Modern History subject report

2023 cohort

January 2024

Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority
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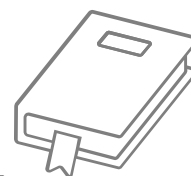Email: office@qcaa.qld.edu.au
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Contents

Introduction

Throughout 2023, schools and the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) continued to improve outcomes for students in the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) system. These efforts were consolidated by the cumulative experience in teaching, learning and assessment of the current General and General (Extension) senior syllabuses, and school engagement in QCAA endorsement and confirmation processes and external assessment marking. The current evaluation of the QCE system will further enhance understanding of the summative assessment cycle and will inform future QCAA subject reports.

The annual subject reports seek to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement of internal and external assessment processes for all Queensland schools. The 2023 subject report is the culmination of the partnership between schools and the QCAA. It addresses school-based assessment design and judgments, and student responses to external assessment for this subject. In acknowledging effective practices and areas for refinement, it offers schools timely and evidence-based guidance to further develop student learning and assessment experiences for 2024.

The report also includes information about:

- how schools have applied syllabus objectives in the design and marking of internal assessments
- how syllabus objectives have been applied in the marking of external assessments
- patterns of student achievement.

The report promotes continuous improvement by:

- identifying effective practices in the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessments
- recommending where and how to enhance the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessment instruments
- providing examples that demonstrate best practice.

Schools are encouraged to reflect on the effective practices identified for each assessment, consider the recommendations to strengthen assessment design and explore the authentic student work samples provided.

Audience and use

This report should be read by school leaders, subject leaders and teachers to:

- inform teaching and learning and assessment preparation
- assist in assessment design practice
- assist in making assessment decisions
- help prepare students for internal and external assessment.

The report is publicly available to promote transparency and accountability. Students, parents, community members and other education stakeholders can use it to learn about the assessment practices and outcomes for senior subjects.

Report preparation

The report includes analyses of data and other information from endorsement, confirmation and external assessment processes. It also includes advice from the chief confirmer, chief endorser and chief marker, developed in consultation with and support from QCAA subject matter experts.

Subject highlights

327
schools offered
Modern History

88.31%
of students
completed
4 units

97.47%
of students
received a C
or higher

Subject data summary
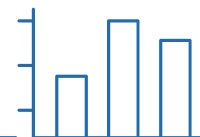
Subject completion

The following data includes students who completed the General subject or Alternative Sequence (AS).

Note: All data is correct as at January 2024. Where percentages are provided, these are rounded to two decimal places and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

Number of schools that offered Modern History: 327.

Completion of units	Unit 1	Unit 2	Units 3 and 4
Number of students completed	5,781	5,576	5,105

Units 1 and 2 results

Number of students	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Unit 1	5,260	521
Unit 2	5,204	372

Units 3 and 4 internal assessment (IA) results

Total marks for IA
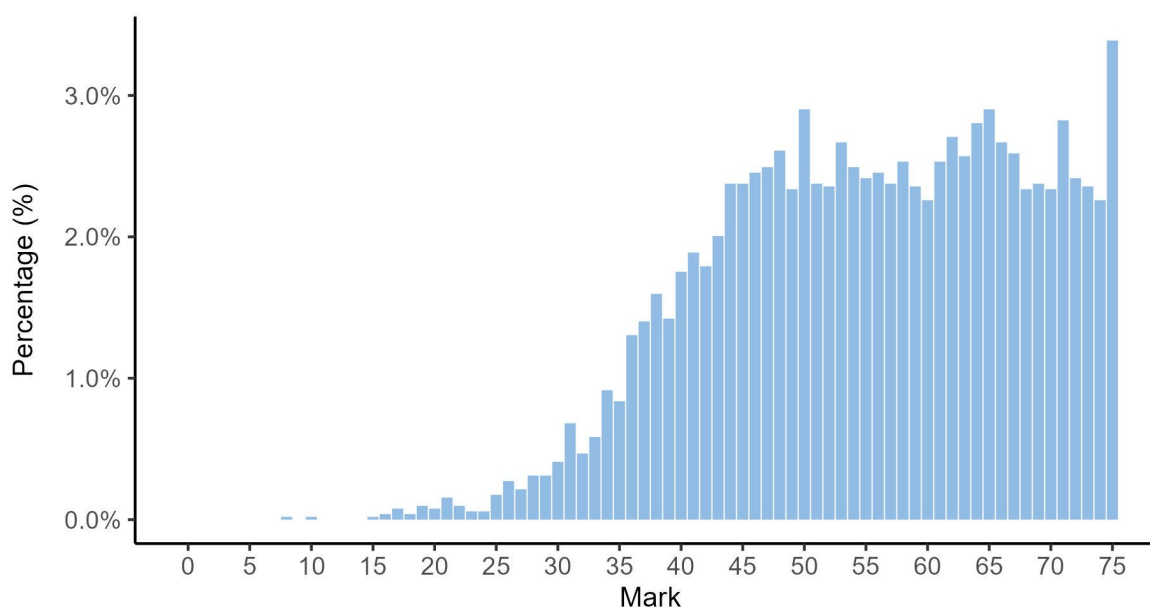
IA1 marks

IA1 total
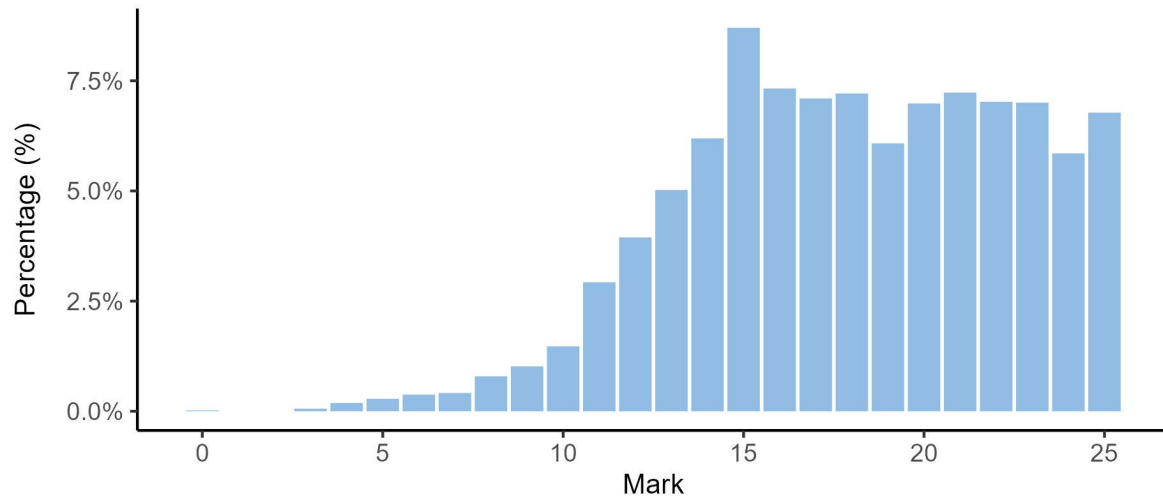
IA1 Criterion: Comprehending
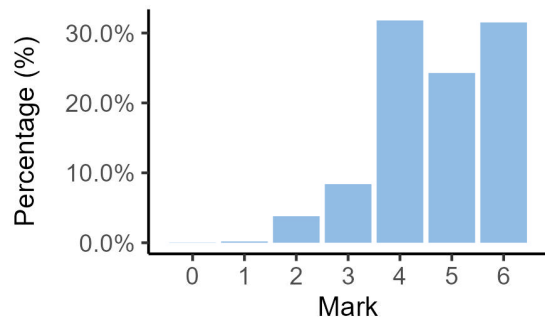
IA1 Criterion: Analysing
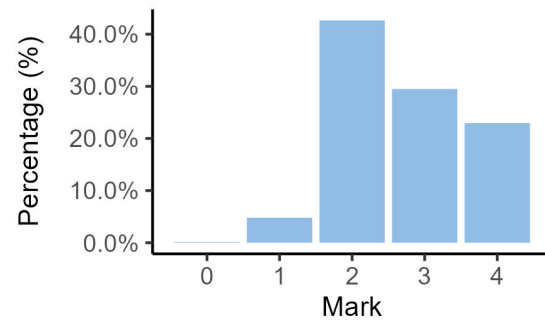
IA1 Criterion: Synthesising
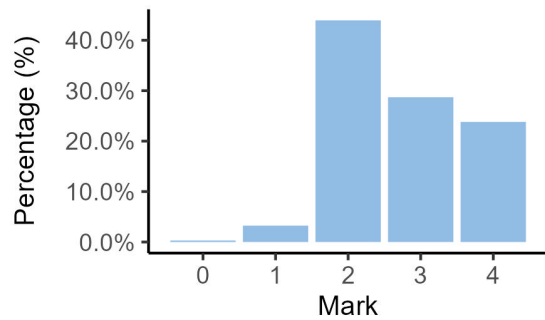
IA1 Criterion: Evaluating
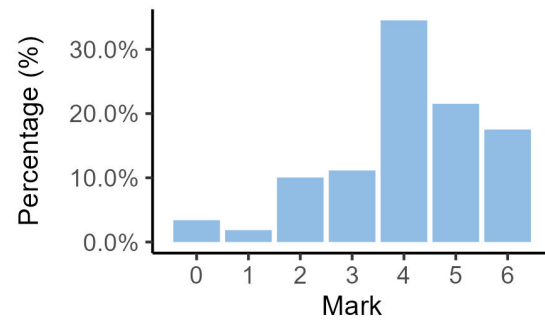
IA1 Criterion: Creating and communicating
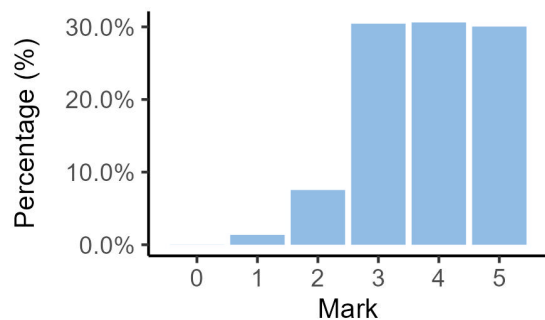
IA2 marks

IA2 total
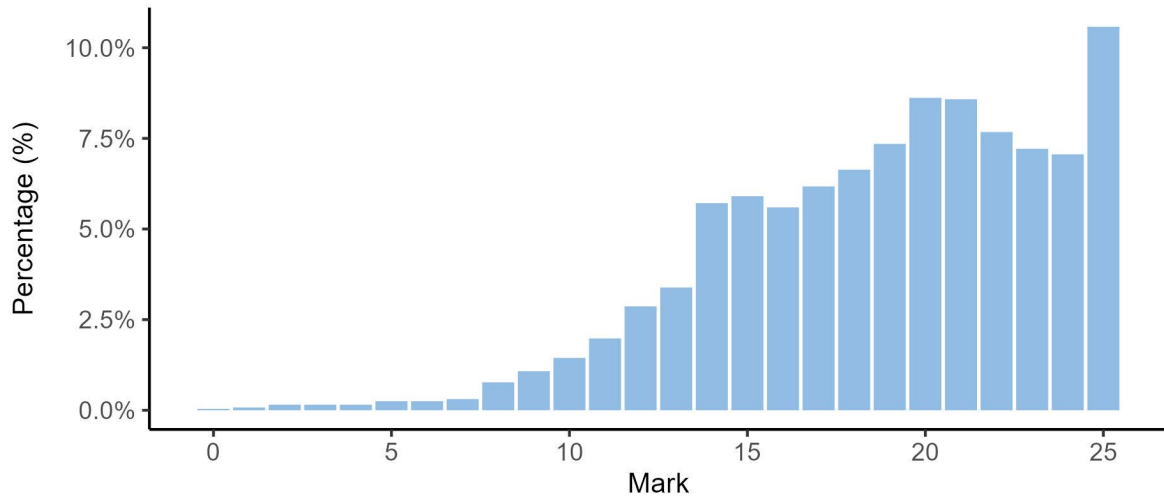
IA2 Criterion: Devising and conducting
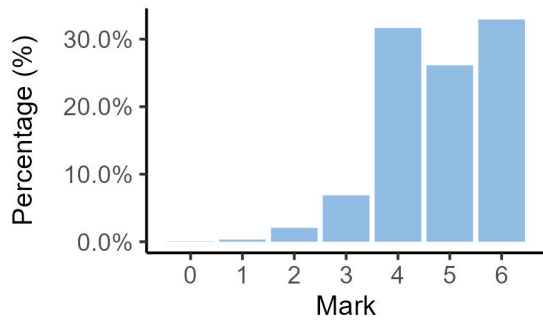
IA2 Criterion: Analysing
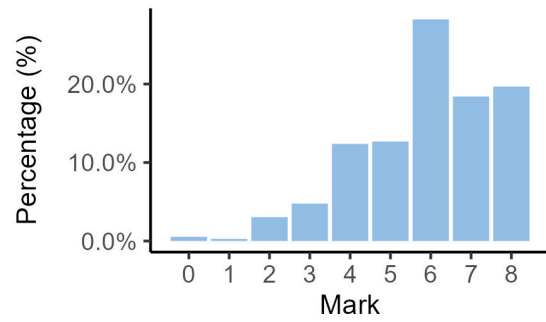
IA2 Criterion: Evaluating
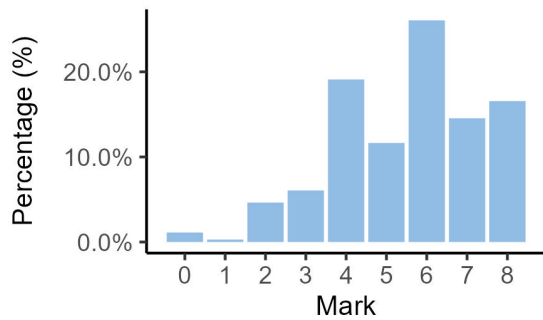
IA2 Criterion: Creating and communicating
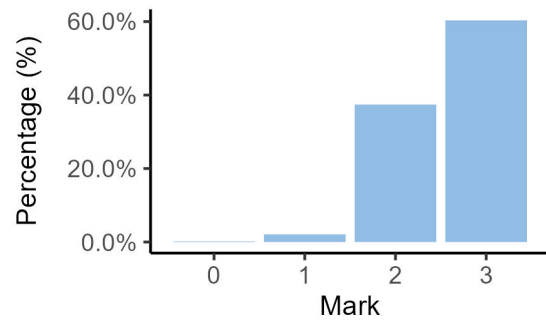
IA3 marks

IA3 total
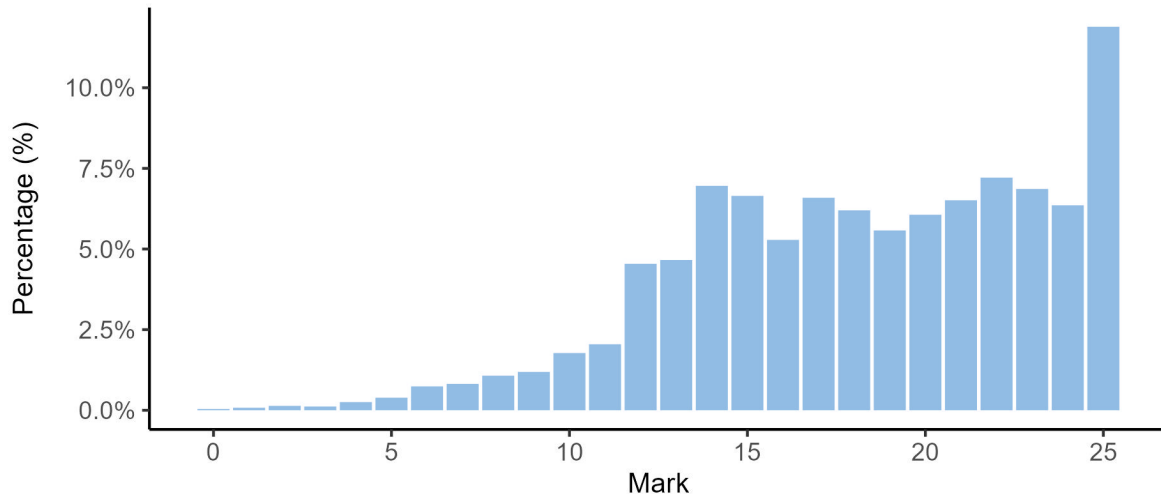
IA3 Criterion: Comprehending
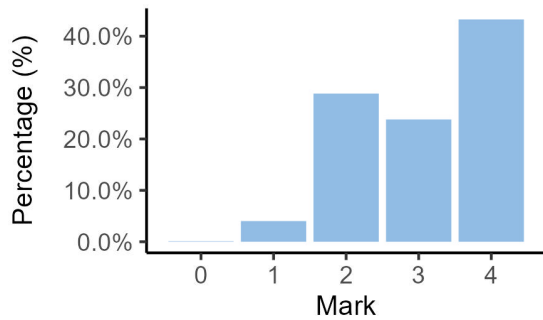
IA3 Criterion: Devising and conducting
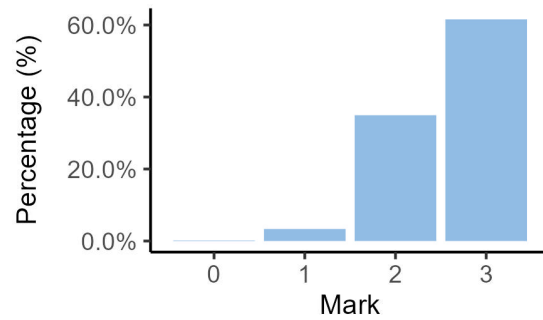
IA3 Criterion: Analysing
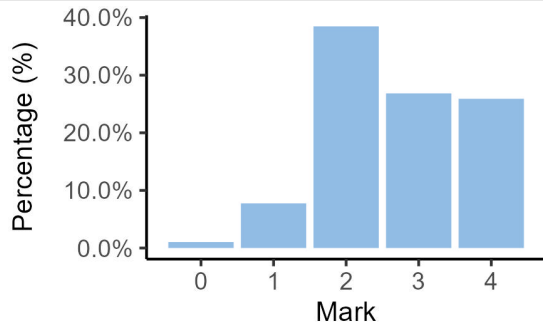
IA3 Criterion: Synthesising
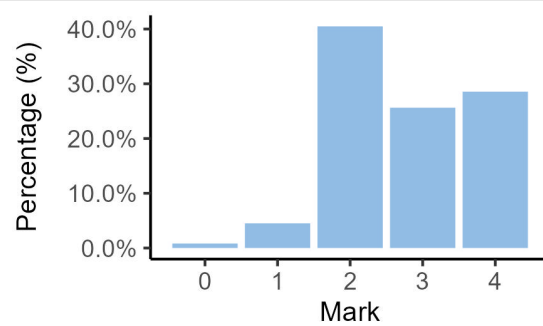
IA3 Criterion: Evaluating
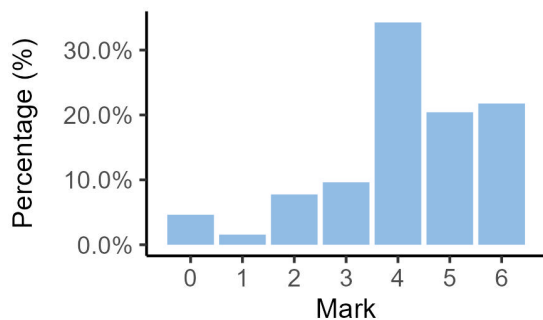
IA3 Criterion: Creating and communicating
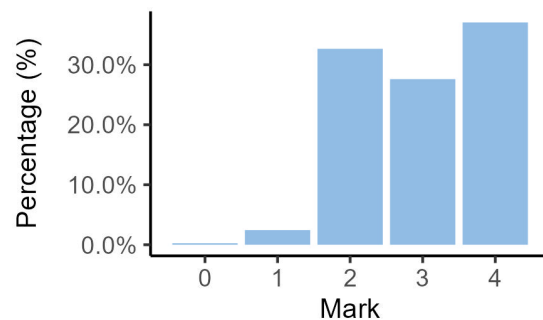
External assessment (EA) marks
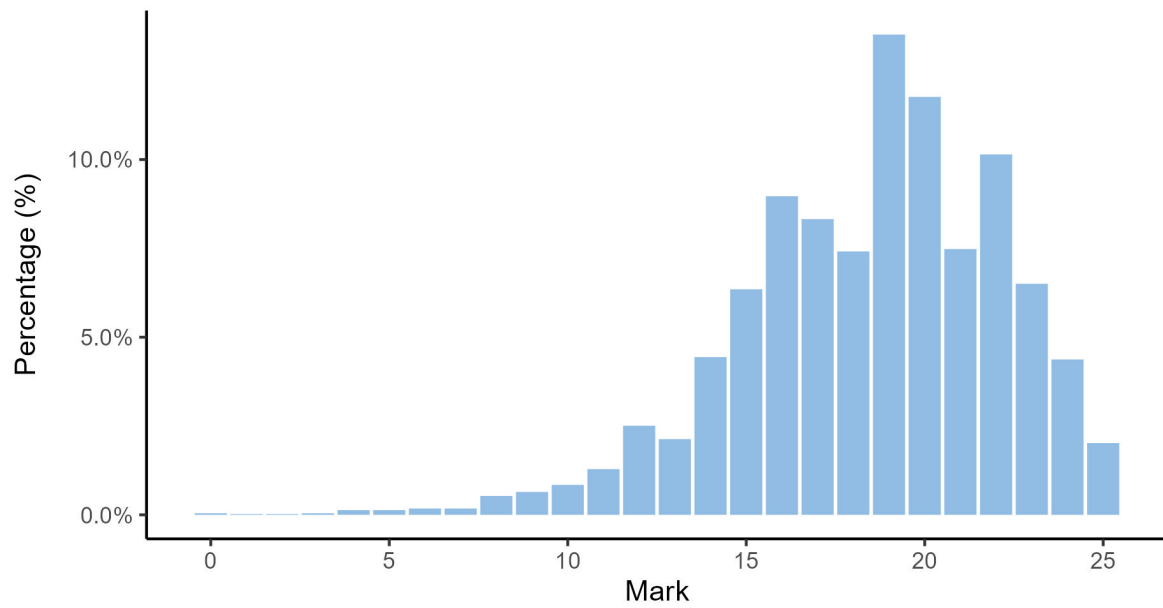
Final subject results

Final marks for IA and EA
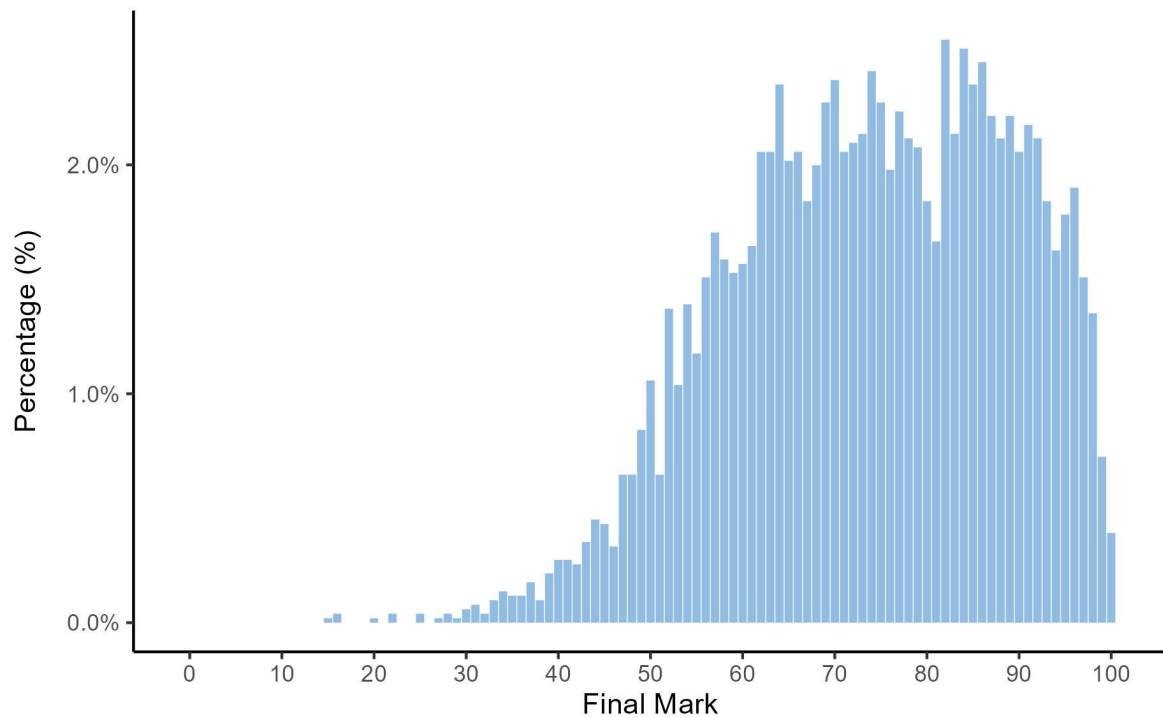
Grade boundaries

The grade boundaries are determined using a process to compare results on a numeric scale to the reporting standards.

Standard	A	B	C	D	E
Marks achieved	100–84	83–67	66–44	43–18	17–0

Distribution of standards

The number of students who achieved each standard across the state is as follows.

Standard	A	B	C	D	E
Number of students	1,599	1,840	1,537	126	3

Internal assessment

The following information and advice relate to the assessment design and assessment decisions for each IA in Units 3 and 4. These instruments have undergone quality assurance processes informed by the attributes of quality assessment (validity, accessibility and reliability).

Endorsement

Endorsement is the quality assurance process based on the attributes of validity and accessibility. These attributes are categorised further as priorities for assessment, and each priority can be further broken down into assessment practices.

Data presented in the Assessment design section identifies the reasons why IA instruments were not endorsed at Application 1, by the priority for assessments. An IA may have been identified more than once for a priority for assessment, e.g. it may have demonstrated a misalignment to both the subject matter and the assessment objective/s.

Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v5.0*, Section 9.6.

Percentage of instruments endorsed in Application 1

Number of instruments submitted	IA1	IA2	IA3
Total number of instruments	329	329	327
Percentage endorsed in Application 1	78%	82%	91%

Confirmation

Confirmation is the quality assurance process based on the attribute of reliability. The QCAA uses provisional criterion marks determined by teachers to identify the samples of student responses that schools are required to submit for confirmation.

Confirmation samples are representative of the school's decisions about the quality of student work in relation to the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG), and are used to make decisions about the cohort's results.

Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v5.0*, Section 9.7.

The following table includes the percentage agreement between the provisional marks and confirmed marks by assessment instrument. The Assessment decisions section of this report for each assessment instrument identifies the agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks by criterion.

Number of samples reviewed and percentage agreement

IA	Number of schools	Number of samples requested	Number of additional samples requested	Percentage agreement with provisional marks
1	325	2,187	61	86.77%
2	325	2,180	63	87.38%
3	325	2,167	13	87.08%

Internal assessment 1 (IA1)

Examination — essay in response to historical sources (25%)

The examination assesses the application of a range of cognitions to an unseen question.

Student responses must be completed individually, under supervised conditions, and in a set timeframe.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	54
Authentication	0
Authenticity	2
Item construction	7
Scope and scale	6

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 330.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided students the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter for a topic from Unit 3, e.g. providing an unseen question about Joseph Stalin's economic policies of industrialisation and collectivisation to assess subject matter from Topic 7: Soviet Union, 1920s–1945

- enabled students to cover the assessment objectives and performance-level descriptors of the ISMG, e.g. the stimulus included evidence from a range of sources that allowed students to engage with the Analysing, Synthesising and Evaluating criteria at the upper performance levels

- addressed all assessment specifications, including the creation of an essay in response to historical sources that requires sustained analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the stimulus material provided to support a student-generated hypothesis.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- align with the stimulus specifications by including context statements

  - for each of the sources included in the stimulus

  - that are in the form of a brief description that *may* include the author, time of production, and any general details about the circumstances in which a source was produced

- include an unseen question that reflects a scale of information appropriate for the syllabus conditions. For instance, this is often achieved by creating an unseen question that narrows a student's focus to a

  - specific historical event that aligns with the topic and aspect of the topic selected

  - specific location

  - point in time that is often measured in days, months, years, or a decade, rather than across multiple decades or longer

  - specific individual/s and/or group/s

  - combination of two or more of the above.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	7
Language	12
Layout	10
Transparency	7

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 330.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- included seen and unseen stimulus that as a whole package

  - contained minimal distractors

  - were of an appropriate length, i.e. both the seen and unseen stimulus could be accessed under examination conditions

- incorporated appropriate language and avoided unnecessary jargon, specialist language and colloquial language, e.g. a source that contained the specialist term 'intifada' is followed by a definition in brackets: 'intifada (uprising)'.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- include formatting features that enable the stimulus to be easily accessed by ensuring, e.g.

    – source labels are on the same page as the source

    – source and context headings apply font and text sizes consistently

- provide English translations for sources containing non-English text, e.g. a political cartoon with a caption '*Visitez l'urss ses pyramides*' needs to include an English translation of the phrase so it also says: 'Visit the pyramids of the USSR'.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Comprehending	97.85%	0.31%	1.85%	0%
2	Analysing	96.31%	2.46%	1.23%	0%
3	Synthesising	97.23%	2.46%	0.31%	0%
4	Evaluating	90.15%	7.38%	2.15%	0.31%
5	Creating and communicating	97.85%	0.92%	0.92%	0.31%

Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- for the Comprehending criterion, judgments recognised

    – the use of terms being correctly placed into historical contexts, e.g. the terms, *Kwantung Army*, *Mukden Incident* and *General Jirō Tamon* were linked to the invasion of Manchuria in 1931

    – the explanation of issues related to an unseen question, e.g. an unseen question about the implementation of economic policies in the Soviet Union during the 1920s was addressed by focusing on issues associated with the New Economic Policy's temporary market economy from 1921 to 1928

    – an understanding of the relationship between concepts and ideas relating to the unseen question, e.g. a response to an unseen question about Israel's involvement in the Suez–Sinai War in 1956 connects the historical concepts of evidence, significance and perspectives with ideas about the Suez Canal, Arab nationalism and Cold War ideologies

- for the Analysing criterion, judgments recognised

  – the discerning identification of features of evidence at the upper performance level. This was achieved when responses referred to two or more of the features of evidence, and these same features of evidence were shown to be especially relevant for developing a hypothesis and/or decisions associated with the historical argument being proposed

  – a range of sources had been used for identifying the features of evidence at the upper performance level. What constitutes a range of sources varies, but is often characterised as, for instance, primary and secondary sources; written and visual sources; and/or sources that reflect different perspectives

  – a detailed examination of the features of evidence at the upper performance level. The qualities typically associated with a detailed examination vary depending on, for instance, the features of evidence being targeted; the extent to which these same features are presented in the stimulus supplied; or a combination of these factors. Moreover, the level of detail provided must always be considered in accordance with the conditions of the task (e.g. a 1000-word limit) and the descriptors conveyed across all of the criteria being assessed.

Samples of effective practices

The following excerpt addresses an unseen question that focuses on the relationship between nationalism and the political ascension of the Nazi Party in Germany during the 1930s. The excerpt demonstrates the thorough and mostly accurate use of terms placed into historical context by linking the terms to specific times, places, and/or spaces related to the focus of the unseen question. The terms include: 'Fuhrer', 'NSDAP' and 'Volkgemeinschaft'.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

The National Socialist German Worker's Party infamously rose to power in a post World War 1 Germany by appealing to a cross-section of German social classes and demographics. Upon gaining control of Germany in 1933 by being appointed Chancellor, and ascending to the role of Fuhrer after President Hindenburg's death in August of 1934, Hitler sought to create 'Volkgemeinschaft', a racially superior 'people's community' in which the Nazis believed to be the solution to Germany's social problems. This lead principle was a key element in the revolutionary aims of the Nazi regime, and the NSDAP intended for the interests of individuals to be subordinate to those of the nation.

Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- when matching evidence in responses to descriptors for the Evaluating criterion, attention should be given to

  - distinguishing judgments from statements. Judgments explain the usefulness and/or reliability of evidence from sources (e.g. 'The evidence from this source is reliable because …'). Statements provide only an assertion about usefulness and/or reliability of the evidence from sources (e.g. 'The evidence from this source is reliable')

  - ensuring that judgments about the usefulness and/or reliability of evidence from sources are corroborated at the upper and mid performance levels. To achieve this, responses discuss the extent to which evidence from sources support or contradict the judgment about the usefulness and/or reliability of evidence from another source. For instance, a response suggests the evidence from Source 1 is very reliable because its main ideas have also been reflected in Source 5. Alternatively, a response suggests the evidence from Source 1 is not very reliable because its main ideas have been refuted or challenged by comments contained in Sources 3 and 5

- when matching evidence in responses to descriptors for the Creating and Communicating criterion, attention should be given to

  - how the features of an essay in response to historical sources and ethical scholarship are consistently used to communicate meaning to suit purpose at the upper performance level. The consistent application of ethical scholarship can be demonstrated for an IA1 by listing source numbers, the names of sources' authors (family names or given and family names), titles of sources, or a combination of these approaches

  - the degree to which the frequency and nature of errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation impede the communication of ideas and argument at the lower performance level.

Additional advice

- When making annotations on the ISMG, schools must ensure best-fit judgments have been applied. For further advice in this area, refer to *Module 3 — Making reliable judgments* in the Assessment Literacy application (app) in the QCAA Portal.

Internal assessment 2 (IA2)

Investigation — independent source investigation (25%)

An independent source investigation uses research and investigative practices to assess a range of cognitions in a particular context. It is an opportunity for students to demonstrate the application of historical concepts and historical skills — by selecting and analysing a range of historical sources and considering different perspectives — to the investigation.

Investigative practices and research include locating and using evidence from historical sources and information that goes beyond what has been provided to the student in class. Research conventions, including citations and reference list, must be adhered to. Responses are completed individually, under process writing conditions, over a number of hours.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	41
Authentication	3
Authenticity	4
Item construction	5
Scope and scale	8

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 330.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided opportunities for students to cover the required assessable objectives and performance-level descriptors of the ISMG, e.g. the task instructed students to investigate an aspect associated with the development of a totalitarian system under the leadership of Joseph Stalin from 1924 to 1941, thereby allowing them the opportunity to devise their own historical questions and conduct research linked to the topic.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- address all of the assessment specifications, including, e.g.
  - a *student-driven* key inquiry question

- 4–6 sources (both primary and secondary)

    - a requirement for students to use a recognised system of referencing, including a reference list

- align to the timeframes prescribed by a topic, e.g. the task instructs students to focus on an area of the past associated with Mao Zedong's leadership during the 1960s when the selected topic is Topic 9: China 1931–1976

- facilitate unique student responses by either or both

    - directing students to investigate an area of the past that is related to the school-nominated topic and a specified aspect of the topic

    - providing a list of some of the areas that may be investigated within the school-nominated topic and aspect of the topic. This list might also include the phrase 'or an area of your own choosing'.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	0
Language	1
Layout	0
Transparency	3

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 330.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided clear instructions using cues that aligned to the assessment specifications in the syllabus.

Practices to strengthen

There were no significant issues identified for improvement.

Additional advice

- Review the checkpoints to ensure directions given to students align with drafting requirements as described in *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v5.0*, Section 8.2.5.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Devising and conducting	94.77%	3.08%	1.54%	0.62%
2	Analysing	94.46%	4.31%	1.23%	0%
3	Evaluating	91.38%	5.85%	2.15%	0.62%
4	Creating and communicating	98.46%	0.31%	1.23%	0%

Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- for the Devising and conducting criterion, judgments recognised

  - *historical questions*, i.e. 'points of inquiry about the past that often reflect the use of historical concepts', as defined in the syllabus glossary. The historical concepts incorporated into these historical questions often included evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives and/or contestability. Historical questions lacking one or more of these historical concepts often risked being characterised as non-historical — a quality associated with the lower performance level

  - the *use* of historical questions, e.g. in the source analysis and/or the critical summary of evidence, a student's commentary referred to how the evidence from historical sources

    - addressed historical questions

    - affirmed, contradicted, or challenged assumptions associated with the historical questions

    - opened new lines of inquiry associated with the historical questions

    - prompted additional reflection and future revision regarding how the historical questions should be framed. By contrast, the mere mention of historical questions was not enough to demonstrate their use

- for the Creating and communicating criterion, responses were considered in terms of

  - the *consistent* demonstration of the *features of an independent source investigation* at the upper performance level. This required all features of the independent source investigation, including all the qualities associated with each of these features, to be reflected in the response

  - the *consistent* demonstration of *ethical scholarship* at the upper performance level. This required the acknowledgment of evidence from all the cited historical sources by using a recognised system of referencing, including a reference list.

Samples of effective practices

The following excerpts relate to a historical investigation about the Nazi Party's use of the German national curriculum to promote anti-Semitism from 1933 to 1945.

Excerpt 1 reflects the:

- discerning use of historical questions by creating a nuanced key inquiry question and relevant sub-questions. The key inquiry question is nuanced because it demonstrates specificity and is finely differentiated to focus the inquiry. This is achieved by narrowing the focus of the investigation to a specific organisation (Nazi Party), program (national school curriculum), target audience (Aryan children), ideology (anti-Semitism) and timeframe (1933–1945). The sub-questions are relevant because they are connected to the key inquiry question. This is achieved because each of the sub-questions refer to schooling in Germany — a central feature of the key inquiry question

- consistent demonstration of the features of an independent source investigation, e.g. a student-driven key inquiry question, 3–5 sub-questions, and a rationale (with a paragraph structure) that explains the student's thinking behind their topic.

Excerpt 2 also reflects the consistent demonstration of the features of an independent source investigation. However, in this excerpt the feature being illustrated is a source analysis that focuses on, in this instance, correspondence from a former school principal in Nazi Germany. To that end, the source analysis pays attention to the origins, historical context, reliability, corroborative value, and significance of this same correspondence.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

Nazi Germany

Key Inquiry Question

To what extent was the Nazi Party's direct implementation of a national school curriculum effective in indoctrinating Aryan children into anti-Semitic ideologies from 1933-1945? *Nuanced.*

Sub-Questions *Aryan*

1. What were German school students' attitudes to anti-Semitism prior to 1933?
2. What teaching strategies did Nazi schools use to promote anti-Semitism?
3. What messages about anti-Semitism were communicated through Nazi schooling?
4. What were the short-term effects of schooling practices on children's alignment with anti-Semitic ideologies?

Rationale

Adolf Hitler believed that youth would play an important role in creating and continuing a new order in Germany. Thus in 1933, as a part of *Gleichschaltung*, the process of aligning Germans citizens with Nazi ideologies, the Nazi Party began to rapidly but methodically transform the curriculums of German schools, focusing mostly on the instruction of anti-Semitism. Since school consisted a large part of childhood, it was of interest to explore the extent to which the system was able to indoctrinate children, especially considering there is historical debate surrounding the effectiveness of the Nazi's brainwashing technique. Furthermore, the investigation was focused on Aryan children as they were the target group for imposing Nazi influence. After conducting initial research, it was hypothesised that Nazi schooling was effective in indoctrinating children in anti-Semitism to a significant extent due to its forceful nature and major role in childhood development. To corroborate this hypothesis, a selection of primary and secondary photographs, excerpts and articles were acquired and analysed in order to answer the key inquiry question and sub-questions.

Excerpt 2

Primary source 2

Text redacted for copyright

Observing Reliability

Reference details:
Burkert, M. (1936). Cited in Mann, E., & Mann, T. (1938). In *School for Barbarians: Education under the Nazis* (pp. 20–101). essay, Modern Age Books.

- This letter was written by Max Burkert in 1936 to the obscene anti-Semitic magazine the *Stürmer,* which was often read to students and used as a stimulus for homework exercises (Mann & Mann, 1938). Burkert was the principal of the Overbeckstrasse School in Cologne, Germany, under the Third Reich. Due to Burkert's motive of contacting the anti-Semitic magazine to promote his teaching methods, and his signing of "Heil Hitler" at the end of the letter, Burkert was likely a Nazi supporter. Thus, his anecdote about the effects of Nazi schooling on a pupil cannot be considered overly reliable as it may be exaggerated to promote the Nazi regime and provide content for the magazine.
- In corroboration with the use of photographs to denounce Jews in the previous source, however, this excerpt can be considered very useful in displaying Nazi teaching strategies in schools: the principal outlines the use of photographs of Jews as an educational tool to illustrate their 'otherness' (Burkert, 1936). Furthermore, the disobedience of the child to their mother demonstrates the great strength of their anti-Semitic ideologies (Burkert, 1936). Considering the letter was created in 1936, well after the Nazi schooling system was implemented, Burkert's first-hand account is very useful in indicating that Nazi schooling had a powerful short-term impact on children's ideologies.

Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- when matching evidence to descriptors for the Analysing criterion, attention should be given to

  - the features of evidence included in student responses. At the upper and mid performance levels, students need to engage with more than one feature of evidence, e.g. explicit meanings and implicit meanings. However, this should not be interpreted as requiring students to engage with *all* the features of evidence from their sources

  - the types of sources from which the features of evidence originated. At the upper performance level and the mid performance level for 5–6 marks, the features of evidence must have come from primary and secondary sources. This can be constituted in various ways, with evidence coming from a primary source with all the other sources being secondary; a balance of primary and secondary sources; a secondary source with all other sources being primary

- when matching evidence to descriptors for the Evaluating criterion, attention should be given to distinguishing between the role played by perspectives at the upper and mid performance level for 5–6 marks. At the upper performance level (7–8 marks), judgments about usefulness

and reliability *must*, among other things, refer to *different perspectives*. However, at the mid performance level for 5–6 marks, judgments about usefulness *and/or* reliability *may* refer to *perspectives*.

Additional advice

- If there are significant doubts about whether evidence comes from a primary or secondary source, this should be acknowledged and addressed in the student response. For instance, in the source analysis section it might be noted that a source, by virtue of its publication details being unauthenticated, could be characterised as primary or secondary. However, other factors have been identified that support the source as being classified as primary.

- If student responses reflect academic misconduct, annotate clearly how the school policy for academic integrity has been applied. For instance, if a student has plagiarised

  - annotate the response to indicate the section/s that have been authenticated as the student's own work and for which judgments have been made (as per *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v5.0*, Section 11.1.5)

  - make the annotations on the ISMG for the affected criterion or criteria.

- Consideration should also be given to the templates provided for students to assist them in preparing their responses. If a template is provided and it lists all of the features of evidence, then it should be made very clear that this does not imply that all the features of evidence must be addressed in a response.

Internal assessment 3 (IA3)

Investigation — historical essay based on research (25%)

This assessment requires students to research a historical topic through the collection, analysis and synthesis of primary and secondary sources. A historical essay based on research uses investigative practices and research to assess a range of cognitions in a particular context. Investigative practices and research include locating and using evidence from historical sources and information that goes beyond what has been provided to the student in class. Responses are completed individually, under process writing conditions, over a number of hours.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	11
Authentication	4
Authenticity	5
Item construction	5
Scope and scale	4

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 327.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- allowed for unique student responses, e.g. the task directed students to create their own key inquiry question, rather than prescribing a key inquiry question

- followed the conventions of item construction, e.g. the

  – Task section directed students to investigate an area that aligned with the nominated topic and aspect of the topic

  – Context and Task sections discussed the same topic and aspect of the topic

  – Checkpoints section referred to the features of an IA3, rather than another assessment instrument.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- address all assessment specifications, particularly the requirements for the use of a recognised system of referencing, including a reference list
- avoid mandating task requirements that are alternatives or in addition to the assessment specifications, e.g.
  - mandating the inclusion of a bibliography, rather than a reference list
  - devising sub-questions alongside a key inquiry question, rather than a key inquiry question only.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	0
Language	7
Layout	0
Transparency	0

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 327.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- used appropriate language and avoided unnecessary jargon, specialist language and/or colloquial language, e.g. syllabus language was used in the task section when describing the assessment specifications.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- are free from errors and model accurate textual features, e.g. full sentences are included in the Checkpoints section.

Additional advice

- When devising the IA3, schools must ensure that they do not select a topic that is nominated by the QCAA as the basis for the external assessment.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Comprehending	97.85%	1.23%	0.92%	0%
2	Devising and conducting	99.08%	0.31%	0.31%	0.31%
3	Analysing	94.77%	3.69%	1.54%	0%
4	Synthesising	96%	3.69%	0.31%	0%
5	Evaluating	91.38%	7.08%	1.23%	0.31%
6	Creating and communicating	95.69%	3.69%	0.62%	0%

Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- for the Synthesising criterion, judgments recognised key differences in the combination of information from sources and the development of a historical argument, e.g.

    – at the upper (3–4 marks) and mid (2 marks) performance levels, the combination of information *supported* the historical argument. This was often demonstrated through clear and close links made between the information presented and the historical argument. For instance, evidence from two sources — both of which attributed the collapse of the Soviet Union to the policy of *Glasnost* — was used to demonstrate that the Soviet Union's downfall during the late 1980s and early 1990s (the focus of the key inquiry question) owes much to the reformist political agenda instigated by Mikhail Gorbachev, the then President of the Soviet Union (the historical argument)

    – at the lower performance level (1 mark), the combination of information was related to the historical argument. This was often demonstrated via unclear, tenuous, dubious, misleading and/or inaccurate links with the historical argument. For instance, evidence from two sources — both of which referred to an alleged resurgence of hero worship within the Soviet Union during the late 1980s — was used to demonstrate the same historical argument as noted above.

Samples of effective practices

The following excerpts relate to a historical investigation about the relative importance of the East German government and the Soviet Union in the decision to create the Berlin Wall in 1961. Excerpts 1 and 2 demonstrate the combining of information from sources to support a sophisticated historical argument that is applied throughout the response:

- Excerpt 1 introduces readers to the sophisticated historical argument in the second half of the paragraph

- Excerpt 2 reflects the clear application of a part of the sophisticated historical argument, namely the ability of the East German politician, Walter Ulbricht, to subtly and persistently persuade the then Premier of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, into supporting the decision to create the Berlin Wall.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

To what extent was the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 a result of pressure from the East German Government as opposed to an initiative of the Soviet Union?

Due to the ideological differences between the two nations, many East Germans crossed into West Germany to escape the communist country, which resulted in a devastating effect on the East German economy. Therefore, on the night of 13 August 1961, a guarded concrete barrier, known as the Berlin Wall, was built around West Berlin, separating it from East Berlin and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Overnight, millions of friends and families were cut off from each other, and for the next 30 years, the Wall would come to symbolise the Iron Curtain that separated the Western bloc and the Soviet satellite states of the Eastern bloc during the Cold War. It has been a source of much contention for historians as to whether the decision to build the Wall originated from the East, led by communist politician Walter Ulbricht, or the West, led by Soviet Union leader Nikita Khrushchev. While the Soviet Union's approval was necessary for the construction of the Berlin Wall, the pressure from the East German government was the driving force behind the decision. The final decision to build the Berlin Wall was approved and supported by Khrushchev. However, it was largely in response to the indirect pressure placed by Ulbricht and the East German government from behind closed doors. Ulbricht's constant badgering increased the tension between the East German and Soviet Union leaders, eventually leading to the construction of the Wall.

Excerpt 2

Ulbricht's constant badgering increased the tension between the East German and Soviet Union leaders, eventually leading to the construction of the Wall. While Khrushchev was against any policies that might exacerbate international tensions, he was also hesitant to reject Ulbricht's requests for a wall, as he did not want the West to view the USSR as weak as to not be able to control a member of their bloc. This meant that Ulbricht had a greater chance to wear down the Soviet Union Premier into agreeing to build the Wall. The article by Tsui (2015) is useful to provide insight into the different methods used by Ulbricht in order to convince Khrushchev that the Wall was a necessity for fixing the problems within East and West Germany. She states that "[Ulbricht] badgered Khrushchev at least two or three times a month about his plans" leading up to the June 1961 meeting in Vienna with President Kennedy (Tsui, 2015). Ulbricht's constant pestering is corroborated by Historian Jodi Koehn (2023), who states that the "pestering from the East Germans to close the border continued in the spring and summer of 1961" (Koehn, 2023). This consistent badgering of the Soviet leader provides valuable evidence of Ulbricht's determination and suggests that Ulbricht aimed to create a sense of urgency to compel Khrushchev to act on the problem he was presenting. This constant harassment can also be seen in a newspaper article published in 2001 by Hans S. Nichols, which outlines the growing tension between Khrushchev and Ulbricht leading up to the building of the Berlin Wall. He outlines how an "aggressive East German leadership persistently pressured a reluctant Soviet apparatus into building the Wall" (Nichols, 2001). This adds weight to historian Koehn's argument, as it conveys the panic that Ulbricht was trying to cause within the USSR government, ultimately leading to Khrushchev giving in to Ulbricht's pleas for a wall. The constant badgering can also be seen in the multiple letters sent between Khrushchev and Ulbricht in January 1961. The letter, provided by the Leon Levy Foundation, provides a reliable count on the discussions between the two leaders, which mentioned the proposals made for a peace treaty to resolve the West Berlin issue, and the plans for economic development in the GDR. They stated that Ulbricht "constantly blamed the USSR for the refugee and economic problems within East Germany," which were a result of the flood of people to the increasingly prosperous West Germany (Wilson Centre, 2011). Since the East

German economy had a growing dependence on the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), it is clear that Ulbricht was extremely worried about the effect this economic burden would have on the reputation of the GDR as a strong communist member. They also mentioned that he "regularly brought this problem to Khrushchev's attention" by emphasizing the destabilising effect that the refugee problem had on the East German government and its economy (Wilson Centre, 2011). Ulbricht's unyielding determination, relentless advocacy, and constant pressure on Khrushchev ultimately played a significant role in driving the decision to build the Berlin Wall.

Attributions for sources quoted in excerpt

- Koehn, J. (2023). *East Germans Pressured Soviets to Build Berlin Wall*. Wilson Centre. www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/east-germans-pressured-soviets-to-buildberlin-wall

- Nichols, H. (2001). Mr Khrushchev: Build This Wall! *Insight on the News: New World Communications LLC*.www.proquest.com/docview/205915649/fulltextPDF/D546962517E64C58PQ /1?accountid=13378

- Tsui, E. (2015). *A Bone in the Throat: An Analysis on the Origins of the Berlin Wall*. E-International Relations. www.e-ir.info/2015/09/06/a-bone-in-the-throat-an-analysis-on-theorigins-of-the-berlin-w

- Wilson Centre. (2011). *Letter From Ulbricht to Khrushchev*. Wilson Centre: Digital Archives. digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/notes-conversation-comrade-nskhrushchev-comrade-w-ulbricht-1-augu

Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- when matching evidence in responses to descriptors for the Analysing criterion, attention should be given to what constitutes a detailed examination of the features of evidence from sources at the upper performance levels (3–4 marks). This requires the finer points associated with features of evidence to be unpacked with greater attention

  - when examining the implicit meanings associated with a political cartoon, the discussion might focus on

    - the objects included in the political cartoon

    - the colour, position and/or relative size of each of these same objects within the political cartoon

    - how the above information could be used to arrive at implicit meanings contained within the political cartoon

  - when examining the audience associated with a newspaper article, the discussion might focus on

    - when the newspaper article was published

    - the newspaper's typical readership

    - the geographical reach of the newspaper

    - the section of the newspaper in which the article appeared — front page, world news or editorial.

Additional advice

- Include the key inquiry question in a separate heading at the start of the response. This helps schools and confirmers to review the descriptors associated with Comprehending, Devising and conducting, Analysing, and Creating and communicating.

- The timeframe associated with the key inquiry question determines if a source is classified as primary or secondary. For instance, a source published in 1964 will typically be characterised as secondary when the key inquiry question focuses on a historical event from 1961 until 1962. However, the same source will typically be characterised as primary when the key inquiry question focuses on a historical event from 1961 until1965.

- Sub-questions, an annotated reference list and/or a bibliography should not appear in student responses as they are not mandated in the task specifications (Syllabus section 5.16.1) and may, in some cases, have an adverse effect on the overall word count.

- The word count for responses includes the key inquiry question and all direct quotes (see Table: Determining word length and page count of a written response in *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v5.0*, Section 8.2.6).

External assessment

External assessment (EA) is developed and marked by the QCAA. The external assessment for a subject is common to all schools and administered under the same conditions, at the same time, on the same day.

Examination — short responses to historical sources (25%)

Assessment design

The assessment instruments were designed using the specifications, conditions and assessment objectives described in the summative external assessment section of the relevant syllabus. The examination consisted of one paper (48 marks), and students were required to provide paragraph-length answers to four short response items using evidence from the historical sources provided in the stimulus book.

General syllabus examination

This examination assessed subject matter from Unit 4. Questions were derived from Topic 1: Australian engagement with Asia since 1945 (World War II in the Pacific ends) and the aspect of the topic: Australia and the Vietnam War.

The stimulus book included excerpts from primary and secondary sources that conveyed information in words and imagery about a range of issues related to Australia and the Vietnam War, including communism, protestors, local newspaper coverage and moratoriums.

AS examination

The AS examination assessed subject matter from AS U2. Questions were derived from Topic 8: Anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, 1948–1991 (apartheid laws start — apartheid laws end) and the aspect of the topic: strategies used to oppose apartheid in South Africa.

The AS stimulus book included excerpts from primary and secondary sources that conveyed information in words and imagery about a range of issues related to the strategies used to oppose apartheid in South Africa, including academic boycotts, division within the USA regarding the use of boycotts, newspaper coverage, and divestment campaigns.

Assessment decisions

Assessment decisions are made by markers by matching student responses to the external assessment marking guide (EAMG). The external assessment papers and the EAMG are published in the year after they are administered.

Effective practices

Overall, students responded well to:

- the requirements of the Comprehending criterion, with relevant terms from nominated sources being placed into historical context

- the requirements of the Analysing criterion in Question 1, by including the explanation of a valid similarity and a valid difference using well-chosen evidence from the nominated sources

- the requirements of the Evaluating criterion in Question 3. This was evident when students unpacked the evidence from Sources 4, 5 and 6 to make a judgment about the sources' usefulness for investigating the claim 'Local newspapers wrote unfavourably about Australian involvement in the Vietnam War' (General examination) or 'Articles published by South African newspapers contributed to the end of apartheid' (AS examination)

- the requirements of the Evaluating criterion in Question 4, particularly the making of a judgment about the reliability of evidence from a nominated source for the historical argument that was proposed.

Samples of effective practices

Short response

The following excerpt is from Question 3 in the General examination. It required students to evaluate evidence from Sources 4, 5 and 6 in the stimulus book to determine their usefulness for investigating the claim 'Local newspapers wrote unfavourably about Australian involvement in the Vietnam War.'

Effective student responses:

- explained a discerning judgment about the usefulness of evidence from Sources 4, 5 and 6, using well-chosen evidence from each of these sources

- used relevant term/s from Sources 4, 5 and 6 that were placed into historical context

- organised paragraph/s purposefully to succinctly and fluently convey ideas relating to the question.

This excerpt has been included:

- to demonstrate a high-level response where a discerning judgment about the usefulness of evidence from Source 4 is included. This judgment is discerning because it explains specifically why the evidence from Source 4 is relevant for exploring the claim about local newspapers having written unfavourably about Australian involvement in the Vietnam War

- to illustrate the use of well-chosen evidence from Source 4, particularly the selection of direct quotes that clearly and plausibly linked with the judgment noted above.

Sources 4, 5 and 6 all present evidence which is very useful in investigating the claim: *Local newspapers wrote unfavourably about Australian involvement in the Vietnam War.* Source 4, an excerpt from Australian newspaper *The Age* produced in 1968, discusses the impact of new "*blanket censorship restrictions*" being imposed on Australian war correspondents. The article's anonymous author links the implementation of these restrictions to Australian authorities "*seeking a more 'sympathetic' press account of the war*". Additionally, the author claims that these restrictions "*will seriously [prevent] the reporting of Australian military operations... in Vietnam*" and states that they have "*already declined to do so*". This primary evidence is very useful in investigating the claim as it strongly implies that the implementation of stricter censorship of war coverage in 1968 was a reaction to unfavourable accounts of the war in Australian media.

The following excerpt is from Question 4 in the General assessment instrument. It required students to synthesise evidence from Sources 7, 8 and 9 to form a historical argument in response to the question 'To what extent did the Vietnam War moratoriums have an influence on Australian involvement in the Vietnam War?'

Students were also asked to include in their response a judgment about the extent to which evidence from one of these sources was reliable for the historical argument that was proposed.

Effective student responses:

- developed a sophisticated historical argument that responded to the question

- skilfully combined evidence from Sources 7, 8 and 9 to develop the historical argument

- explained a discerning judgment about the reliability of evidence from Source 7, 8 or 9, with the evidence included from this same source having been well-chosen

- used relevant term/s from Sources 7, 8 and 9 that were placed into historical context

- organised paragraph/s purposefully to succinctly and fluently convey ideas relating to the question.

These excerpts have been included:

- to demonstrate a high-level response where intellectual complexity — a central feature of a sophisticated historical argument — was reflected by

  – creating a multi-layered historical argument based on the evidence from Sources 7, 8 and 9 that was applied across the whole response (Excerpt 1)

  – acknowledging and addressing perspectives that were raised in the evidence from Source 7 and that challenged the historical argument being posed (Excerpt 2).

Excerpt 1

Moratoriums were overall suggested to be impactful in altering Australian involvement into the Vietnam War by demonstrating condemnation towards the government, ~~indirectly~~ leading to Gorton's 1970 withdrawal. However, while both Sources 8 and 9 argue moratoriums were ^influential in affecting Australian involvement, Source 7 contradicts this idea and suggests any changes made to Australian commitment remained independent from anti-war protests.

Excerpt 2

> However, the National Museum of Australia contradicts the degree of impact the moratoriums achieved, in an excerpt from 'Defining Moments: Vietnam Moratoriums', arguing changes to Australian involvement were independent from protests. The excerpt argues that 'It is unlikely that the moratoriums directly affected the government's decision to ~~st~~ withdraw troops from Vietnam,' (Source 7), stating withdrawal had already started before the moratoriums were held. Additionally, the excerpt argues that US policy's influence outweighed that of the moratoriums. The excerpt does, however, concede that the moratoriums 'probably affected the government's policy on conscription', further detailing that after the first moratorium, 'Cabinet took measures to reduce the number of draft-resisters who went to jail', serving to depict ~~overall depicting~~ moratoriums as not entirely unimpactful.

Practices to strengthen

When preparing students for external assessment, it is recommended that teachers consider:

- implementing learning experiences that support students to effectively respond to short response questions, e.g.

    - deconstructing sample questions

    - recalling the meaning of terms (e.g. compare, usefulness, reliability) that may appear within questions and that are defined in the syllabus

    - distinguishing between judgments about the usefulness and reliability of evidence from sources

- devising ways to demonstrate the intellectual complexity associated with the creation of a sophisticated historical argument

- developing paragraphs in practice responses, particularly for questions where comparatively longer answers are anticipated

- signposting in practice responses the aspect of the question that is being addressed, e.g. the evidence from both sources is similar/different

- discussing strategies for indicating how the evidence from a source helps to address what has been targeted in the question, e.g. conveying precisely why evidence from a source is/is not useful for a particular investigation.