

Subject report: Endorsement

Legal Studies — 2026 cohort

This resource identifies strengths and opportunities to improve the development and submission of internal assessment instruments for Legal Studies (General subject and alternative sequence (AS)). Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, [Section 9.5](#).

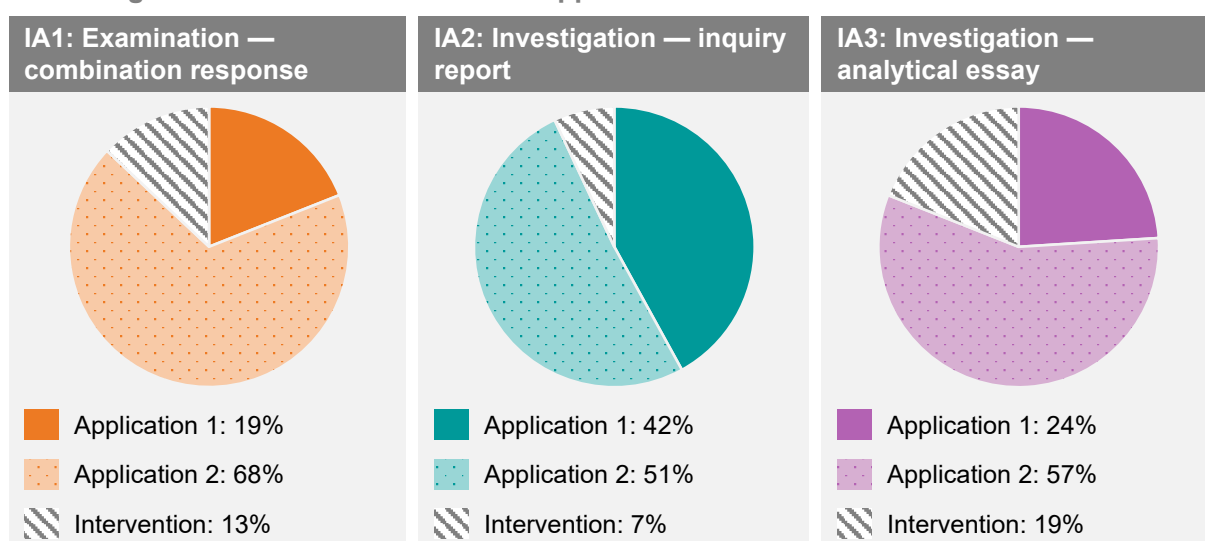
Summary of endorsement for the 2026 cohort

Number of internal assessment (IA) instruments submitted for endorsement

IA1	IA2	IA3
343	342	340

Note: Number of instruments may vary due to changes in schools offering the subject after the endorsement process started.

Percentage of instruments endorsed at Applications 1 and 2



Note: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

Validity: Reasons for non-endorsement at Application 1 by assessment priority

IA1	IA2	IA3
Alignment: 248	Alignment: 172	Alignment: 245
Authentication: 0	Authentication: 3	Authentication: 4
Authenticity: 28	Authenticity: 36	Authenticity: 40
Item construction: 57	Item construction: 19	Item construction: 24
Scope and scale: 50	Scope and scale: 5	Scope and scale: 7

Accessibility: Reasons for non-endorsement at Application 1 by assessment priority

IA1	IA2	IA3
Bias avoidance: 9	Bias avoidance: 3	Bias avoidance: 3
Language: 20	Language: 8	Language: 3
Layout: 22	Layout: 3	Layout: 0
Transparency: 26	Transparency: 14	Transparency: 21

Note: A priority may be identified more than once in the endorsement decision for an assessment instrument.

Advice for assessment design

Endorsement is the quality assurance process based on the attributes of validity and accessibility. The following advice is based on the endorsement process for the 2026 completion year. In acknowledging effective practices and areas for refinement, it offers schools timely and evidence-based guidance to further develop valid and accessible assessment.

■ IA1: Examination — combination response (25%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when they:

- included a range of short response questions that focused on legal concepts, principles and processes of both Australian and Queensland governance, e.g. 'Explain the difference between the Queensland and Australian parliaments' allows students to demonstrate comprehension of unicameral and bicameral parliaments and their relevant applications in both State and Federal governance. Conversely, 'Explain the difference between a bicameral and unicameral parliament' does not provide direction to refer to State and Federal governance (**item construction**)
- provided an extended response question without additional description or details that would lead students to the nature and scope of the issue and possible viewpoints (**bias avoidance**)
- included multiple viewpoints in the stimulus design to allow students to analyse different viewpoints from the stimulus under examination conditions (**item construction**)
- included a variety of stimulus items by way of graphs, images and/or political cartoons (**scope and scale**).

Practices to strengthen

Schools can improve the validity and accessibility of assessment instruments by:

- explicitly directing students to analyse two different viewpoints and their consequences. The most common directive to schools focused on the missing reference to viewpoints and consequences in the task instructions (**alignment**)
- using the correct terminology from the 2025 syllabus and AS resource, e.g. 'a recommendation' has replaced the term 'decision' (**alignment**)
- ensuring the extended response question clearly identifies the legal issue for which the question and stimulus have been designed. Students are assessed on their ability to analyse, not to select or determine a legal issue (**item construction**)
- ensuring there are no references to word count, as this is no longer part of the IA1 specifications (**alignment**).

■ IA2: Investigation — inquiry report (25%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when they:

- included relevant and engaging contemporary legal issues in Australian and/or Queensland legal reform contexts, which enabled meaningful student inquiry (**alignment**)
- provided clear context statements and task topics for students to research and engage with (**transparency**).

Practices to strengthen

Schools can improve the validity and accessibility of assessment instruments by:

- ensuring task wording explicitly mirrors the language of each assessment objective, e.g. directs students to determine the nature and scope of the issue, examine viewpoints and their consequences, present legal alternatives, justify a recommendation using legal criteria and discuss implications (**alignment**)
- explicitly requiring students to refer to legislation and/or case law, and to locate and select relevant legal information from both primary and secondary legal sources in alignment with syllabus specifications (**item construction**)
- avoiding legal issues and topics that have already been reformed. It is important that updates and current reforms are checked before submission. Topics such as youth crime and coercive control have been reformed recently and may not currently meet the task specifications. Task topics must focus on a clearly defined legal reform issue that aligns with syllabus specifications, ensuring students can effectively analyse legal alternatives and make informed recommendations (**alignment**).

■ IA3: Investigation — analytical essay (25%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when:

- task specifications were aligned with the 2025 syllabus for an analytical investigation and did not use argumentative wording such as ‘to what extent’ or leading statements and predetermined positions such as ‘to improve outcomes for’ (**alignment**)
- the context statement provided guiding themes to introduce the topic and was designed to help students connect legal concepts to real-world human rights challenges (**bias avoidance**)
- the task maintained an international human rights focus connected to Australia’s legal response rather than domestic governance issues, Australian policies or legislative compliance with no reference to international contexts or human rights (**alignment**).

Practices to strengthen

Schools can improve the validity and accessibility of assessment instruments by:

- focusing on a contemporary international human rights issue and Australia’s legal response to that issue, rather than focusing on an international obligation or treaty (**alignment**)
- avoiding inclusion of unnecessary duplication of assessment objectives, instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG) language and task instructions, which creates repetition and reduces the clarity of instructions for students (**transparency**)
- using appropriate wording to prompt a balanced investigation for the analytical essay that aligns with the assessment objectives (**alignment**).

Additional advice

- For schools delivering the AS, the advice about the specifications and application of the assessment objectives and assessment expectations can be applied as advised above. It is recommended that schools carefully check the content alignment for the sequence year.
- While an open-ended task that allows students to choose their own topic for IA2 may be used, teachers should monitor the topic choice closely to ensure the law reform issue allows students to achieve across all performance levels of the ISMG.
- Before submitting an instrument, check the formatting using the Print preview function in the Endorsement application (app). This helps ensure assessment instruments are well presented with appropriate page breaks and other formatting features. This would be particularly helpful for IA1 tasks.
- If an instrument is not endorsed at Application 1, consider consulting with the lead endorser before submitting the revised instrument at Application 2. These consultations are supportive and provide feedback to school communities to strengthen the endorsement process.



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