachers will engage in processes to achieve consistency of judgments with other teachers whose classes undertake the QCATs.

Example of QCAT report format

<i>Year level and KLA</i>	<i>Year 4 English</i>
	The Year 4 English assessment targeted a selection of the Essential Learnings from the end of the Year 3 juncture.
Brief description of the requirements within the assessment	Students were asked to interpret the content in a piece of writing and then to compare two other pieces of writing to find similarities and differences. Students then prepared a report for a school newsletter
Brief description of how judgments were made	Judgments were made on your child's performance using a marking guide that was available to students before doing the assessment
Overall grade	B: Evidence in your child's work demonstrates a high level of knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts and procedures, and application of processes

Explaining student achievement levels to students and parents/carers

The purpose of the QCATs is to assess students' Knowledge and understanding and Ways of working in a targeted selection of *Essential Learnings* in English, Mathematics, and Science. These selected *Essential Learnings* form only a part of a KLA, and as such, they do not constitute a report about levels of achievement for a KLA as a whole. Student achievement with these selected *Essential Learnings* may be different to their achievement within the KLA as a whole.

It is important to note that student achievement levels in the school assessment of performance in the KLA may not match the student performance level in one or any of the QCATs. This is the case in most collections of student work where students demonstrate a range of achievement across a semester or year. When this occurs, there is an opportunity for teachers to gather more evidence about what the student knows, understands and can do as well as discuss the differences in performance with the student and parent/carers.

Teachers are encouraged to explain to parents/carers the nature of the *Essential Learnings* and the contents and operation of the QCATs and how they compare with a student's achievement in other areas of the curriculum. The level of achievement may or may not be representative of the student's usual classroom assessment, and this should be seen as an opportunity by teachers, parents/carers and students to investigate the student's progress. Similarly, it may be an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their own use of the *Standards* in classroom assessment.

Guideline 5

Schools implement strategies for access and equity when reporting the Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs).

School sectors are responsible for ensuring that all students are provided with an appropriate educational program. The *Essential Learnings* and *Standards* are intended as the core of curriculum for students. In Queensland, all students in schools, including special schools, should have access to high-quality educational programs that meet their individual needs.

School sectors maintain responsibility for providing direction to their schools on the access and equity considerations pertaining to individuals and groups of students. Legislation exists to support schools and school sectors in their responsibilities to all students in Queensland schools.

As QCATs are designed more like school-based assessments, than like a large-scale standardised testing program, and as they are intended to be implemented as part of a classroom assessment program, the principles of access and equity should apply. This means that schools should not exclude students on the basis of impairment or disability as they may do in testing regimes where it is common practice to provide a means of identifying students who are unable to complete, or take part in the test because of absence, illness, impairment or disability.

Equity principles ensure that adjustments are made so that all barriers to access, engagement and success are removed. Students' needs and abilities are taken into account when planning (for teaching, assessing and reporting) to promote optimum success and participation in learning. Therefore, opportunities and choices in courses or programs and in the use of the facilities and services should be available to all students. In some cases, students will not be able to participate on the same basis as other students if all students are treated in the same way (Adapted from *Disability Standards for Education 2005*; Commonwealth of Australia, p. 12). In these cases, adjustments may be required).

An adjustment may be defined as a measure or action (or group of measures or actions) taken by an education provider that has the effect of assisting a student to participate and learn on an equitable basis and includes an aid, a facility, or a service that the student requires. An adjustment is reasonable if it balances the interests of all parties. Generally it is a requirement to make reasonable adjustment where necessary (Adapted from *Disability Standards for Education 2005*; Commonwealth of Australia pp. 13–14).

Where students have undertaken the QCAT, in whole or in part, they should receive a report of the overall grade awarded to their performance on the task in the same way as other students.

Students who are absent for the time when QCATs are conducted or who only complete part of a task due to absence may need special consideration when a judgment is being made on their level of achievement. It should be noted that as the available period to undertake the task will be several weeks, students returning to school in that time should be provided with opportunities to complete each QCAT.

When returning student levels of achievement to the QSA, students are marked absent if they:

- ✦ are absent from school due to continuing illness
- ✦ have other personal reasons for not attending school
- ✦ are enrolled at a school of distance education and cannot complete the QCAT.

In each of these cases, an overall result of “N” should be recorded for that student on the individual report and the data return program provided to schools in 2008. Students receiving “N” are recorded in aggregate data appropriately. Schools may not need to include these students in their own analysis of their data.

Schools will receive further advice about inclusion, participation and equity in relation to the implementation of QCATs in the *Teacher guidelines* as part of QCATs assessment packages each year. Schools can access information on special considerations in assessment and equity guidelines on the QSA website. Further information on specific school authority policies and guidelines should also be provided to schools by sectors.

Guideline 6

Twice-yearly student reporting should include information about student achievement and progress including as a minimum:

- › student achievement on the *Essential Learnings*
- › other school-identified learning
- › results achieved on the Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs) undertaken in that semester.

Generally, report cards should capture the salient aspects of student achievement and progress and, while what is salient may vary from individual to individual (student, parents/carers, school community), there are certain aspects that are widely regarded as imperative. These include aspects that are covered by legislation and regulations, such as attendance as well as aspects that have been identified in a school sector's curriculum and assessment framework. Above all, there is now, across Australia, a mandate to ensure that there is consistency in the ways teachers report and to some extent a mandate about what to report.

Schools ensure that, for the reporting period (twice-yearly), they report:

- › A–E levels of achievement awarded in all KLAs or subjects offered as part of a school's curriculum program
- › information on student participation and skills in school-based extra-curricular activities as appropriate
- › information on student attributes including effort, punctuality, social and behavioural skills
- › information on attendance

and, in so doing:

- › use clear and appropriate language to report student achievement and progress
- › be confidential about the information reported to students, their parents/carers and school communities (Schools Assistance (Learning Together — Achievement through Choice and Opportunity) Regulations 2005).

Note: Parents/carers are also entitled to information about a student's achievement relative to their peers upon request. The Australian Government regulation states the parent can receive the student's achievement relative to the performance of the child's peer group at the school (Schools Assistance Regulations 2005).

The QCATs are performance-based assessments designed to support student learning, and provide schools and teachers with information about the quality of student learning, what is working well, and what needs improving.

Schools will ensure that, when reporting QCATs in Years 4, 6 and 9, they report:

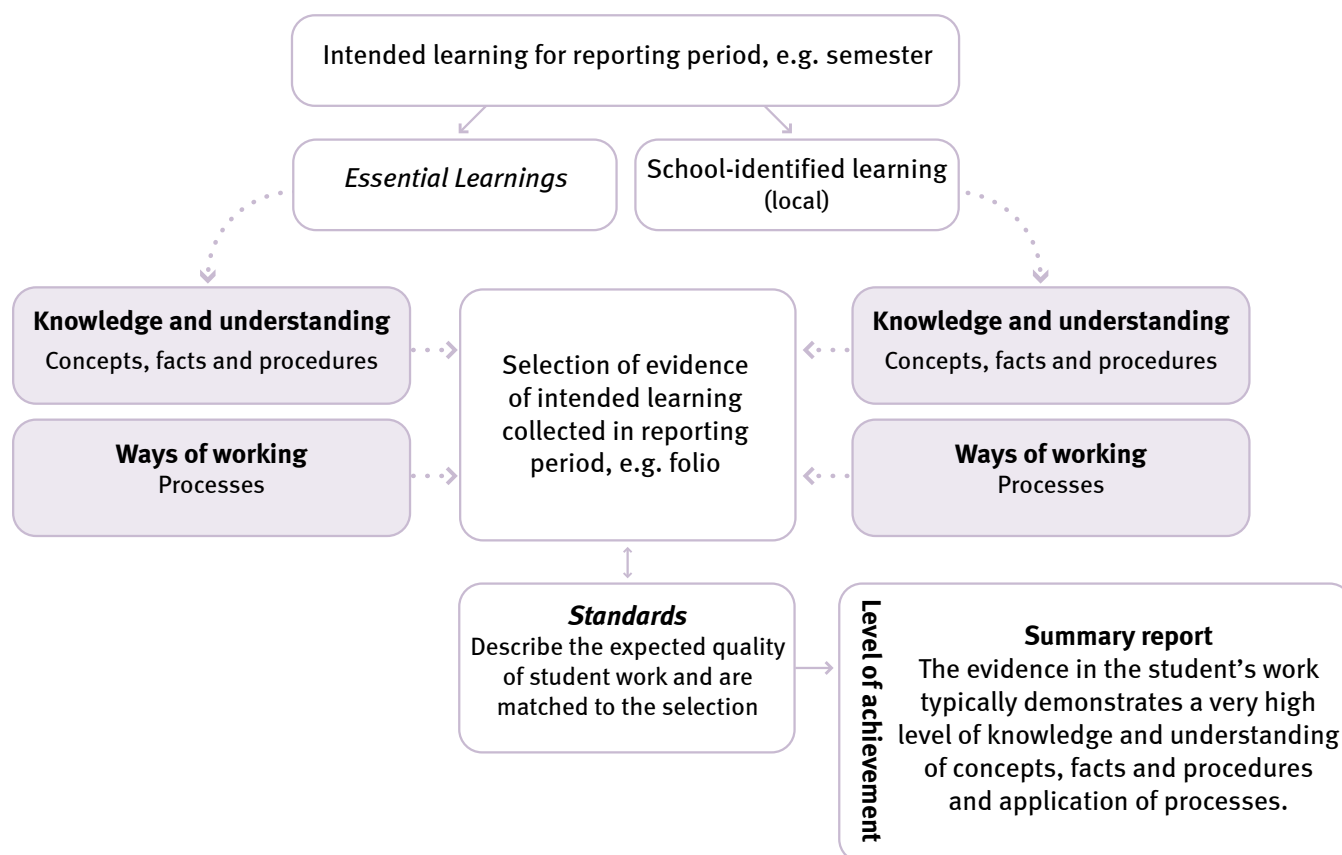
- › achievements in those QCATs undertaken by students in the reporting period in which the QCAT is undertaken (i.e. Semester 1 for Years 4 and 6; Semester 2 for Year 9)
- › individual student achievement using the *Standards*
- › summary information about the nature of the QCATs undertaken by the student and the meaning of the reported levels of achievement (provided by the QSA).

In addition to the written report, school sectors may require schools to report the QCATs as part of a parent–teacher interview or in other ways most appropriate to their community.

To ensure that students and parents/carers understand the information in report cards, schools should provide information about how placement on a five-point scale is determined, improving transparency and promoting equitable practices. Parents/carers need to be informed of changed reporting practices. Parents/carers and students will benefit from receiving information about the curriculum, what will be assessed, and how, early in the year.

In addition to the learning specified in the *Essential Learnings*, school sectors and individual schools may identify additional learning that is required, reflecting particular philosophical positions or sector priorities. School sectors may wish to provide an avenue for reporting this learning. This may not need to be reported separately, but can be incorporated into the reporting of the *Essential Learnings*, where the additional learning includes the two dimensions of Knowledge and understanding and Ways of working. This is represented in the diagram on page 10.

Diagram 2: A model for reporting student achievement on the *Essential Learnings, Standards* and additional learning



In this way, the learning of the *Essential Learnings* and any school-identified additional learning can be judged using the same *Standards*. While not all evidence will include both Knowledge and understanding of concepts, facts and procedures, and all Ways of working, a selection of the evidence can be made so that reporting using the *Standards* descriptors can incorporate both dimensions.

Guideline 7

The QSA will make available to schools a qualitative report on the trends emerging from the implementation of the Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs).

QSA will make available to schools a qualitative report on the trends emerging from the implementation of the QCATs based on an examination of a random sample of student responses as well as a collection of statistical data.

Annually, QSA will monitor the ways in which *Standards* are applied to award levels of achievement to student responses to the QCATs. The outcomes of such monitoring will be used to communicate appropriate information about what students have achieved to legitimate audiences (teachers, school authorities and government). This is intended to ensure that, over time, there will be even greater consistency in reporting student achievement and progress. This report will not rely on a collection and analysis of statistical data.

QCATs

QSA will collect from schools the levels of achievement allocated to each student completing QCATs.

The QSA will aggregate this student achievement data. This data will be used for the purpose of analysing trends and providing a report for teachers on the implementation of the QCATs in schools. The data will not represent a reliable analysis of student performance. More realistically, it will represent the grades that teachers allocated to student work. This data will not be for publication in ways that will allow for superficial comparisons of classes, schools or sectors.

Additionally, QSA will conduct a random sampling process each year that will collect and analyse a sample of student responses. This will be an analysis of the ways students tended to respond to the different parts of the tasks and will draw conclusions about what they understand and are able to do.

The information drawn from the random sample will provide QSA with the basis of a report for teachers, aimed at improving consistency and student learning.

Report for teachers

The QSA will make available each year a report: *QCATs — Report to teachers*. This report will provide teachers with information about the assessment tasks and student responses. It will include information about trends in students' performances and about the consistency in the way teachers made judgments.

Through an examination of student responses, the QSA will be able to give teachers insights into the way students typically responded and what can be generalised for the purposes of improving the teaching and learning process. This will provide qualitative information about interpreting student responses.

This report will contribute to:

- teacher capacity to make consistent judgments and feedback into the curriculum
- teachers' understanding about student strengths and areas for attention across the state
- greater consistency of teacher judgment
- consistency in reporting student achievement and progress.

The QSA will also conduct a teacher survey to capture information about the implementation of QCATs. The value of this report will depend to a large extent on the commitment to ongoing professional development and resourcing efforts of school authorities.

Appendix 1: Commonwealth and State Government reporting requirements

The *Guidelines for Reporting* operate within relevant legislative and regulatory requirements and are intended to help schools meet their obligations to report individual student achievement on assessments twice-yearly.

Commonwealth Government reporting requirements

In 2005, the Commonwealth Government set out, as a condition of continuing government funding to schools, both government and non-government, a number of requirements for reporting student achievement and progress (Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Regulations 2005).

The regulations require that reports:

- › use plain language
- › are able to be readily understood by parents/carers
- › be timely and given at least once each semester
- › give an accurate and objective assessment of the child's progress and achievement, using a five-point A–E scale (or equivalent), of levels of achievement set against clearly defined and specific learning standards
- › be confidential
- › deal with the child's academic and non-academic learning
- › be followed by an opportunity for the child and the parents/carers to meet with the child's teachers to discuss all aspects of the report and for the school to give constructive advice about supporting the child's further progress at school.

(Source: Office of Legislative Drafting and Publishing, 2006)

School sector advice to schools

Taking account of the principles identified in the Schools Reporting Consultation (2004) and the Australian Government's requirements, Queensland state schools (The State of Queensland, DEA 2006a & 2007) were advised that, for state schools reporting:

- ... must include, for the subjects studied, an assessment against achievement levels or bands defined by the education authority or school, being levels or bands that:
 - a) must be labelled as A, B, C, D or E (or an equivalent) and
 - b) should be clearly defined against specific learning standards

(Source: Register of Legislative Instruments 2005, p. 6).

Subsequently, advice about compliance with Australian Government regulations was provided by the non-government school authorities to their schools.

In 2005, the Queensland Government required that the QCAR Framework would include a common five-point results scale for describing student achievement across all areas of learning between the Preparatory Year and Year 10 for twice-yearly reports (The State of Queensland, DEA 2005).

These *Guidelines for Reporting* now provide consistent *Standards* for reporting student achievement using an A–E scale, and offer school sectors advice about reporting student achievement in Years 1–3 and in Years 4–9.

Appendix 2: Overview of the QCAR Framework

The QCAR Framework is designed to provide:

- › clarity about what to teach
- › a common language to describe student achievement through Standards
- › access to quality assessments to collect evidence of student achievement
- › resources to enhance consistency in the way teachers use standards to make judgments
- › advice to enhance comparability of reported results.

The QCAR Framework has five components, which are designed to work together:

- › *Essential Learnings*
- › *Standards*
- › Assessment Bank
- › Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs)
- › *Guidelines for Reporting*.

Essential Learnings and Standards

The *Essential Learnings* identify what should be taught and what is important for students to have opportunities to know, understand and be able to do for each of the eight KLAs. These KLAs are English, Languages, Study of Society & Environment, Health & Physical Education, The Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Technology. They describe the Knowledge and understanding and Ways of working that students need for ongoing learning, social and personal competence and participation in a democratic society. They are the part of the curriculum that is common across all schools.

Schools report individual student achievement in the *Essential Learnings* in each KLA using the *Standards*.

The *Standards* provide a common language to describe student achievement. *Standards* are integral to the alignment of curriculum, assessment and reporting. The *Standards* are used to make judgments about the quality of student achievement and to report student achievement.

Assessment Bank

The Assessment Bank is a rich and varied online collection of assessments and resources that are linked to the *Essential Learnings* and *Standards*. The Bank is designed to support teachers in developing school-based assessments that are standards-referenced.

The Assessment Bank helps teachers develop an understanding of the *Standards* and how they can be used to guide and inform judgments about student work. With regular and informed use, the Assessment Bank has the potential to contribute significantly to improving the comparability of reported results.

Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs)

QCATs model authentic, performance-based assessments and are an important mechanism in working towards consistency of teacher judgments and comparability of reported results.

Consistency in teacher judgments is best supported through gaining experience in using standards to help develop judgments about the evidence in student work, and reaching consensus about the judgments of achievement. The most effective way to build capacity for making consistent judgments is for teachers to look at, discuss, critique and analyse student work using agreed *Standards*. The QCAR Framework presents this opportunity by providing resources to help teachers work towards agreement and consistency in their judgments.

Guidelines for Reporting

The QCAR Framework promotes consistent reporting of student achievement through:

- › promotion of consistency of teacher judgment strategies
- › reporting guidelines for individual student achievement on school-based curriculum which incorporates the *Essential Learnings*
- › promotion of common standards for describing and reporting student achievement on QCATs
- › provision of an annual report on the administration of the QCATs in schools, identifying trends in student responses.

Using the QCAR Framework to align teaching, assessing and reporting

The *Essential Learnings* provide teachers with a clear direction about what must be included in the curriculum, whether using a KLA approach, a New Basics approach, an integrated studies approach or some other approach to the organisation and integration of the curriculum.



Appendix 2: Overview of the QCAR Framework (cont.)

Standards provide teachers with a consistent schema to make judgments about student learning and provide a common language to describe student achievement and progress. *Standards* are arranged as a five-point scale describing the differences in quality evident in student work collected from assessments undertaken within a learning area. They can be used for reporting student achievement. *Standards* describe the range of qualities expected of student work using a simple grading scale (very high – very limited).

The *Standards* are achievement standards which describe a level of achievement that is assigned to evidence of student learning. Achievement standards have two components. These are:

- *what* students are expected to learn
- *how well* they have achieved.

The *Standards* articulate with the *Essential Learnings*. The *Standards* are described using:

- two dimensions – Knowledge and understanding (concepts, facts and procedures) and Ways of working (application of processes) which are found in the *Essential Learnings*
- descriptors of the quality of the performance or achievement on these dimensions (e.g. very high, high).

How QCAR Standards operate

While the *Essential Learnings* make explicit for teachers what to teach, the *Standards* indicate the range of achievement and make explicit the quality of a student's achievement.

The *Standards* are the basis for judging how well students have demonstrated what they know, understand and can do. Making judgments using achievement standards requires teachers to match evidence in student responses against (purpose-specific) descriptors written for the explicit judgment of performance across the evidence.

Standards, as summary statements, describe student achievement. They provide a common language that can be used by teachers, students and parents/carers.

The *Standards* are arranged as a five-point scale so that they can be used for describing student achievement when reporting.

Reporting using achievement standards means providing students and parents/carers with summary information of a student's achievement in a reporting period, such as

a semester, with the level of achievement assigned to the evidence of learning, such as a collection of assessments and teacher observations.

Reporting is the end result of a process of assessing student learning, gathering evidence of learning, making professional judgments and tracking student progress over time. These *Standards* can be used to support the reporting needs of school sectors. By using the *Standards* for reporting student achievement and progress, consistency of reporting practice will be enhanced.

Appendix 3: Overview of the reporting process

Purpose of reporting

The overarching purpose of reporting student achievement and progress is to improve student learning. To this end, reporting to students is critically important and reporting to parents/carers and school communities is equally important.

Periodic reporting associated with school-based assessment may be documented using various forms e.g. report cards and parent–teacher interviews. Of these forms of reporting, only regular (twice-yearly) report cards and the reporting of the QCATs are the subject of these guidelines.

Twice-yearly reporting provides a summary of student achievement and progress, often at the end of each semester. In addition to providing an overall achievement level for KLAs, reports may also include achievement in other areas considered appropriate by school communities.

Reporting using Standards

The reporting process is the process of gathering evidence of student learning, making an on balance judgment on that evidence by matching the evidence of student work with the Standards and then reporting the standard achieved. The report, in whatever form, is by its nature a summary of the student’s learning in the reporting period.

A collection of evidence typically takes the form of different types of assessments planned by the school to be part of a curriculum and assessment program. The assessable elements identified in the *Essential Learnings* should guide teachers’ comprehensive and balanced selection of evidence.

In order to report student achievement twice-yearly, teachers make a professional on balance judgment to decide which standard or descriptor best matches the evidence produced by the student, based on assessment information collected over the reporting period e.g. semester.

Using the *Standards* to make and report judgments will promote consistency of reporting as teachers, students and parents/carers develop an understanding of the *Standards* and how they are applied to a collection of evidence.

Refer to Diagram 3: A model of process for assessing, judging and reporting, on page 16.

Reporting to students

It is important, indeed imperative, that students receive constructive feedback from their teachers about their achievements and progress throughout their schooling. Feedback should provide students with timely and accurate information about the learning they have accomplished along with clear indications of the standards achieved. Constructive feedback helps students to learn and reflect on their achievements and plan their future progress.

School curriculum incorporating the *Essential Learnings* and *Standards* provides an appropriate focus for providing students with constructive feedback on their achievements and progress. This enables students to focus on what is essential, knowing that this is also valued as essential for other students across all schools, and across the state.

Twice-yearly reports are intended to complement the ongoing feedback provided to students such as verbal or written comments, annotations on their work and face-to-face discussions with teachers. Reporting is an opportunity for teachers to help students identify strengths and possible improvements in their work. For teachers, providing feedback to students is an opportunity to reflect on learning and consider how to adjust instruction to meet student needs.

Reporting to parents/carers

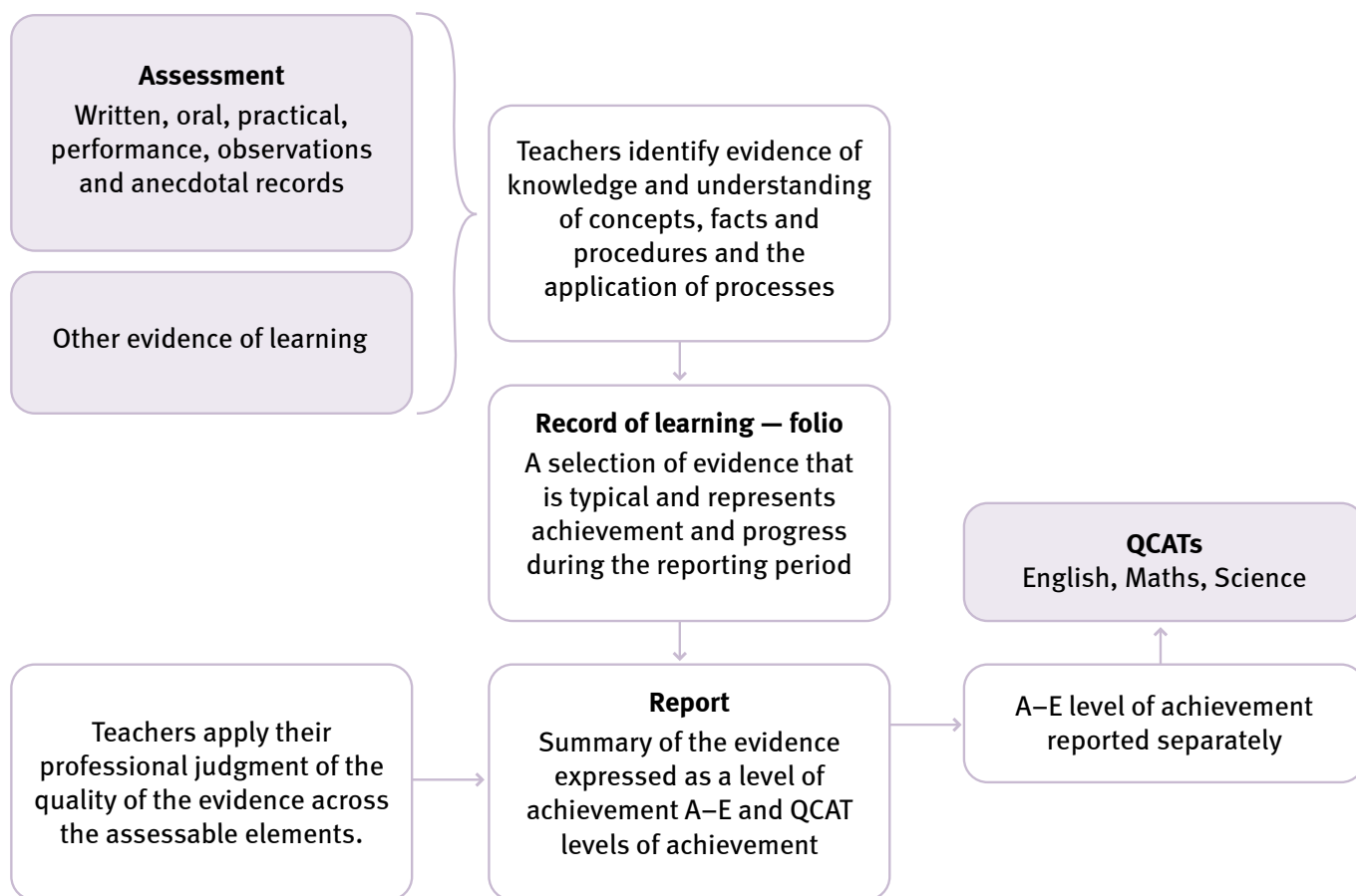
Research indicates that there is a need for schools to provide parents/carers with regular and comprehensive feedback about their child’s achievements and progress. Parents/carers want reliable, regular and easy-to-read reports. They want to know whether their child is achieving above, below or on par with expectations so they can help support and plan for their child’s future learning (The State of Queensland, DEA 2005, p. 10).

Schools already offer a range of opportunities for parents/carers to access information about their child, ensuring that parents/carers are aware of student achievements in the full range of activities in which the child is engaged. Some parents/carers need help to access this information.

The *Essential Learnings* and *Standards* create a well-defined basis for delivering consistent, regular and comprehensive feedback to parents/carers. The *Essential Learnings* provide clear statements about what must be taught in Queensland schools. The *Standards*

Appendix 3: Overview of the reporting process (cont.)

Diagram 3: A model of process for assessing, judging and reporting



provide a common language for communicating student achievement.

Parents/carers can feel confident that a core curriculum and common standards are enacted in schools across the state. Schools may offer additional opportunities for parents/carers to access information on student learning and progress through online mechanisms.

Reporting to teachers

Teachers assess students' learning to gain knowledge of individuals and groups of students in order to plan additional learning. This information is collected through a range of assessments. Teachers have available to them information from large-scale standardised assessments such as the annual literacy and numeracy tests for Years 3, 5, 7 and, 9 (NAPLAN). Analysis of the data can assist planning for teaching and learning and school-based assessment.

The QCATs provide an additional opportunity for teachers to analyse the performance of their students. QSA provides tools and strategies for teachers to analyse their student's responses, and will also provide a retrospective report that will assist teachers to understand trends in the range of students' responses to the QCATs. This information will offer a basis for the development of consistent judgments among teachers and an opportunity to improve teaching and learning in schools.

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