

QSA response to *Year-to-year comparability of results in QSA senior secondary courses that include school-based moderated assessment: An ACACA sponsored review*

The QSA is committed to continually reviewing and improving its policies and procedures for delivering curriculum, assessment, reporting and certification products and services to schools. It is from such a perspective that we welcomed the recent opportunity to assist our colleagues from interstate and overseas — Scott Marion, Bob Peck and Jan Raymond — with reviewing aspects of Queensland’s system of externally moderated school-based assessment in Years 11 and 12. The commendations, affirmations and recommendations in their subsequent report, *Year-to-year comparability of results in QSA senior secondary courses that include school-based moderated assessment: an ACACA sponsored review*, should inspire confidence in the effectiveness of the Queensland system while offering possible opportunities for further refinements.

In brief, the report evaluates the processes used by QSA to ensure within-course and across-year comparability of student achievement in QSA senior subjects. Overall, the reviewers were impressed with our efforts to maintain the quality and comparability of student results and noted that “Queensland has created an internationally respected model of assessment”. In particular they commend:

- the high quality of online and print publications about the Queensland system
- the professional development support and training available to moderation panellists
- the assessment system’s ability to empower teachers and enhance their professional practice
- that student results do not rely on assumptions about what is being measured but on the skills and knowledge students’ demonstrate
- the sophisticated statistical analyses undertaken to support comparability and inform future adjustments to the system
- random sampling of student folios as a useful method for ensuring comparability.

Two of the reviewers’ four observations about how the Queensland system may be improved will require further exploration before the QSA can commit to actioning them. These recommendations relate to the possibility of randomly sampling previous years’ student folios as well as the most recent folios, and providing additional analyses in the annual random sampling report. And while the QSA appreciates the intention behind Recommendation 1, we believe that annual monitoring in Year 11 for all senior secondary schools remains the best way to support the consistent implementation of syllabuses, effective assessment and appropriate judgements by teachers about student achievement. Similarly, in regard to Recommendation 3, we maintain that our moderation processes, data collection, reporting and feedback to panellists are already systematic and sufficiently robust across districts and the state.

The QSA looks forward to assessing the potential of the strategies in Recommendations 2 and 4 as a means to enhancing comparability, and thanks the review team for its observations.