

Random sampling project

2015 Report on random sampling of assessment in Authority subjects

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Summary

Random sampling of school judgments of student achievement in Authority subjects (the random sampling project) is one of the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority's (QCAA) quality-assurance procedures for senior certification. It has been conducted annually since 1994.

The principal purpose of the random sampling project is to evaluate the quality of school-based assessment programs and the comparability of teacher judgments of student achievement in Authority subjects across the state after completion of senior certification processes.

The key question considered for the random sampling project is:

How consistently do teachers around Queensland apply syllabus standards in determining students' levels of achievement in Authority subjects?

Method

For selected Authority subjects, a random sample of schools submit the Year 12 exit folio of a stratified random sample of seven students. The exit folios are sent to review panels from a different district to that of the submitting school. Since 2010, small and intermediate subject groups (with fewer than 14 students) have been included in the sample.

Requests for student folios are made to schools in November, after the final achievement decisions are reported to the QCAA. Schools submit folios to QCAA district offices.

Each year's report focuses on results of students who completed Year 12 in the previous year.

Findings

- A total of 1381 folios were reviewed from 140 schools across 9 subjects.
- Random sampling review panels generally found that, overall, there was substantial agreement between panels and schools:
 - 93.8% of folios were placed in the same level of achievement (LoA) by both the random sampling panel and the school
 - 94.3% were either agreed, or differed by no more than one-third of an LoA (three rungs or fewer)
 - 94% of folios were agreed to within an LoA (consistent with previous years)
 - there were no districts or schools within districts where large differences between school and panel judgments were evident. Small differences were found across most of the subjects sampled.
- Serious disagreement (defined as eight or more rung differences, with an LoA difference) was recorded for 1% of folios.
- The greatest variances were recorded for Information Technology Systems, Geography and Modern History.
- The subjects with the highest number of folios with rung differences of three or more were Modern History, Information Technology Systems, Business Communication and Technologies and Geography.

- Based on the level of disagreement recorded by random sampling panels, 21 submissions were requested for review. Subjects for which a further review was requested are in Table 6. Following further reviews, the number of folios with rung differences of three or more decreased for most subjects. For further information, see page 18.

Conclusion

The random sampling project supports the view that the school-based assessment and moderation process for Authority subjects continues to be an effective quality-assurance process, valued by schools and panels.

Recommendations

- Support continued professional development in 2016 by reviewing the current random sampling project process for further improvement.
- Conduct training for Modern History, Information Technology Systems and Business Communication and Technologies review panels.

Background

Purpose

The random sampling project contributes to the processes of moderation for the LoAs awarded on the Senior Statement. The project has been conducted each year since 1994.

Its purposes are to:

- evaluate the quality of school-based assessment and the comparability of teacher judgments of student achievement in Authority subjects across the state, i.e. to assess the strength of school decision-making in the system of school-based assessment for senior certification
- provide information on the quality of assessment procedures and assessment judgments in sampled subjects
- identify, at a systemic level, any issues concerning assessment and moderation that need further investigation.

The process of reviewing student folios for the random sampling project occurs in the year after the students have left school and after they have been issued with their Senior Education Profile (SEP). Therefore, the outcome does not influence the LoAs awarded to that cohort of students. Instead, the random sampling project checks the quality of school-based judgments after they have been made. However, the findings can contribute to further improvements in moderation processes.

Senior moderation process

Moderation is the set of processes designed to:

- support the integrity of school-based assessment in Authority subjects
- strengthen the quality of teacher judgments of student achievement in Authority subjects
- ensure a high degree of comparability in certified LoAs in Authority subjects
- maintain the credibility and acceptability of the SEP.

Moderation begins with the **approval of work programs** for Authority syllabuses. The other moderation processes are **monitoring, verification, comparability, confirmation** and **random sampling**.

Work program approval

Using the syllabus and the relevant work program requirements, schools write work programs that show how they intend to implement the syllabus. Review panels provide recommendations to the QCAA about the suitability of a work program for approval.

Monitoring

The monitoring process is carried out at the end of February each year. It is a review of student folios sampled at the end of Year 11 — after half the course has been delivered. Review panels consider evidence of the school's delivery of their courses of study and of their programs of assessment. They also consider school judgments of student achievement in Authority subjects, based on a sample of student folios from each school. Advice is given to schools early in Year 12 so that they can apply the advice to the assessment and judgments of the exiting cohort.

Verification

The verification process occurs towards the end of Year 12. Schools submit sample student folios for the verification meeting in October. School submissions are sent to the relevant (usually district) review panel. These submissions consist of a sample of folios of work for students about to complete the course of study, together with the school's judgments of interim LoAs for those students. Panellists review the folios for evidence to confirm the school's judgments, and to confer with other panellists and the chair to formulate advice to the school. If the panel cannot confirm a school's proposal, consultation between the school and the district review panel chair (DRPC) takes place. If the school and the DRPC cannot agree on all sample folios in a submission, the complete submission is sent to the relevant state review panel for further consideration.

Comparability

Comparability is the process by which state review panels look for evidence that judgments about student achievement using standards are comparable across districts. Two agreed-to submissions from each district are sent to state review panels in November. State review panels review the threshold samples and give the QCAA advice about the comparability of LoAs across the state.

Confirmation

Confirmation occurs following completion of Year 12. Schools forward their exit proposals to the QCAA in November, immediately after the final day for Year 12 students. QCAA officers review any changes to the LoAs that had been agreed to at verification. Legitimate changes can occur as a result of assessment in the final term of Year 12. The confirmation phase concludes when the QCAA reaches agreement with the school on its proposed results for recording on students' Senior Statements.

Random sampling

The sampling focuses on student exit folios, and occurs after the issue of SEPs. No changes in the recorded results in SEPs occur as a consequence of random sampling.

Random sampling refers to the process of sampling schools and students. However, subjects are not randomly selected, and some (smaller) subjects were not previously randomly sampled at all. Subjects are usually selected on the basis of their size (total number of students), stage of implementation or implementation issues.

Schools are chosen randomly within each subject. Before 2010, to be included, the school needed to have a large group (14 or more students) in that subject. Small (9 students or fewer) and intermediate (10–13 students) groups were generally not included because most of these students' folios of work were assumed to have already been reviewed by their district or state panel. However, being reviewed by other districts is a valuable process and a key aspect of the random sampling project. Therefore, they are no longer excluded from selection.

For each chosen group, a random sample of students is selected, stratified by LoAs awarded to the students. The school is asked to provide the exit folios for these students, including each student's LoA and rung placement (recorded on the Form RS, see Appendix A). These folios are called the random sampling submission.

Random sampling submissions are allocated randomly to other districts. The other district panel is referred to as the random sampling review panel when it is reviewing random sampling submissions.

District review panels (DRPs), acting as random sampling review panels, review random sampling submissions in February.

Project design

Sampling procedure

This random sampling project focused on the Year 12 cohort of 2014.

Subjects were selected deliberately to include those with large statewide enrolments as well as other subjects of interest, such as those that had not previously been sampled or had not been sampled in recent years.

The selection criteria included:

- subjects not selected for two or more years
- subjects with a revised syllabus, with a Year 12 cohort completing the course for the first time
- subjects with a new or revised syllabus, with a Year 12 cohort completing the course for the second time
- subjects nominated from the outcomes of previous random sampling processes.

Schools were selected randomly within each of the districts under the following constraints (where possible):

- no more than three subject groups from one school
- a maximum of 26 school subject groups for any one subject.

A stratified random sample of student folios was selected within each school subject group (submission) with the following specifications:

- folios are selected by the QCAA, not the school
- if there are fewer than the required number of folios at any given LoA, folios are selected from the next LoA (moving towards the centre)
- if there are fewer than two Sound Achievement folios, folios are selected, in turn, from High Achievement, Very High Achievement, Low Achievement or Very Low Achievement.

The outcome of this selection process is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Requested and received submissions and folios for the selected subjects

Subject	Schools	Folios requested	Folios received	Folios reviewed
Ancient History	26	182	180	178
Business Communication and Technologies	26	182	180	166
Chemistry	26	182	180	180
Geography	26	182	177	176
Hospitality Studies	6	42	42	42
Information Technology Systems	14	98	98	98
Mathematics C	26	182	182	182
Modern History	26	182	182	182
Physics	26	182	178	177
Total	202	1414	1399	1381

Table 1 shows the final number of submissions was 202. The number of folios received was 1399. Of the total received, 18 were not reviewed by a random sampling review panel.

Results for the past 3 years have consistently demonstrated more than 91% agreement, and have shown that random sampling issues are syllabus-specific, rather than relating to the overall process. It was therefore decided to reduce the number of subjects chosen for sampling. This resulted in a significant difference in the overall sample size and, as such, historical comparisons may not be meaningful.

Subjects were distributed across 105 panels. A full list of all subjects sampled for the past nine years is contained in Appendix E. Most schools were required to provide only one submission. No school was requested to provide more than three submissions (see Table 2).

Table 2: Number of submissions requested from schools

	Submissions requested	Number of schools
	1	89
	2	40
	3	11
Total schools		140

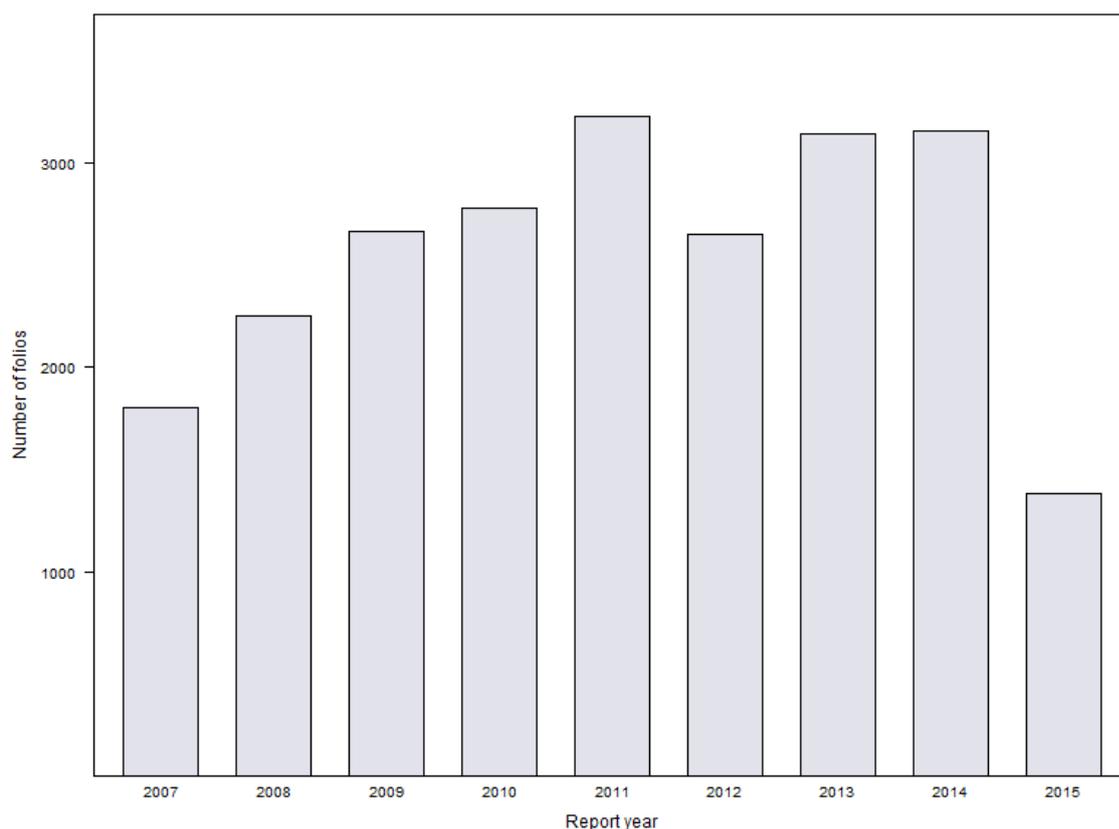


Figure 1: Number of folios sampled for review by random sampling review panels by year

Random sampling review panel procedures

Members of the DRPs (acting as random sampling review panels) examined each of the folios in the school submissions allocated to their panel and decided a specific rung placement (from 10 rungs within each LoA). The DRPC and one other panellist reviewed each submission independently, then met to reach consensus on each submission.

The reviewers were given advice on how to ensure that two independent reviews of the two submissions allocated to their district took place.

Analysis of results

Rung/achievement placements allocated by schools and random sampling review panels were converted to a numerical scale of 1–50. The rung or level difference was calculated by subtracting the school's exit rung (or level) placement from that of the panel. Negative differences therefore meant that the panel judged the school's placement to be lower.

Folios requiring further review

Folios with a significant difference (defined as eight or more rungs' difference) between school judgment and panel judgment were identified and the following criteria were used to select submissions for further review by state review panellists (SRPs) and QCAA officers:

- highest proportion of subjects with eight or more rungs' difference

- three or more students identified as having a change to rung level and/or LoA.

SRPs and QCAA officers independently reviewed these submissions and, after comparing the school judgment with the panel judgment, determined the appropriate action to be taken.

The information gained from this review will guide future professional development and training in specific subject areas.

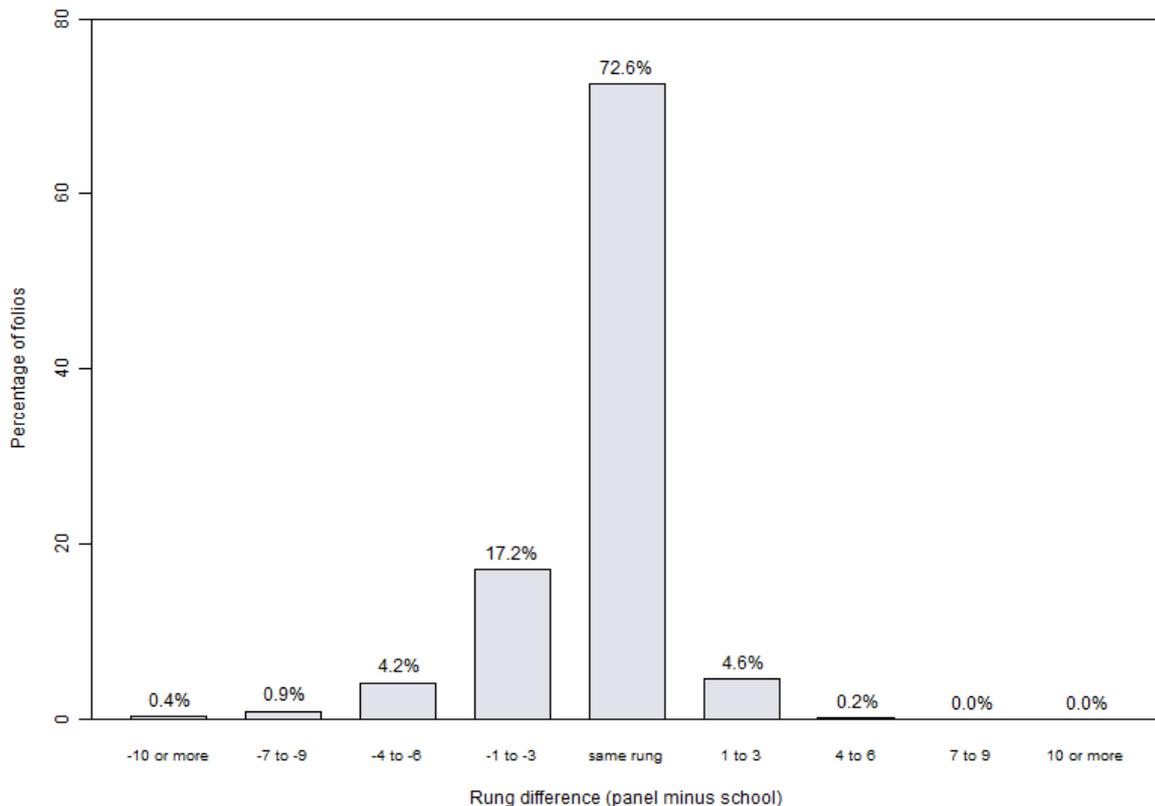
Findings

Overall differences

The random sampling panels were asked to comment on the standards evident within each school submission as applied by schools. As shown in Figure 2, 72.6% of folios had no rung difference and 94.3% were found to be either 'same rung' or within three rungs on the Form R6 submitted by their schools.

As noted in previous reports, there is a greater tendency for random sampling review panels to rate folios lower than the schools.

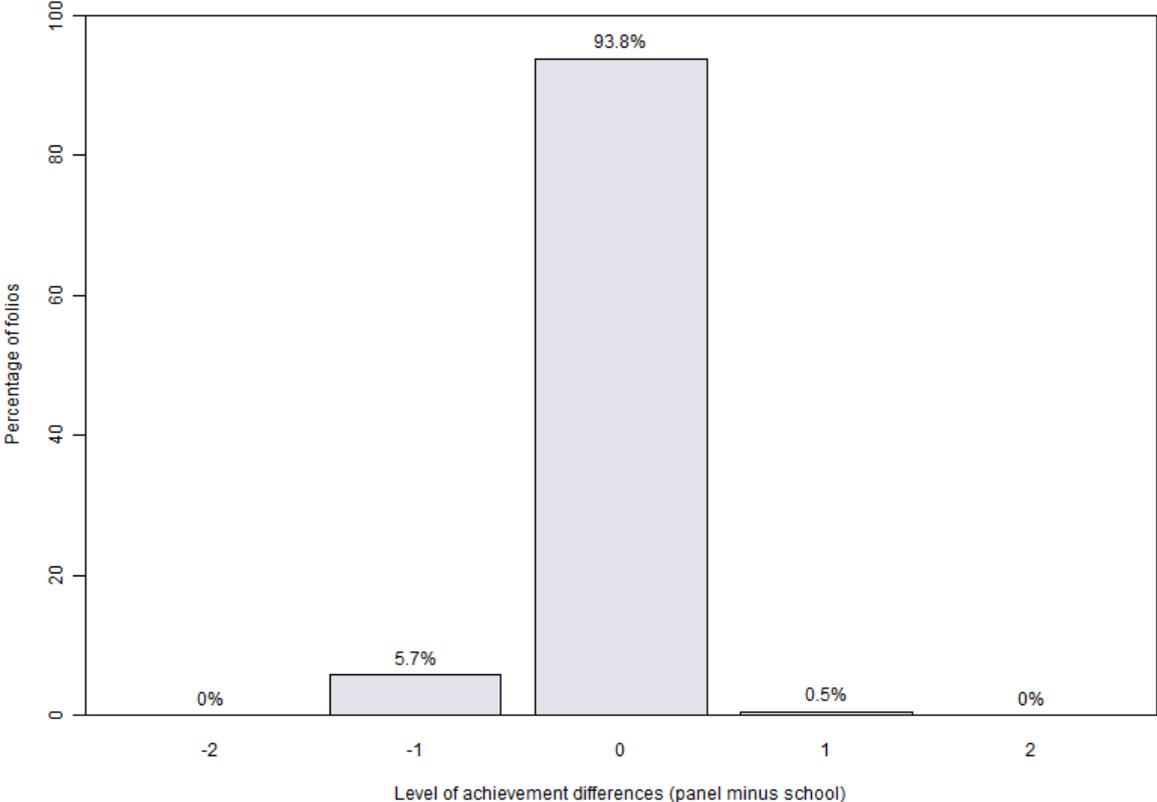
Figure 2: Distribution of rung differences for folios ¹



¹ Due to rounding, the total may not equal 100%.

There was a high level of agreement between the random sampling review panels and the schools about LoAs awarded to folios. Figure 3 indicates that reviewers found that 93.8% of LoAs awarded by the school were supported. While 5.7% of folios were judged to have been placed one LoA too high at exit, 0.5% of folios were found to have been awarded one level too low.

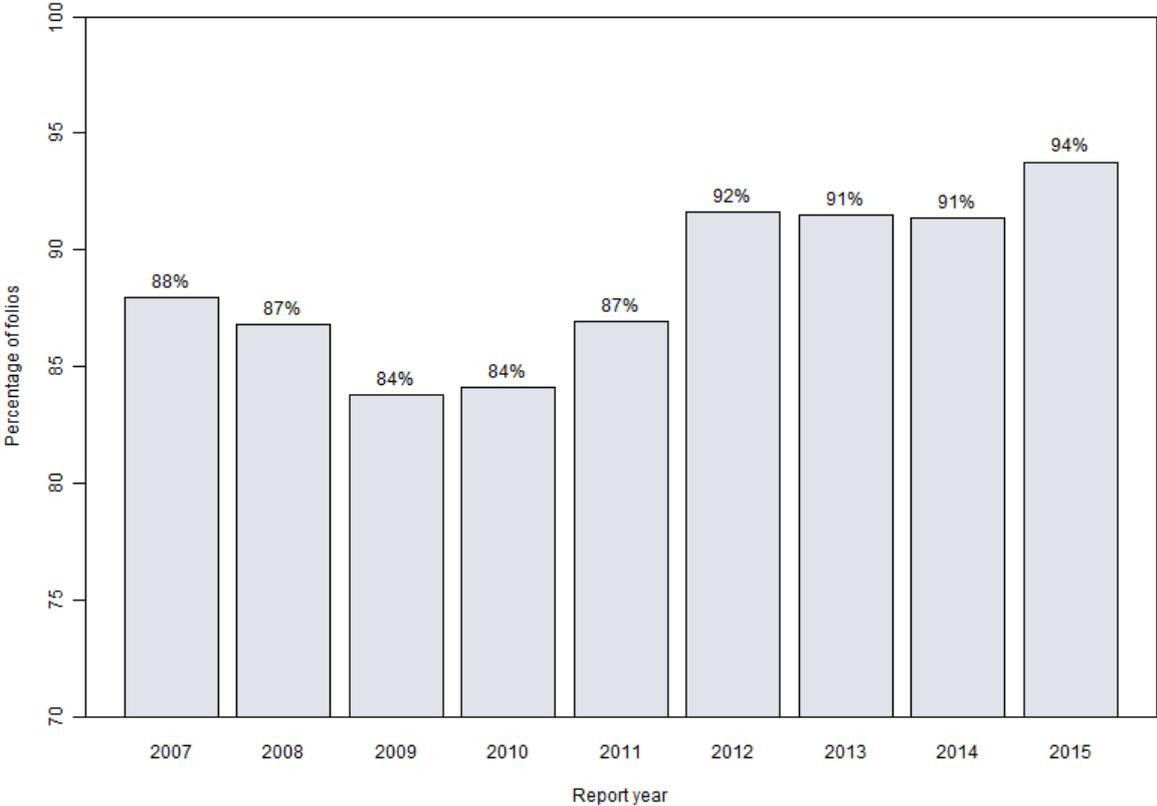
Figure 3: Distribution of LoA differences for folios ²



² Due to rounding, the total may not equal 100%.

Figure 4 shows that there has been some variation over time in the percentage of folios considered by random sampling review panels to have been placed appropriately in terms of LoA overall. At 94%, the 2015 result is consistent with the past few years.³

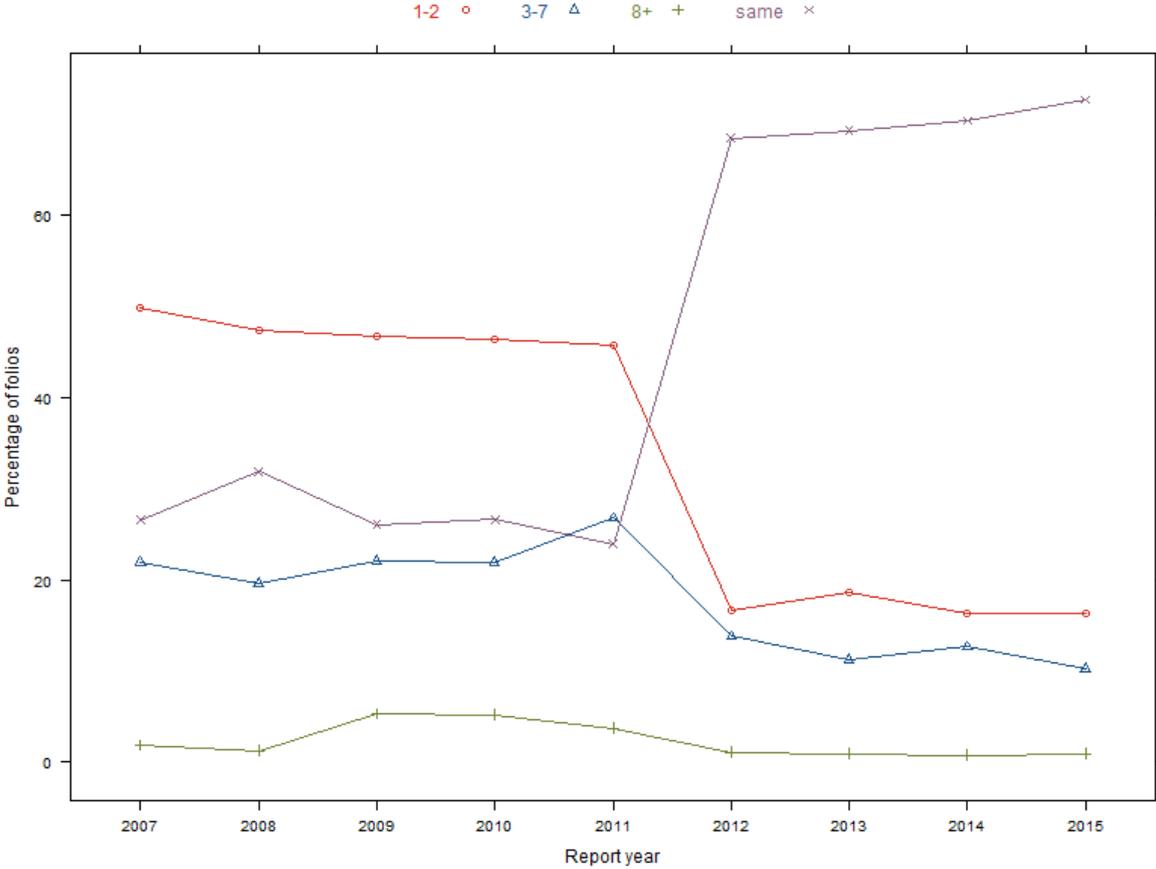
Figure 4: Comparison of percentage placed in same LoA



³ Readers should note smaller sample size of current report.

Figure 5 shows the historical comparisons for rung differences from 2007 to 2015. The 2015 results are generally consistent with past results.⁴

Figure 5: Comparison of rung differences across years



⁴ Readers should note smaller sample size of current report.

Subject analysis

Table 3 summarises the absolute mean rung differences by subject over time.⁵ The absolute mean does not take into consideration the direction of difference and therefore provides an overall indication of the degree of consistency in judgment based on rungs. The overall mean and standard deviation are for all subjects sampled in that year (not just those appearing in the table).

The table reinforces the trend noted in Figure 5 that 2015 has one of the highest levels of agreement of standards for any year, as reflected by the lowest absolute mean value. It also highlights that there was only one common subject in the 2014 and 2015 samples (Business Communication and Technologies).

Information Technology Systems, Geography and Modern History have the largest average mean differences.

The absolute mean for most subjects is lower than for any previous year.

Chemistry, Mathematics C and Ancient History have the smallest absolute mean rung differences.

Table 3: Absolute mean rung differences by subject

Subject	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Ancient History	2.16	1.45		1.76		1.19	0.7		0.56
Business Communication & Technologies			1.89		1.76	0.3		0.53	0.73
Chemistry		1.2		1.83	2.15		0.95		0.38
Geography			1.52	2.04	1.94		0.71		0.97
Hospitality Studies		0.98		1.84		0.45	0.5		0.67
Information Technology Systems	1.37		2.3	2.71		1.66	1.16		1.47
Mathematics C	1.62		2.42	1.88	1.9		0.91		0.55
Modern History	1.75	2.17	2.71	2.34		0.83	0.86		0.92
Physics		2.16		1.97	2.3		0.9		0.64
Standard deviation	1.89	1.79	2.72	2.71	2.35	1.69	1.78	1.58	1.54
Overall mean(absolute)	1.7	1.55	2.11	2.09	2.12	0.9	0.84	0.81	0.73

⁵ Readers should note smaller sample size of current report.

District analysis

Figure 6 compares absolute mean rung differences for random sampling panels in each district. Panels in the Townsville and Brisbane Central districts had the highest level of disagreement with the decisions made by schools about student placement across all subjects reviewed by the district.

Figure 6: Absolute mean rung differences by district of the random sampling review panel

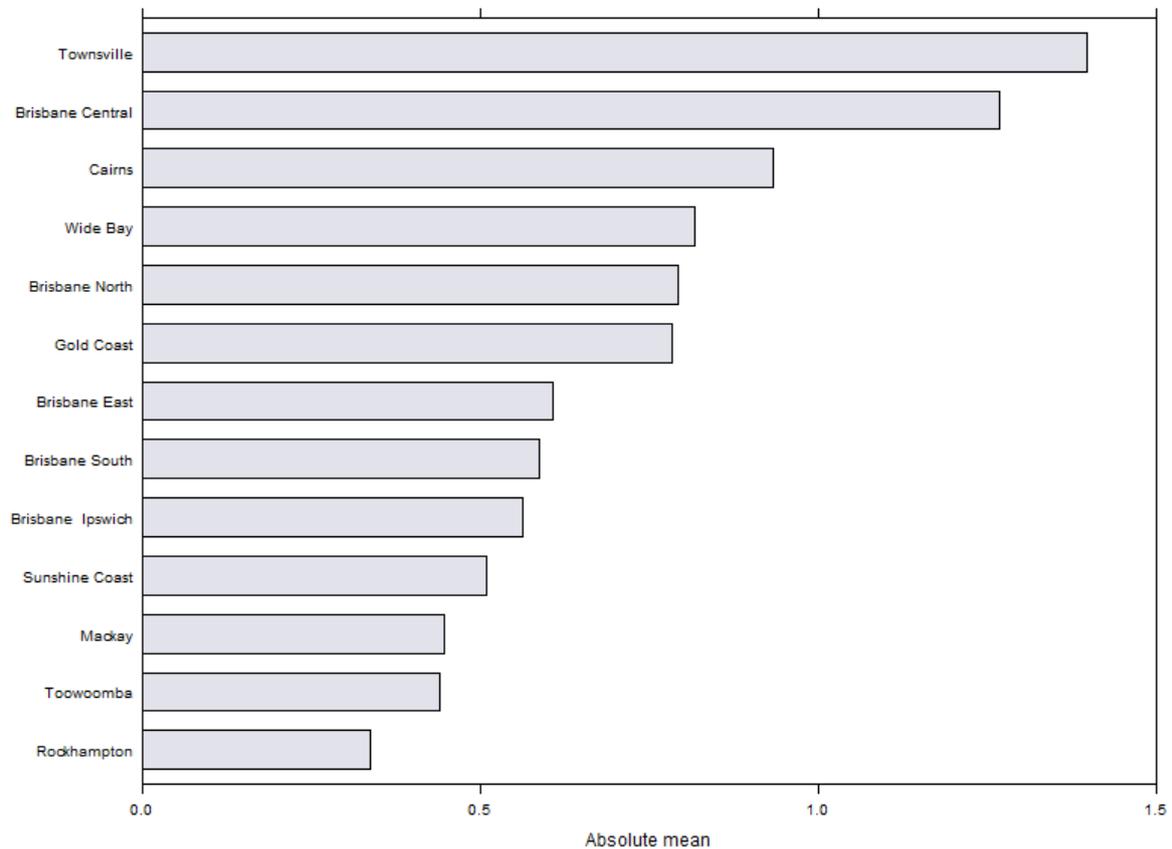


Figure 7 compares absolute mean rung differences for schools in each district. Mean rung differences across all subjects were largest for schools in the Sunshine Coast, Mackay and Wide Bay districts.

Figure 7: Absolute mean rung differences for schools in each district

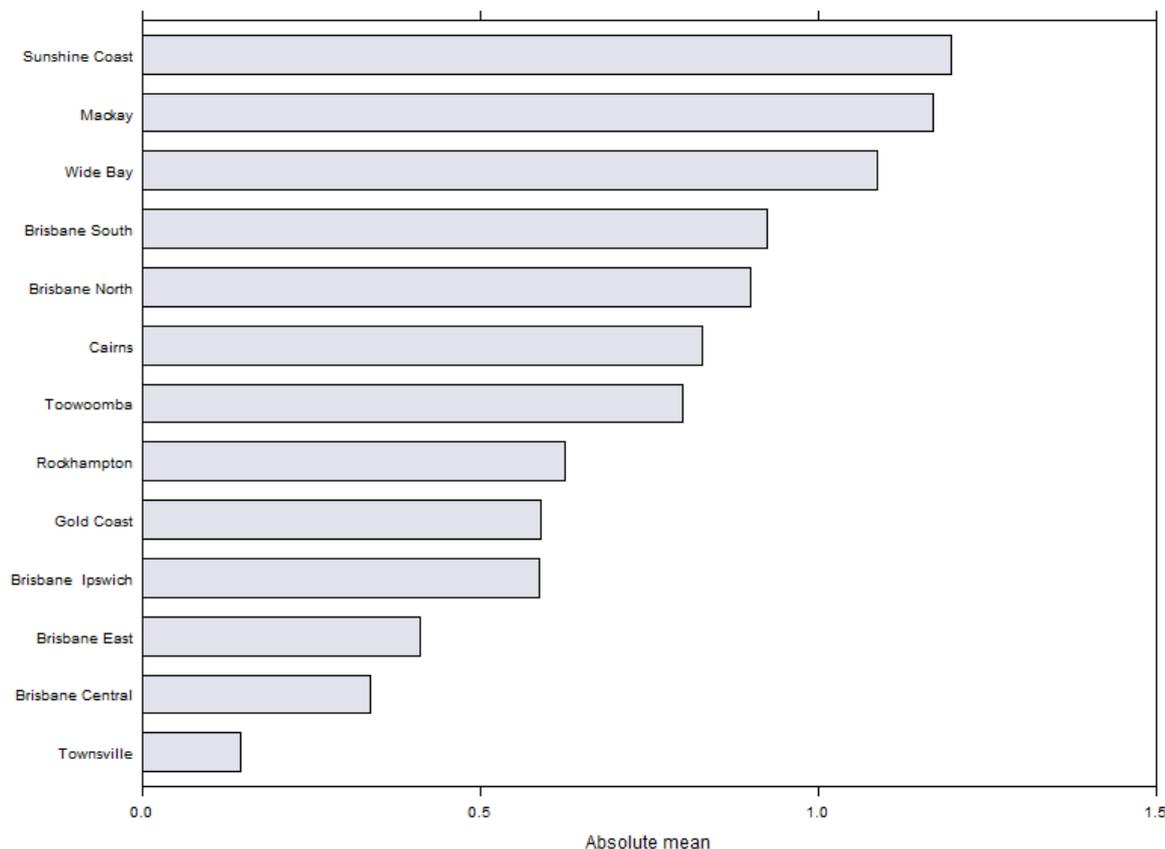


Table 4 compares absolute mean rung differences for random sampling panels in each district (Figure 6) with those of the schools' districts (Figure 7). Differences have been classified as large, medium or small to facilitate this analysis (where large is equivalent to greater than 1.5 rungs absolute mean difference and small is equivalent to less than one rung absolute mean difference). It should be noted that sample sizes received by district panels ranged from 83 to 126 folios and each district reviewed a different range of subjects. The most evident patterns to emerge from this comparison were:

- no large differences were found by random sample district panels or in schools within districts
- Townsville and Brisbane Central districts found medium differences in the folios they reviewed while other district panels found small differences
- while the Townsville district panel had the highest levels of disagreement with folios they reviewed, schools in the Townsville district had the lowest level of disagreement when reviewed by panels from other districts
- more than half of the districts showed only small differences for panels and schools.

Table 4: Comparison of random sampling and home district mean differences

		Random sampling district panels		
School's district	Difference	Large	Medium	Small
	Large (>1.5)			
	Medium (1-1.5)			Mackay Sunshine Coast Wide Bay
	Small (<1)		Brisbane Central Townsville	Brisbane East Brisbane Ipswich Brisbane North Brisbane South Cairns Gold Coast Rockhampton Toowoomba

Serious disagreement

Each year, the random sampling project report quotes figures for the level of serious disagreement over the exit LoAs awarded to folios. Table 5 summarises the rung differences where there has been an LoA difference. Over the years, the percentage of folios considered to have serious disagreement has ranged from 1% to 3%. At 1%, this remains consistent in 2015.⁶

Table 5: Cases of rung differences affecting level of achievement

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Sample size	1800	2248	2662	2774	3224	2649	3136	3192	1414
Different LoA with 1–2 rung differences	80 (4%)	114 (5%)	150 (6%)	146 (5%)	130 (4%)	79 (3%)	113 (4%)	113 (4%)	39 (3%)
Different LoA with 3–7 rung differences	105 (6%)	160 (7%)	191 (7%)	209 (8%)	198 (6%)	116 (4%)	126 (4%)	140 (4%)	35 (2%)
Different LoA with 8+ rung differences	32 (2%)	23 (1%)	71 (3%)	68 (2%)	93 (3%)	26 (1%)	27 (1%)	19 (1%)	12 (1%)
Total with different LoA	217	297	412	423	421	221	267	272	86

⁶ Readers should note smaller sample size of current report.

Submissions selected for additional review

After the initial review, 21 submissions (containing 49 folios) were recalled for additional review. Table 6 summarises the selected submissions. SRPs or senior education officers (SEOs) from the QCAA completed the additional reviews.

Modern History had the largest number of folios requiring additional review, followed by Information Technology Systems, Business Communication and Technologies and Geography.

After the additional review there were fewer folios with disagreements, indicating that the state panellists were more likely to agree with the schools' placement of students.

Table 6: Subject submissions selected for additional review (number of folios)

Subject	Submissions	Total folios	Number of folios with differences	
			Before SRP review	After SRP review
Ancient History	1	2	2	1
Business Communication & Technologies	3	8	8	2
Chemistry	1	2	2	0
Geography	3	7	6	5
Hospitality Studies	1	2	2	2
Information Technology Systems	4	10	9	6
Modern History	5	12	8	5
Physics	3	6	5	5
Total	21	49	37	20

SRPs and SEOs were asked to provide an independent assessment of the selected folios. The results of this review are summarised in Table 7.

The mean rung difference declined after the additional review. Despite an increase in the number of folios with small differences to rung placement, there is a smaller number with an LoA difference. Further review of additional folios is more likely to reduce the amount of disparity between school and random sampling review panel judgments.

The greatest number of discrepancies remained for Information Technology Systems, Business Communication & Technologies, Modern History and Geography.

Table 7: Summary of additional review

	Number of folios with differences	
	After random sampling	After second review
1–2 rung differences	4	17
3–7 rung differences	33	24
8+ rung differences	12	8
Different LoA	49	23
Mean rung difference	0.43	0.16
Absolute mean rung difference	5.29	4.45

Appendixes

Appendix A: Random Sampling Form RS1

Random Sampling Form RS1

School recording form

School	<School name>	School code	<SCHOOL>
Subject	<Subject name>	Subject code	<SUBJECT>
District	HOME: <REGIONNAME>	Panel code	<PANEL>

The following school recording form is to assist in the preparation of the random sample submission. For each of the students, the complete exit folio of responses is required. Please ensure that the level of achievement (LOA) and rung placements are recorded in the space provided (e.g. VH7). As each of the items is collected, please tick them off in the school column. Upon completion attach this form to the submission and send to the district coordinator.

Student	Name	LOA and rung placement	School	District coordinator
• Student A	<A>			
• Student B				
• Student C	<C>			
• Student D	<D>			
• Student E	<E>			
• Student F	<F>			
• Student G	<G>			
• A copy of the school's work program				
• A set of the assessment instruments used in the school's determination of the exit levels of achievement, with conditions identified, criteria sheets attached and expected responses where appropriate				
• Particular material required by syllabuses, e.g. audio and/or visual recordings				
• Any letters, signed by the principal, that may explain atypical situations				
• A profile of each selected student's achievement with the exit relative achievement indicated				

The information you provide on this form will be used for moderation as part of legislative functions described in *Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014* (s.14). Personal information will be accessed by authorised QCAA staff, including panel staff, and handled in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*. The information provided will be disclosed to the relevant school and teachers for moderation purposes. Personal information will not be disclosed to other parties without consent unless required to do so by law.



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Appendix B: Random Sampling Form RS2

Random Sampling Form RS2

Panellist recording form

School	<School name>	School code	<SCHOOL>
Subject	<Subject name>	Subject code	<SUBJECT>
District	HOME: <REGIONNAME> AWAY: <AWAYREGIONNAME>	Panel code	<PANEL>

After making judgements about the evidence in the student folios, indicate the level of achievement and the rung placement for each student that reflects the relative achievement at Exit.

Student	Name	Rung placement by school	Rung placement by panellist
A	<A>		
B			
C	<C>		
D	<D>		
E	<E>		
F	<F>		
G	<G>		

Comments:

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

The information you provide on this form will be used for moderation as part of legislative functions described in *Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014* (s.14). Personal information will be accessed by authorised QCAA staff, including panel staff, and handled in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*. The information provided will be disclosed to the relevant school and teachers for moderation purposes. Personal information will not be disclosed to other parties without consent unless required to do so by law.



for all Queensland schools

Appendix C: Random Sampling Form RS3

Random Sampling Form RS3

RPC recording form

School	<School name>	School code	<SCHOOL>
Subject	<Subject name>	Subject code	<SUBJECT>
District	HOME: <REGIONNAME> AWAY: <AWAYREGIONNAME>	Panel code	<PANEL>

After making judgements about the evidence in the student folios, indicate the level of achievement and the rung placement for each student that reflects the relative achievement at Exit.

Student	Name	Rung placement by school	Rung placement by RPC
A	<A>		
B			
C	<C>		
D	<D>		
E	<E>		
F	<F>		
G	<G>		

Comments:

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

The information you provide on this form will be used for moderation as part of legislative functions described in *Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014* (s.14). Personal information will be accessed by authorised QCAA staff, including panel staff, and handled in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*. The information provided will be disclosed to the relevant school and teachers for moderation purposes. Personal information will not be disclosed to other parties without consent unless required to do so by law.



For all Queensland schools

Appendix D: Random Sampling Form RS4

Random Sampling Form RS4

Consensus form

School	<School name>	School code	<SCHOOL>
Subject	<Subject name>	Subject code	<SUBJECT>
District	HOME: <REGIONNAME> AWAY: <AWAYREGIONNAME>	Panel code	<PANEL>

After making judgements about the evidence in the student folios, indicate the level of achievement and the rung placement for each student that reflects the relative achievement at Exit.

Student	Name	RS1 School	RS2 Panellist	RS3 RPC	Consensus
A	<A>				
B					
C	<C>				
D	<D>				
E	<E>				
F	<F>				
G	<G>				

Comments:

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

The information you provide on this form will be used for moderation as part of legislative functions described in *Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014* (s.14). Personal information will be accessed by authorised QCAA staff, including panel staff, and handled in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*. The information provided will be disclosed to the relevant school and teachers for moderation purposes. Personal information will not be disclosed to other parties without consent unless required to do so by law.



For all Queensland schools

Appendix E: All subjects reviewed over the past 9 years

Subject	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
English		*	*		*		*	*	
French		*			*	*		*	
German					*	*		*	
Italian									
Japanese		*			*	*		*	
Chinese					*	*		*	
Ancient History	*	*		*		*	*		*
Modern History	*	*	*	*		*	*		*
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies									
Geography			*	*	*		*		*
Economics	*		*		*	*	*	*	
Study of Society									
Legal Studies	*		*	*	*		*		
Mathematics A	*		*		*	*		*	
Mathematics B	*		*		*	*		*	
Mathematics C	*		*	*	*		*		*
Chemistry		*		*	*		*		*
Physics		*		*	*		*		*
Biology		*	*		*	*		*	
Earth Science									
Marine Studies		*		*		*		*	
Science21				*			*	*	
Agricultural Science		*		*	*			*	
Accounting			*		*	*	*	*	
Business Communication & Technologies			*		*	*		*	*
Information Technology Systems	*		*	*		*	*		*
Health Education				*			*	*	
Physical Education	*	*		*		*	*	*	

Subject	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Home Economics		*	*	*			*	*	
Hospitality Studies		*		*		*	*		*
Engineering Technology			*						
Graphics	*			*	*		*		
Technology Studies				*	*			*	
Visual Art		*	*		*	*		*	
Dance		*		*			*	*	
Study of Religion			*	*	*	*		*	
Information Processing & Technology	*		*	*	*		*	*	
Drama		*		*	*		*		
Music		*	*		*	*		*	
Film Television & New Media		*	*			*		*	