

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, 2009–2013 (visa students excluded)

Year	Students certificated ²	Eligible	Sat QCS	QCS Exempt		Ineligible who sat	Otherwise eligible but did not sit ³
				Eligible	Ineligible		
2013	47910	25883	27794	437	0	2348	1448
2012	47181	26233	28365	474	0	2606	1372
2011	46136	25947	28326	503	0	2882	1489
2010	44998	25703	28420	453	0	3170	1195
2009	43545	25305	28301	397	0	3393	1100

Table 2: QCS attendance for visa students⁴ (Equivalent OP-eligible/ineligible), 2009–2013

Year	Students certificated	Eligible	Sat QCS	QCS Exempt		Ineligible who sat	Otherwise eligible but did not sit
				Eligible	Ineligible		
2013	963	728	736	27	0	35	59
2012	1022	790	819	6	0	35	37
2011	1073	868	892	9	0	33	39
2010	1082	862	892	17	0	47	45
2009	1004	812	845	8	0	41	48

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.

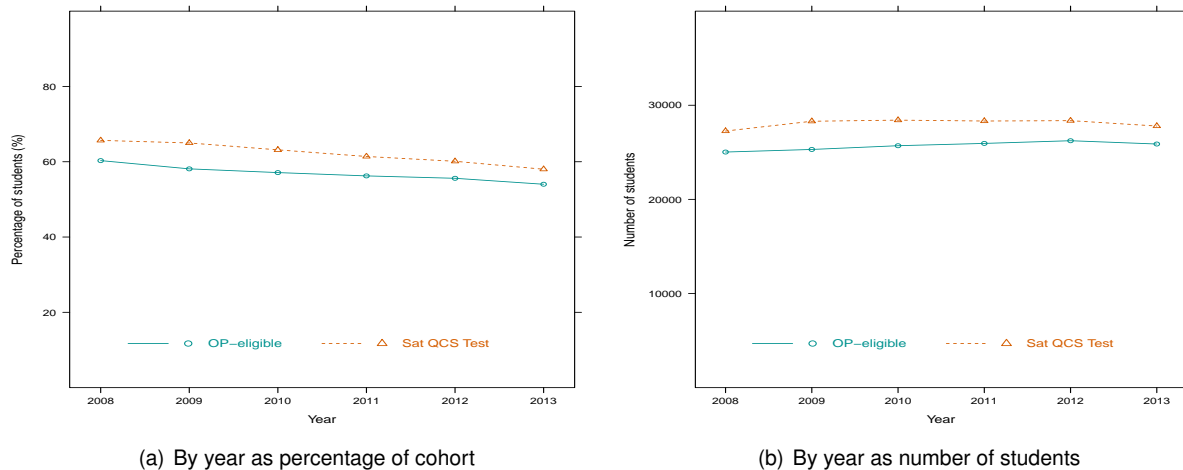
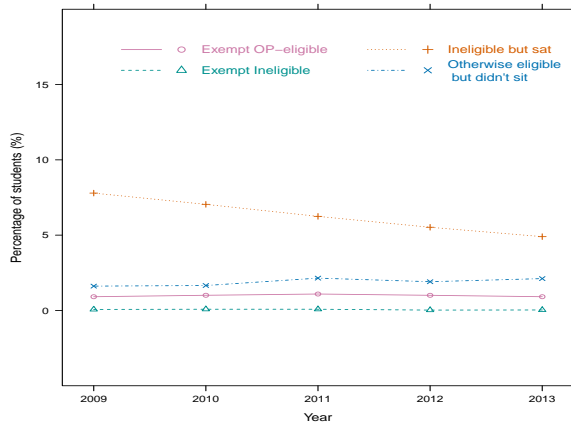
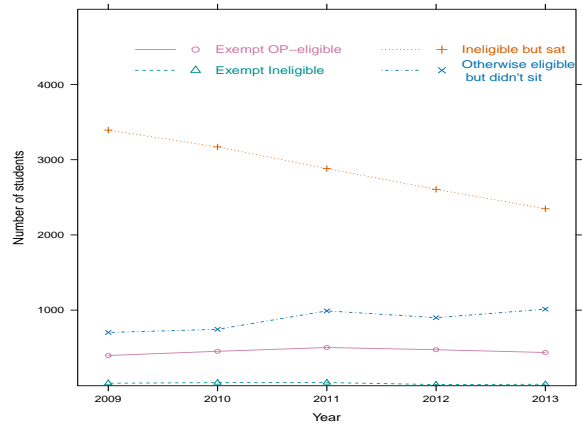


Figure 1: OP-eligible students and students who sat the QCS Test, 2009–2013



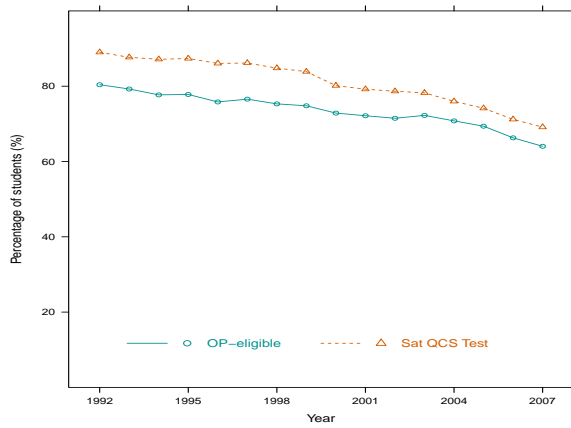
(a) By year as percentage of cohort



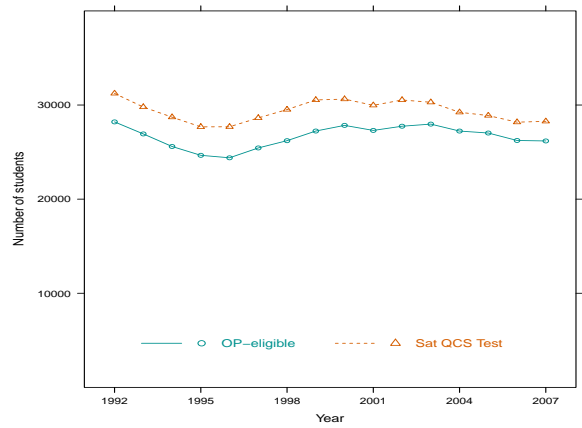
(b) By year as number of students

Figure 2: Exempt and OP-ineligible students, 2009–2013

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

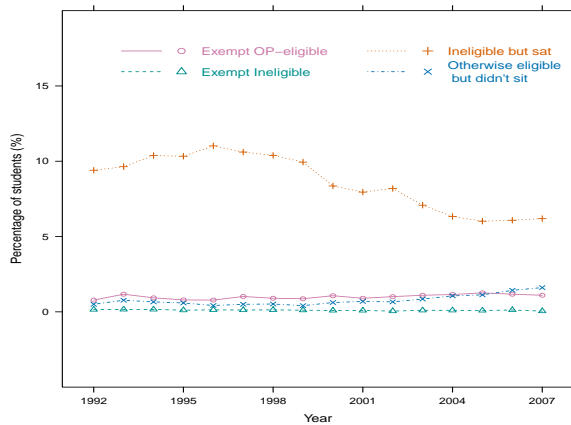


(a) OP-eligible and students who sat the QCS Test

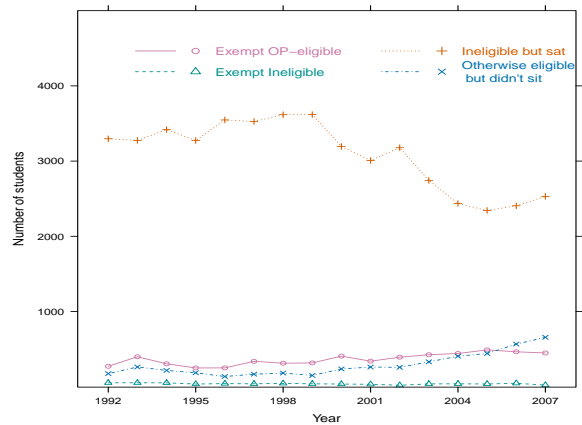


(b) OP-eligible and students who sat the QCS Test

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

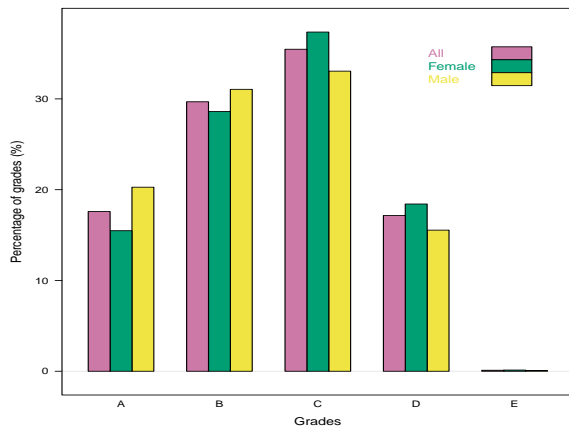
Figure 4: Exempt and OP-ineligible students, 1992–2007

Grades awarded

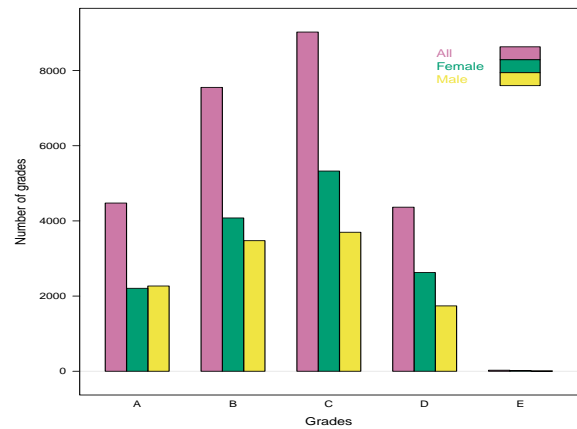
A student's individual QCS Test result is expressed as a grade from A (highest) to E.

Table 3: Numbers of students per QCS grade awarded, by OP-eligibility and gender, 2013

	Gender	A	B	C	D	E	Total	%
OP-eligible	Male	2268	3475	3698	1739	9	11189	44
	Female	2207	4078	5326	2627	19	14257	56
	All	4475	7553	9024	4366	28	25446	
OP-ineligible	Female	71	127	352	658	33	1241	52.9
	Male	78	131	292	568	38	1107	47.1
	All	149	258	644	1226	71	2348	
Equivalent OP-eligible (Visa students)	Female	18	52	111	168	6	355	46.2
	Male	28	45	105	192	43	413	53.8
	All	46	97	216	360	49	768	
Equivalent OP-ineligible (Visa students)	Female	0	1	1	3	4	9	25.7
	Male	0	0	3	16	7	26	74.3
	All	0	1	4	19	11	35	
All students who sat	Female	2296	4258	5790	3456	62	15862	55.5
	Male	2374	3651	4098	2515	97	12735	44.5
	All	4670	7909	9888	5971	159	28597	

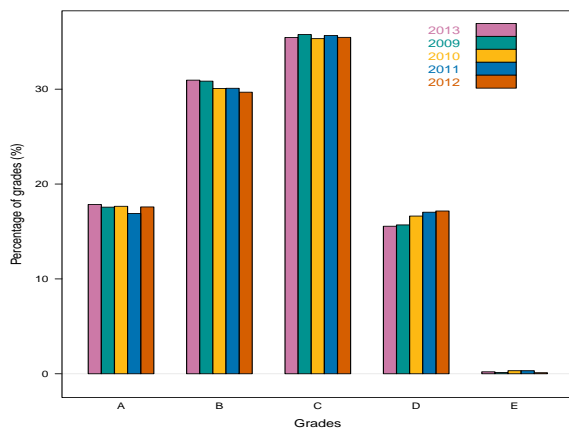


(a) By gender as percentage, 2013

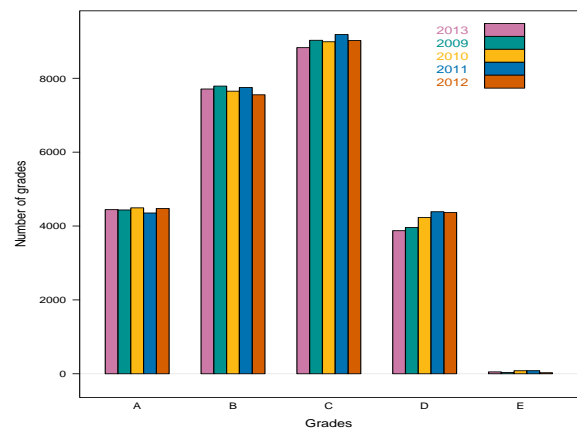


(b) By gender as number of students, 2009–2013

Figure 5: Distribution of QCS grades by gender



(a) By year as percentage, 2013



(b) By year as number of students, 2009–2013

Figure 6: Distribution of QCS grades by year

Contact us

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