

Research Series

Stakeholder feedback on

OPs and tertiary entrance: the



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1: BACKGROUND

As part of the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority's ongoing commitment to the provision of relevant and timely information, the need for an additional resource for parents was identified. The Authority endorsed the Information Team's recommendation that further information regarding tertiary entrance procedures be produced to complement the existing publication *SEP: Facts for parents*. Following on from the success of the most recent TEPA production, *You and the SEP: Partners in staff selection*, it was decided that the most appropriate format for the information would be in the form of a video.

To ensure that all relevant stakeholder groups found the video informative and useful, an evaluation package was included with the resource. It was anticipated that the feedback would allow the information team to identify the existence of any gaps in the material provided and determine whether it was necessary to develop further support materials.

2: THE STUDY

Measures

The questionnaires used in this evaluation were based on information obtained from previous TEPA information resource evaluations and discussions with the Information Team. Questionnaires were specifically developed for guidance officers, parents and students. Appendix A contains an example of the evaluation form which was modified slightly for each of the target groups.

Procedure

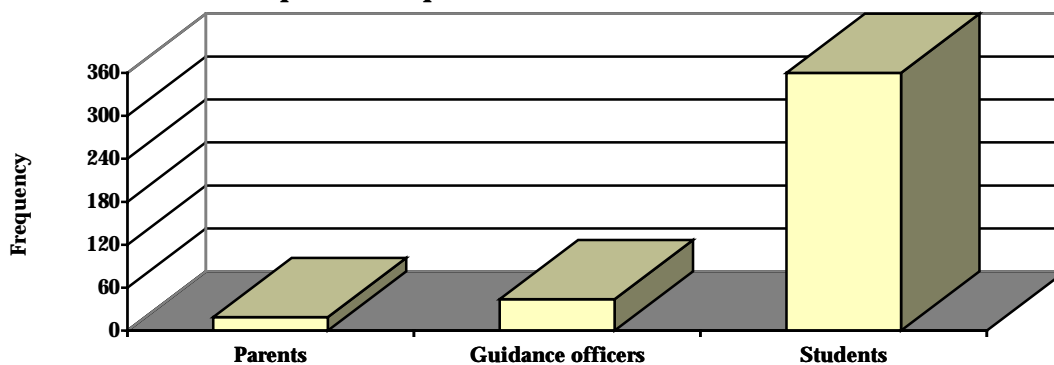
Questionnaires were distributed during early September to all guidance officers at both senior and junior secondary schools throughout the state. Recipients were requested to obtain additional responses from parents and students by photocopying the masters provided and returning the feedback forms in a reply paid envelope at their earliest convenience. All participants were invited to indicate whether they wished to receive feedback about the investigation.

Response rates and sample

Response rates

Response rates varied greatly across target groups, as can be seen from Figure 1. Unfortunately, only 44 of the guidance officers at senior and junior schools chose to respond to the survey. It is apparent that those guidance officers who participated had little difficulty obtaining responses from students, with 360 questionnaires returned from this group. As the majority of parent information meetings had been concluded for the year, it was not surprising that only 19 parent questionnaires were received.

Figure 1. Number of responses to questionnaires.



Students

Of the 360 students who provided feedback, 105 (29%) were male and 247 (67%) were female with eight respondents failing to provide data. The majority of respondents were 17 years old (41%) with fewer aged 15 or less (30%). Twenty-four percent of respondents were 16 and the remainder were aged 18 years or more (5%). As would be expected based on the students’ ages, most respondents were in Year 12 (175: 49%) or Year 10 (109: 31%), with fewer in Year 11 (71: 20%).

Parents

The majority of the 19 parents who provided feedback were female (10: 53%), with only 6 (32%) males and 3(16%) declining to respond. Most (15:79%) had attended a tertiary institution and currently had a child in Year 12 (9:47%).

3: FINDINGS

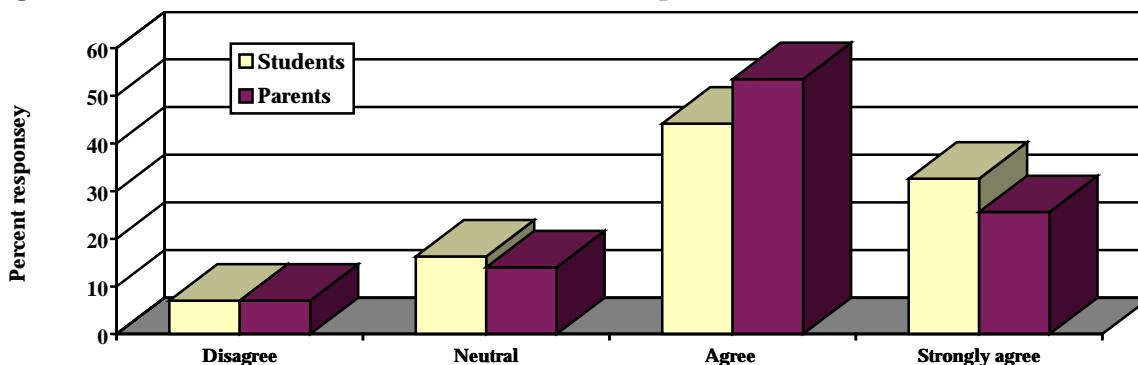


Feedback from guidance officers

Overall perceptions of video

As can be seen in Figure 2, the majority of guidance officers either agreed (44%) or strongly agreed (33%) that they would recommend that all students watch the video. Respondents also indicated they would recommend that all parents watch the video, with 54 percent agreeing and 26 percent strongly agreeing with this statement.

Figure 2. Recommendations that all students and parents view the video.



Guidance officers appeared to value the potential usefulness of the video when communicating tertiary entrance issues to parents, with all respondents indicating that they intended to show the video to parents in the future. Thirty-two per cent of guidance officers also intended to show the video to teachers at their school. When

asked to specify the students to whom they intended to show the video, the majority (31%) felt that it was appropriate for Years 11 and 12. Fewer (24%) felt they would only show it to Year 12 students, while others (17%) believed the video could be used with all appropriate year groups. The variety of responses to this question indicates that guidance officers perceive the information contained in the video to be relevant to almost all students from Year 10 to Year 12. Based on further comments provided by guidance officers, the only factor which may limit the video's usefulness with all student groups was the fact that it did not contain information about alternate pathways for those who are ineligible for an OP (see Appendix A).

Feedback about the content, format and usefulness of the video

Ratings made in relation to specific aspects of *OPs and tertiary entrance: the facts* are detailed in Table 1. On average, guidance officers found the video to be well organised and accurate as indicated by the very positive ratings. Responses in relation to whether the video was interesting and easy to understand were slightly lower but still well within the positive range.

Table 1. Guidance officer ratings of the video's content and format.

	Average rating
Interesting	4.0
Well organised	4.4
Easy to understand	3.8
Accurate	4.4

Note: Ratings were made on a five-point scale with 5 reflecting the most positive response.

As would be expected based on the distribution of the resource late in the year, guidance officers made relatively low ratings when asked whether they had seen the video at the most appropriate time. Guidance officers also appeared to find the video only moderately useful in assisting with student decision making, possibly again reflecting the timing of the resource's distribution.

Table 2. Guidance officer ratings of the usefulness and timing of the video's distribution.

	Average rating
Useful in decision making	3.6
Seen at a time when most needed	3.1

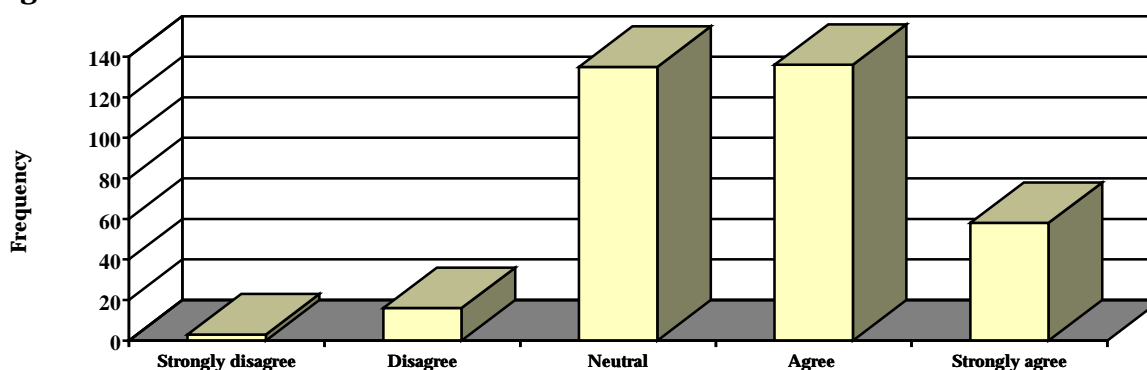
Note: Ratings were made on a five-point scale with 5 reflecting the most positive response.

Feedback from students

The majority of students (39%) agreed or gave a neutral response (39%) when asked whether they would recommend that all students view the video, as shown in Figure 3. Fewer students strongly agreed (17%) or disagreed (5%) with this recommendation. It is possible that the relatively high number of neutral responses may reflect the views of students who were either ineligible for an OP or were unsure whether they would be eligible for an OP in the future. These students who were ineligible or unsure of their eligibility were significantly less likely to recommend that all students watch the video ($F=2.94, p<.05$). While this resource

was not primarily intended for students, this pattern of responses may have resulted from a lack of alternative pathway information in the video.

Figure 3. Recommendations that all students view the video.



As can be seen from Table 3, on average, students agreed that the video was accurate, well organised and easy to understand, with slightly lower ratings made in relation to whether the video was interesting. Based on further analysis, it appears to be the case that the OP-eligibility and year group were factors which significantly influenced student responses. Interestingly, students who were ineligible or unsure whether they would be eligible for an OP were less likely to rate the video as accurate when compared to other students ($F=5.5, p<.01$). This again may reflect a perception that the video was less than accurate as it did not contain pathways information which would be relevant to this group of students.

Table 3. Student ratings of the video's content and format.

	Average rating
Interesting	3.4
Well organised	3.9
Easy to understand	3.6
Accurate	3.9

Note: Ratings were made on a five-point scale with 5 reflecting the most positive response.

Again, as the video was distributed to schools towards the end of the year, on average students gave low positive ratings with regard to the usefulness of the video and whether it was seen at the most relevant time, as can be seen from Table 4. Responses to these questions significantly differed according to the students' year groups. Students in Year 10 were significantly more likely to agree that the video was useful in decision making ($F=7.48, p<.01$) than those who were in Year 11 or 12. This would be expected given that much of the information contained in the resource would have already been communicated to those students who were currently in the final years of their senior schooling.

It is also not unexpected that students in Year 12 were significantly less likely than other year groups to report that they viewed the video at the most relevant time ($F=7.36, p<.05$). At the time of year that the resource was distributed, the majority of Year 12 students would have personally experienced almost all the events covered by the video and many may have found the information redundant.

Table 4. Student ratings of the usefulness and timing of the video's distribution.

	Average rating
Useful in decision making	3.3

Seen at a time when most needed	3.0
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Note: Ratings were made on a five-point scale with 5 reflecting the most positive response.

Students were also specifically requested to comment on what they perceived to be the 'best' and 'worst' aspects of the video. Overall, students appeared to find the video useful, informative, clear and easy to understand, reflecting the positive ratings earlier in the survey as shown in Table 5. Many students valued the explanation of OPs, FPs and the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test and the fact the all the information was directly relevant to students.

Table 5. Positive perceptions of the video

	Frequency
Useful and informative	96
Clear and easy to understand	61
Explanation of OPs, FPs and the QCS Test	58
Relevant to students	23
Other	27
Interesting, well organised and an appropriate length	19
Informative about tertiary matters	15
Useful analogies and diagrams	15
Accurate	13
Good host	12

Note: Students made comments relevant to more than one category.

When asked to comment on the negative aspects of the video many students indicated that it was uninteresting which may reflect the opinion of the many Year 12 students who had already covered the majority of the information. Other feedback related to the perception that the video was confusing, the distribution was poorly timed and the pacing appeared to be too fast. A number of students also made suggestions including the need for more explicit definitions of acronyms and requests for 'real' students to present some of the information.

Table 6. Negative perceptions of the video

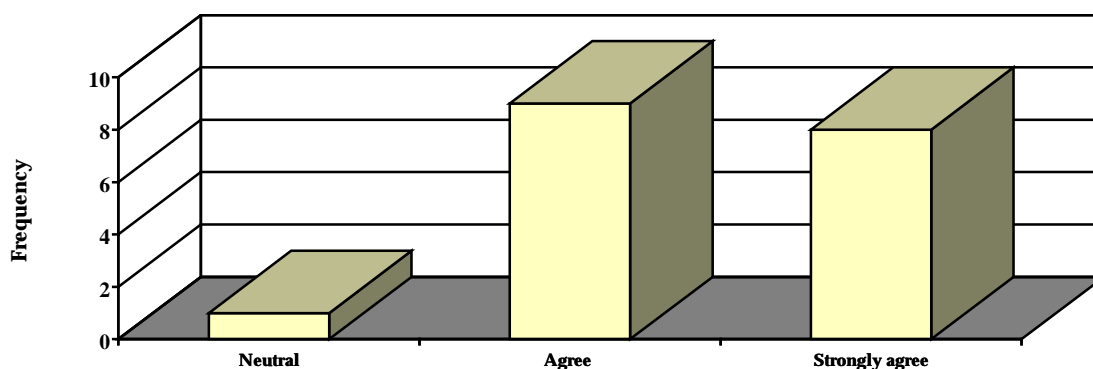
	Frequency
Uninteresting	67
Confusing	53
Timing of distribution	44
Suggestions about additional information	39
Pacing was too fast	35
Other	22
Poor host	22
No negative aspects	18
Production and presentation	15

Note: Students made comments relevant to more than one category.

Feedback from parents

Due to the small number of responses obtained from parents, the conclusions which can be drawn from this data are limited. Those who watched *OPs and tertiary entrance: the facts* for the most part either agreed (50%) or strongly agreed (44%) that they would recommend that all parents view the video.

Figure 4. Recommendations that all parents view the video.



Ratings with regard to the content and format were very positive with most parents indicating that the video was interesting, accurate and well organised. Slightly lower, but still positive, ratings were made in relation to the ease of understanding of the video. Comments made by parents highlighted the perception that the video was comprehensive and provided a thorough explanation of the tertiary entrance process (see Appendix C). As was the case with students, many parents also suggested that further explanation of acronyms and analogies would be helpful.

Table 7. Parent ratings of the video's content and format.

	Average rating
Interesting	4.2
Well organised	4.1
Easy to understand	3.6
Accurate	4.2

Note: Ratings were made on a five-point scale with 5 reflecting the most positive response.

Despite the fact that the video was provided to schools too late to be of use at most community and information meetings held in 1997, respondents indicated that the it was both useful in decision making and seen at a time when most needed.

Table 8. Parent ratings of the usefulness and timing of the video's distribution.

	Average rating
Useful in decision making	4.0
Seen at a time when most needed	4.0

Note: Ratings were made on a five-point scale with 5 reflecting the most positive response.

4: RECOMMENDATIONS

While some valuable feedback about the use of *OPs and tertiary entrance: the facts* was obtained as part of this evaluation, the timing of the resource's distribution appears to have markedly influenced the results. Based on the current findings, there are a number of courses of action which could be pursued.

1. Feedback from guidance officers and students indicates that supplementary notes need to be provided with the video. Video presentation notes would outline for guidance officers and careers advisers the most appropriate places at which to stop the video and topics for discussion with students and parents.
2. Based on the pattern of responses for OP-ineligible students and feedback from guidance officers, it appears to be timely to investigate producing a resource which provides specific information for those who wish to pursue alternative tertiary entrance pathways.
3. It would be worthwhile to send feedback forms to schools which did not respond to the initial survey prior to parent and information meetings in 1998. This further evaluation, at a more appropriate time, would provide a more accurate insight into stakeholder perceptions of the resource and would also assist with determining whether the video presentations notes were useful.
4. As part of the acquisition of additional feedback, guidance officers will be specifically asked to obtain comments from parents. The earlier distribution of feedback forms will ensure that guidance officers are in a position to access this target group in 1998.

Appendix A



OPs and tertiary entrance: the facts Feedback form

ID

All information provided in this questionnaire will be treated in the strictest confidence. TEPA guarantees your anonymity in the conduct and reporting of this survey.

For each of the following questions, please circle one number.

1. Overall the video was...

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Interesting	1	2	3	4	5
Well organised	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to understand	1	2	3	4	5
Accurate	1	2	3	4	5
Useful in decision making	1	2	3	4	5
Seen when I most needed the information	1	2	3	4	5
I recommend that all parents watch this video	1	2	3	4	5

2. The best thing about the video was... *(Please make any additional comments on reverse)*

3. The worst thing about the video was... *(Please make any additional comments on reverse)*

To help TEPA better understand your responses, please answer the following questions about yourself.

4. Current occupation: _____

5. Sex: Male/Female 6. Age: _____ 7. Postcode: _____

8. Have you ever attended university or TAFE? *(Please circle one)* YES NO

9. My son/daughter is in *(Please circle one)* Year 10 Year 11 Year 12 Other

If you would like to receive feedback about the results of this research or be placed on TEPA's research mailing list, please fill in the following section:

Name: _____

Address: _____

I would like to receive feedback about the research *(Please circle one)* YES NO

I would like to be placed on TEPA's research mailing list *(Please circle one)* YES NO

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

Appendix B

Guidance officer comments

Positive aspects of the video

Comprehensive

- ◆ Covers important points.
- ◆ Covered most aspects of SEP/QTAC procedures.
- ◆ It followed through the process from the Core Skills Test to applying and dealing with an offer. I found it also helped to clarify my understanding as I am relatively new in the field.
- ◆ Plenty of facts/information. Covered a large range of information.
- ◆ It addresses all issues relating to tertiary entrance.
- ◆ This video explained the terminology and process of the Year 12 transition to tertiary level extremely well.
- ◆ It's comprehensive. I liked the inclusion of SEP information, QCS info and QTAC procedures & Pathways. I think all important information was included.
- ◆ Range of content.
- ◆ Up to date. Interesting and informative.
- ◆ Has the necessary information.
- ◆ Comprehensive. Attention to detail.
- ◆ Covered all the basics; before during and after application.
- ◆ The information is all present. I would use this video as a centrepiece and expand/elaborate on several crucial points discussed.

Use of diagrams and analogies

- ◆ Use of tennis ranking analogy helps explain calculation of OP. SAI illustration was also effective.
- ◆ Visual images and presentation of a difficult topic.
- ◆ Graphically well organised. Tennis metaphor understandable for parents and students.
- ◆ Good tennis analogy.
- ◆ Graphics.

Information clear and easy to understand

- ◆ Ease of explaining a complex issue.
- ◆ To the point/uncomplicated.
- ◆ Easy to watch and hear. Section on QTAC processes was excellent.
- ◆ Easy to listen to; examples given were easy to understand; good info on QTAC for Year 12s.
- ◆ The information was clear with verbal statements and then given illustration, e.g. Senior Certificate.
- ◆ Clear explanation of school process-Board and OPs.
- ◆ Explanation re SAIs and scaling was clear and visually helpful. Also useful to see the sequence of events September to January.
- ◆ Easy to listen to and because I know the information it all made sense.
- ◆ Contents are explained in a format which should allow students and interested parents to easily understand the processes involved.

Presentation and production

- ◆ Well known newsreader as central character.
- ◆ Mr Page is a good presenter.
- ◆ Familiar personality.
- ◆ Information presented by someone else other than those known to students.

- ◆ Well made-good picture quality, well organised in terms of material, good presenter.
- ◆ Professional presentation, Bruce Paige-very good.
- ◆ Presentation.
- ◆ Professional delivery-Bruce Paige is very good.
- ◆ Presented information of largely a technical nature in a relatively interesting way.
- ◆ Was useful to have a different format to explain to students and parents the tertiary entrance process/procedures.
- ◆ Professional presentation and production.
- ◆ Presentation.

Succinct and informative

- ◆ Informative in a short amount of time.
- ◆ Section on SAs and Core Skills Test-Good to have a concise summary that should clear up many of the myths perpetuated by students despite receiving TEPA publications.
- ◆ Succinct and to the point.
- ◆ The whole process was summarised succinctly. Up to date information.
- ◆ Short and comprehensive.
- ◆ Its brevity and simplicity.
- ◆ Clear and concise and provided a uniform message to all.

Other

- ◆ How OPs are used.
- ◆ The first ten minutes would be good for a Year 10 parent night, the whole video would be good for Year 11 and the last five minutes for Year 12.
- ◆ Actually came at a time when I needed to talk to Years 11 and 12. It kept their attention well.
- ◆ Optimistic especially in stating that there is a variety of pathways to careers.
- ◆ Awareness of documents, familiarises audience with basic concepts and procedures.

Suggestions for additional information provision

- ◆ Is there going to be a video “Ranks and tertiary entrance” or should it be included in this video?
- ◆ It had little relevance for non-tertiary bound students and their parents. This is a major consideration in remote western areas where only 30% of students, if that, are interested in tertiary courses.
- ◆ No students were interviewed. I think some interviews re alternative pathways/back-up options would have been very helpful. Bruce Paige made mention of them, but did not offer any details or examples. I believe parents would want that.
- ◆ Perhaps further explanations and examples re OP calculations and QTAC acceptance procedures etc.
- ◆ Maybe a little more on QTAC application/acceptance/rejection.
- ◆ FPs glossed over and not explained what they are and their weightings is confusing when juxtaposed against non-weighted subjects for OPs.
- ◆ Probably require parts to have done preliminary reading or to have some hands-on material available on the night. Should comment that anomalies are perceived due to better students choosing certain subjects.
- ◆ Perhaps a brief summing up after each segment may be more worthwhile.
- ◆ The other thing I’d add to the video is something on how to organise their preferences. We constantly reiterate the option for non-OP-eligible students. Particularly as many unis have courses they can apply for. The Principals who say you need an OP for tertiary study have only just learnt that that’s not so. They say you need an OP for uni. But that’s not so either.
- ◆ A number of Guidance Officers have serious concerns about the QTAC phone system. We cannot help some young people who genuinely need extra support because we do not know

who has or has not applied! Some schools, students, homes do not have access to the 0055 facility!

- ◆ QTAC book should be in schools start June.
- ◆ QTAC phones should give start August latest.
- ◆ QTAC should send fortnightly updates of applicants.
- ◆ QTAC should provide info on changes to OP cut-offs over past years.

Negative aspects of the video

Boring

- ◆ Needed variety of speakers-monotonous.
- ◆ Personal opinion-presenter is clear but uninspiring.
- ◆ Boring/talking heads approach. Use of graphics/pictures would be better.
- ◆ Presentation: very dry, lacked interest, focusing devices, lacked imagination.

Jargon and technical terms

- ◆ May be difficult for viewers who are not familiar with the process to understand all the terms and procedures.
- ◆ Too much jargon for parents and students.
- ◆ No real problems. Sometimes the language can go over parents' heads but it is hard to avoid using educational language in a video like this.
- ◆ Needed more visuals, e.g. examples flashed on screen; too technical-hardly mentioned OPs-used tertiary statement. Students identify with OP.
- ◆ More detail on how overall achievement indicator (OAI) is calculated; when technical term is used for the first time display as a 'caption' on screen.
- ◆ Perhaps SAIs needed to be stated a little more clearly. Several students weren't aware of what they stood for.
- ◆ I still haven't seen an easy way to explain the scaling process. Still, Bruce's effort was as good as I have seen so far.

Timing of video distribution

- ◆ Video needed beginning term 3 end term 2 for me.
- ◆ Unfortunately, this video arrived one day after my 'QTAC night' for students and parents. It would have been an excellent educational resource and discussion-stimulation at such an evening. Consequently, I'd appreciate receiving any updated versions in August.
- ◆ The timing that schools get this issue.
- ◆ That it arrived after this topic was covered in our school in 1997 but should be very useful from 1998 on.

Production and presentation

- ◆ Bruce Paige may not be the most suitable commentator.
- ◆ Poor picture quality.
- ◆ One person spoke throughout-variety of voices needed.
- ◆ Too much dialogue-diagrammatic form would be better - perhaps with voice overs.
- ◆ Would prefer more 'graphical' representation. Too much 'talk' at.

Information quantity and speed of presentation

- ◆ Students seem to be overwhelmed by info.
- ◆ A lot of information in a short time.
- ◆ However in doing this [presenting a large range of information] it meant the video was crammed with probably too much information in too short a time. A half hour or 25 minute video may have been better.

- ◆ Perhaps it was too much info in this short space of time, for parents.
- ◆ The video was very easy for me to follow and understand, however, I think it would require further explanation and discussion when presented to parents (certainly!) and students (perhaps).
- ◆ Very good at the start, got lost during the middle. Still too complex.
- ◆ The audience is lost because it tries to present some complex issues too quickly.
- ◆ Still a lot of information/detail, to absorb in one hunk.
- ◆ Too much information delivered too quickly.
- ◆ It's a good overall coverage of vital material but would be overload if played straight through for classes under Year 12. Would need intermittent discussion. Opening few minutes are weaker than the main body of the content.
- ◆ Presents too much too fast.
- ◆ Would appeal more to adults than to students (v. formal presentation); a lot of info in a very short period of time (seemed so fast it would be difficult even to pause especially in the segment dealing with OPs/FPs).

Other

- ◆ Entry to university details were disjointed. Information was given at the beginning and end of the video.
- ◆ Consider using video time out, space for class discussion at appropriate points-making a class video different from a parent evening video.
- ◆ Whilst certainly a useful resource for helping to explain the details of how tertiary entrance procedures work, I feel that a video (produced by BSSSS a few years ago) is a more concise, easier to understand explanation for students and parents.
- ◆ Prefer original video released on this topic.
- ◆ The suggestion that students would need to check that what was on the QTAC acknowledgment was on the 0055 telephone service. This is unclear and suggests that students should pay for another phone call after receiving their acknowledgment. The sentence could be better worded.
- ◆ I would prefer to show the old "Tertiary Entrance It's no Drama" in preference to the new one. It shows students talking to students and illustrates OPs/FPs exceptionally well. Students understand how quotas work and the part played by FPs at the margins.
- ◆ Let's see some lower socio-economic schools represented here.
- ◆ The explanation of SAI and scaling the QCS Test to get OPs is always difficult.
- ◆ Girl on telephone-poor acting; wasn't long enough.

Appendix C

Parent comments

Positive aspects of the video

Comprehensive

- ◆ Fairly comprehensive.
- ◆ Gave an overall picture of the process and how all the different 'scores' tied in together; contained all the necessary information.
- ◆ The video has made me fully understand the whole process. I have attended several presentations and picked up various information but the video has given me an overall picture of what actually happens in stages.

Informative

- ◆ The tennis ranking analogy.
- ◆ Up-to-date.
- ◆ Showing the cross section of work fields and subjects.
- ◆ A good explanation and would encourage a presentation to P & F meetings and community groups to assist in understandings and support.
- ◆ Good tennis analogy.
- ◆ The information provided how OPs are obtained. The difference between OPs and Field subjects and the effect of the CST on the overall performance of the school.
- ◆ The explanation of all the terms used.
- ◆ Information was relevant and to the point with no 'waffling' (seeing Curly Hawkins on video).
- ◆ Information was clear and concise.
- ◆ Gave the information clearly, and sequentially and in a relaxed manner.
- ◆ It clarified several issues.
- ◆ Use of examples, graphs/diagrams aided. Understanding.
- ◆ The attempt to explain the factors which contribute to tertiary entry.

Video format

- ◆ Great deal of info without having to read it all.
- ◆ The fact that the info is available on video.

Production and presentation

- ◆ It was professionally made and presented.
- ◆ Venue was excellent.
- ◆ Well organised-presented.
- ◆ Very well narrated; very clearly detailed.
- ◆ Voice clear, easily understood.

Negative aspects of the video

Analogies and acronyms

- ◆ Analogy to Sport!!
- ◆ Use of Acronyms. Use of tennis as a comparison a poor choice.
- ◆ Some of the language. "Pre-requisites, ranking, acronyms SAI, OP, QTAC". How does the school QCS result influence the student's OP?
- ◆ A lot of abbreviated terms used-it was hard to remember what abbreviated terms stood for. It would've been helpful to see on the screen terms and abbreviations as it is much easier to remember something seen, not just heard.

- ◆ Tennis segment.

Confusing

- ◆ If you did not understand the process or have read any material prior I feel that you would not understand half of what was said.
- ◆ More diagrams required. Very 'wordy'.
- ◆ Confusing at times. Have found current video more helpful.
- ◆ The explanation of how the QCS results related to the students results. This sounded terribly complex and I'm sure that it isn't.
- ◆ Information overload-would need to be watched more than once for someone who knows little about the process.

Pacing and presentation

- ◆ Commentator boring.
- ◆ Too much information in 15 minutes.
- ◆ Fast. Pauses needed between each part. Too fast where tennis and then subject results core skills graph put together.
- ◆ Speaker often too far from camera.
- ◆ Too much too fast. Not enough explanation.
- ◆ Covered a lot of ground perhaps with no knowledge a little baffling.
- ◆ Perhaps slightly too compacted.
- ◆ Bruce Paige.
- ◆ The over-complex shots of the narrator. If he had been in a studio with some graphics to work with it would have been less distracting. I would need to watch the video twice.

Suggestions

- ◆ Needs an extra flow chart.
- ◆ Clear sections-Certificate, Tertiary Statement; QTAC; Results and what to do; particular subject requirements.
- ◆ Would have liked more diagrams.
- ◆ There was no information for students who apply interstate as well as within the state. Do they get two offers?