

Background

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

- a common statewide test for Queensland Year 12 students
- an achievement test, not an intelligence test or an aptitude test
- grounded in the Queensland senior curriculum
- accessible to all Year 12 students regardless of individual differences in subject patterns
- a standardised test requiring reading and writing in Australian English.

The Queensland Core Skills Test

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Attendance

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

Table 1: QCS attendance for OP-eligible¹/ineligible students, 2008–2011 (visa students excluded)

Year	Students certificated ²	Eligible	Sat QCS	QCS Exempt		Ineligible who sat	Otherwise eligible but did not sit ³
				Eligible	Ineligible		
2011	46136	25944	28326	503	37	2885	990
2010	44997	25704	28420	453	36	3169	745
2009	43545	25305	28301	397	29	3393	703
2008	41512	25030	27262	563	28	2795	768

Table 2: QCS attendance for visa students⁴ (Equivalent OP-eligible/ineligible), 2008–2011

Year	Students certificated	Eligible	Sat QCS	QCS Exempt		Ineligible who sat	Otherwise eligible but did not sit
				Eligible	Ineligible		
2011	1073	868	892	9	0	33	30
2010	1082	862	892	17	0	47	28
2009	1004	812	845	8	0	41	40
2008	869	679	685	24	1	30	27

¹ “OP-eligible” refers to the status of the student at the end of the year when SEPs are issued.

² The cohort of students considered includes any student who received an SEP at the end of that year

³ Students who, by consideration of subjects studied, would have been OP-eligible but did not sit the QCS Test.

⁴ A visa student is a student who is not a citizen or permanent resident of Australia. They may qualify for an equivalent-OP. Visa students are not included unless indicated.

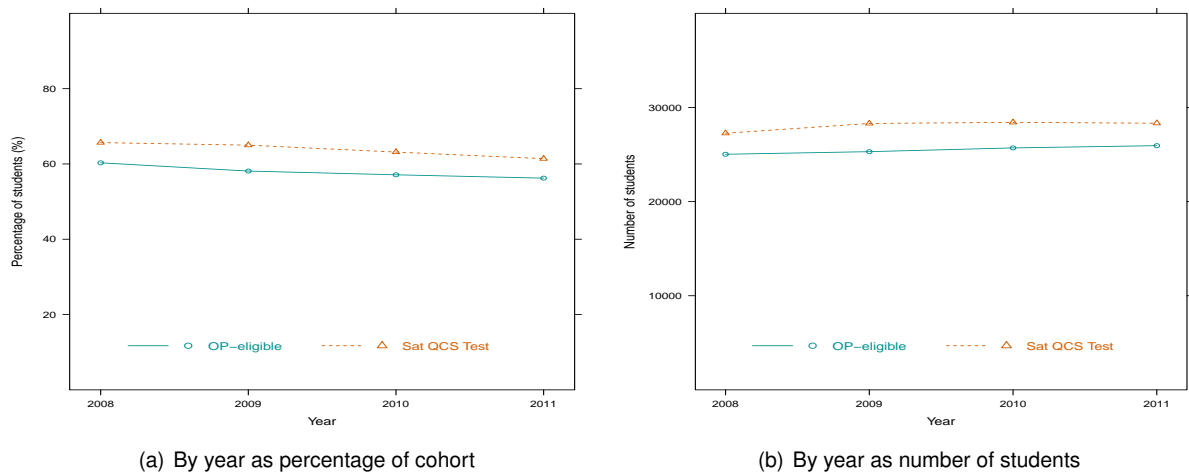
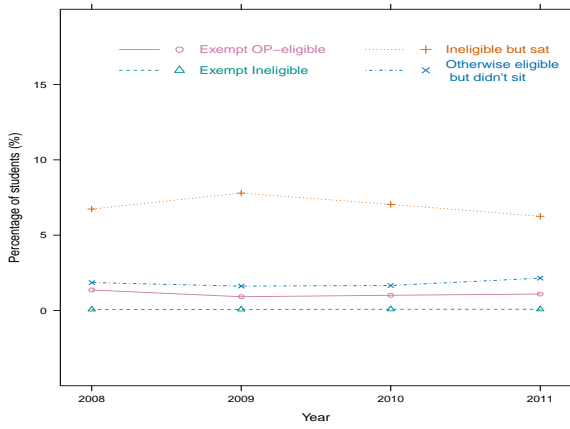
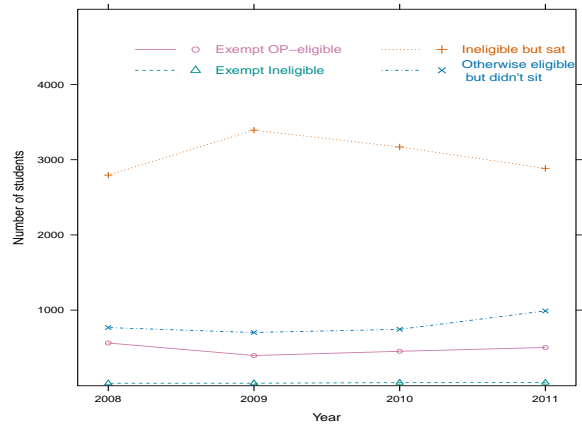


Figure 1: OP-eligible students and students who sat the QCS Test, 2008–2011



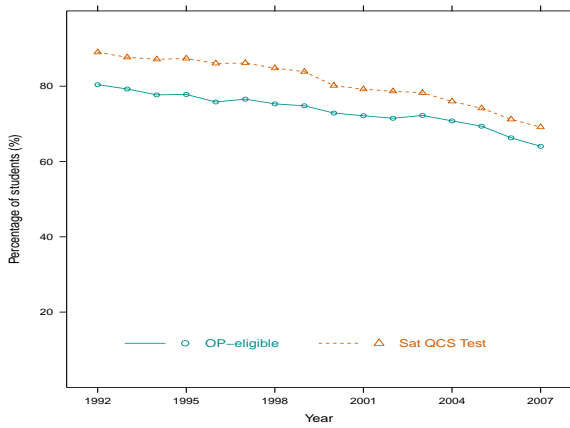
(a) By year as percentage of cohort



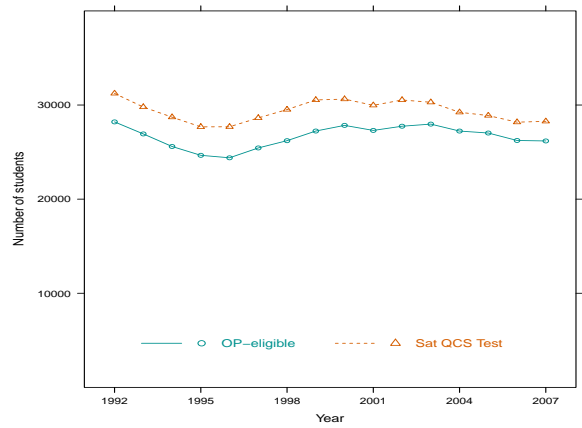
(b) By year as number of students

Figure 2: Exempt and OP-ineligible students, 2008–2011

In the following graphs showing QCS attendance trends for 1992–2007, the cohort includes students eligible for a Queensland Senior Certificate.

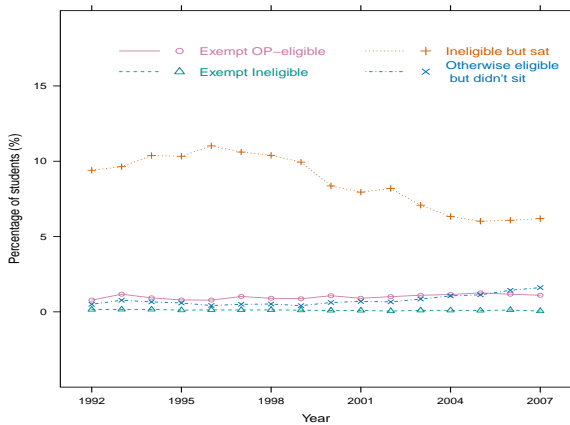


(a) OP-eligible and students who sat the QCS Test

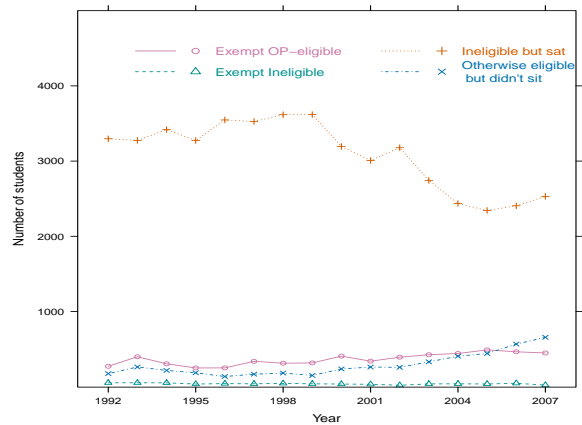


(b) OP-eligible and students who sat the QCS Test

Figure 3: OP-eligible students and students who sat the QCS Test, 1992–2007



(a) By year as percentage of cohort



(b) By year as number of students

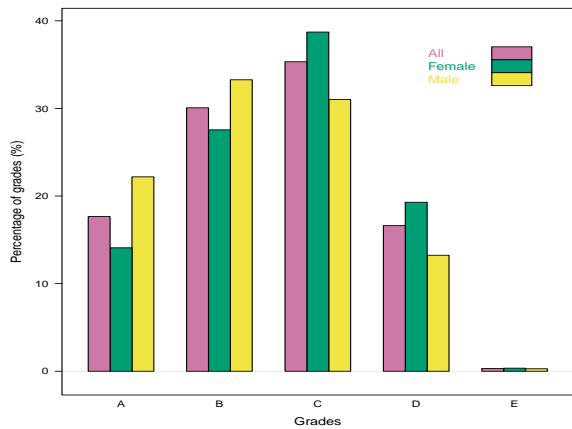
Figure 4: Exempt and OP-ineligible students, 1992–2007

Grades awarded

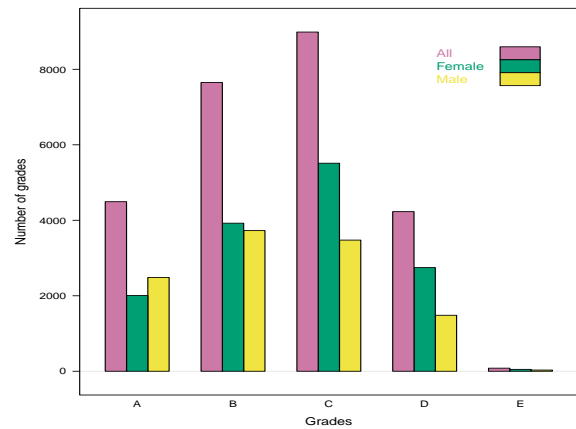
A student's individual QCS Test result is expressed as a grade from A (highest) to E.

Table 3: Numbers of students per QCS grade awarded, by OP-eligibility and gender, 2011

	Gender	A	B	C	D	E	Total	%
OP-eligible	Female	2006	3923	5513	2746	50	14238	56
	Male	2486	3727	3475	1483	32	11203	44
	All	4492	7650	8988	4229	82	25441	
OP-ineligible	Female	46	138	457	829	99	1569	54.4
	Male	73	170	407	576	90	1316	45.6
	All	119	308	864	1405	189	2885	
Equivalent OP-eligible (Visa students)	Female	13	60	116	192	34	415	48.3
	Male	18	50	110	207	59	444	51.7
	All	31	110	226	399	93	859	
Equivalent OP-ineligible (Visa students)	Female	1	2	1	7	6	17	51.5
	Male	0	3	0	10	3	16	48.5
	All	1	5	1	17	9	33	
All students who sat	Female	2066	4123	6087	3774	189	16239	55.6
	Male	2577	3950	3992	2276	184	12979	44.4
	All	4643	8073	10079	6050	373	29218	

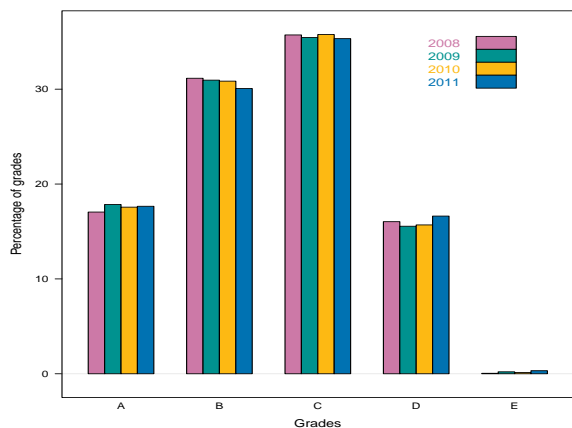


(a) By gender as percentage, 2011

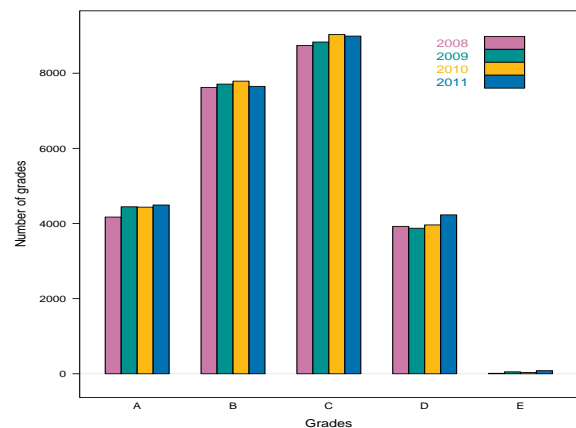


(b) By gender as number of students, 2008–2011

Figure 5: Distribution of QCS grades by gender



(a) By year as percentage, 2011



(b) By year as number of students, 2008–2011

Figure 6: Distribution of QCS grades by year

Contact us

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