

Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test

Guideline

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1 Introduction

A guideline is a statutory instrument that provides detailed information of policy or procedures required to complete the legislative framework. This guideline provides school personnel and other interested parties with information about the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test.

The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) establishes and amends the rules for this test under its powers and functions set out in the *Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014* (the Act), the *Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Regulation 2014* (the Regulation) and appropriate amendments. The Act and the Regulation are available at www.legislation.qld.gov.au/OQPChome.htm.

Terms used in this guideline are sometimes different from terms used in the Act and the Regulation. A list of terms with synonymous meanings is provided below.

Terms used in guidelines	Terms in the Act or the Regulation
Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test	core skills test
candidate/student	person
test centre	place at which a core skills test can be taken
special provision	special arrangements/special consideration

1.1 What is the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test?

Under section 13 of the Act, the QCAA has a function to develop tests prescribed under a regulation. Section 64 of the Regulation requires the QCAA to develop a core skills test.

In fulfilling this obligation, the QCAA develops an annual test known as the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test.

The QCS Test is one component of the Senior Education Profile (SEP) for Year 12 students and is administered across Queensland each year in the third last week of school in Term 3 before the start of the September school holidays.

The QCS Test is:

- a common statewide test designed for Queensland Year 12 students
- an achievement test, not an intelligence test or an aptitude test
- grounded in the Queensland senior curriculum
- accessible to all Queensland students in the year they receive their Senior Statement regardless of individual differences in subject choice.

The QCS Test provides:

- group results for comparing the achievement of students in different subject-groups and different schools in order to calculate Overall Positions (OPs)
- group results for calculating Field Positions (FPs) — up to five per student, depending on subject choice
- individual results reported on a five-point scale.

The QCS Test is developed and administered, and student responses graded and certified, by the QCAA as required under the Act, Regulation and appropriate amendments.

1.2 What is the purpose of the test?

The QCS Test contributes data for the calculation of Overall Positions (OPs) and Field Positions (FPs), which are used to rank OP-eligible Year 12 students for tertiary entrance.

To make it possible to compare the achievement of OP-eligible Year 12 students in one subject in a school with the achievement of OP-eligible Year 12 students in other subjects in that school and in different schools, the QCAA needs a standard baseline of comparison.

The baseline of comparison is the group data of OP-eligible Year 12 students.

A student's subject achievement indicators (SAIs), awarded by the school for each of the student's Authority subjects, and scaled according to the group results from the QCS Test, are used for the calculation of a student's OP. An individual's QCS Test grade is not used directly in the calculation of their OP.

1.3 What are the characteristics of the test?

The QCS Test is a test that:

- requires students to undertake a writing task, multiple-choice items and short-response items
- takes place over two consecutive days and is held only once each year on the dates determined by the QCAA
- requires reading and writing of Standard Australian English
- is conducted under uniform conditions in test centres across the state
- is based on the common curriculum elements of the Queensland senior syllabuses
- requires students to respond to a variety of stimulus material
- allows sufficient working time for students to attempt all tasks.

The characteristics of the QCS Test listed above will not be varied for a student, as this would affect the integrity of the test and the grades awarded.

1.4 What does the QCS Test assess?

The QCS Test assesses achievement in the common elements that are the threads of the Queensland senior curriculum. These are called Common Curriculum Elements (CCEs). The CCEs are listed at www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/qcs-test/common-curriculum-elements-cces.

Although the level of sophistication demanded by the test is appropriate to Year 12 students, particular knowledge of specific Year 12 subjects is not tested. However, the test assumes basic levels of general knowledge and vocabulary in Standard Australian English, and a Year 10 knowledge of mathematical operations.

1.5 Format of the test

The QCS Test consists of four testpapers:

- one Writing Task (WT) testpaper
- two Multiple Choice (MC) testpapers
- one Short Response (SR) testpaper.

The testpapers require students to respond to a variety of stimulus material, including visual material such as maps, diagrams, photographs and cartoons; written material such as prose passages, poetry and television transcripts; and mathematical, tabular and graphical material.

Writing Task (WT) testpaper

The WT testpaper:

- allows 10 minutes perusal time and 2 hours working time
- requires students to compose an extended piece of continuous prose (about 600 words) in Standard Australian English.

Multiple Choice (MC) testpapers

Each of the two MC testpapers:

- allows 10 minutes perusal time and 1 hour 30 minutes working time
- requires students to select the best of four alternative answers (options) for each of 50 items.

Short Response (SR) testpaper

The SR testpaper:

- allows 10 minutes perusal time and 2 hours working time
- requires students to respond in different ways, e.g. writing a sentence or paragraph, drawing a diagram, performing a calculation.

2 Sitting the QCS Test

2.1 Who is eligible to sit the test?

Section 65 of the Regulation identifies people who are eligible to sit the test.

- All Year 12 students have a **right** to sit the test in the year they receive their Senior Statement.
- Year 12 students who, because of their subject choices and number of units completed, are eligible for an OP or an equivalent OP (visa students) **must** sit the test in the year they receive their Senior Statement in order to retain eligibility for an OP.
- Year 12 students who are not eligible for an OP or an equivalent OP **may choose** to sit the test in the year they receive their Senior Statement.
- People who are not in full-time schooling but who have completed Year 12 in full-time secondary schooling or are at least 18 years of age in the year in which they nominate to sit the test **may apply** to sit the test as private-entry candidates. The closing date for applications is 21 May.

2.2 Information for students and parents

The publication *Student Information Bulletin* provides an overview of the QCS Test for Year 12 students. It includes sample test items and responses. Copies of this publication are sent to schools early in the year for distribution to Year 12 students.

Two other publications are available at www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/qcs-test/publications.

- *A guide for parents and carers* provides general information about the QCS Test.
- *Preparing for the QCS Test* provides sample questions that draw on assumed mathematical knowledge.

2.3 Preparing for the test

Preparation for the QCS Test comes through syllabus-based learning experiences.

Most students also familiarise themselves with the nature of the QCS Test — becoming comfortable with extended writing of the length required in the response to the writing task testpaper; the format of multiple-choice items and how to fill out the multiple-choice response sheet; and different forms of responses to short-response items. This contributes to what is known as ‘test wiseness’.

Students should ensure that they have (and are able to use) all essential equipment; otherwise, they may not be able to respond to some items.

The QCAA does not involve itself with preparation for the QCS Test. However, the QCAA prepares an annual publication, *Retrospective*, which provides detailed and wide-ranging feedback on the test and the responses of students. The *Retrospective* for each year from 2001 is available on the QCAA website, and can assist students prepare for the test. Past testpapers are available to help prepare students for the test (see Section 7, Resources).

Most schools provide some focused preparation for the test.

Any perceived lack of preparation before the test will not be taken into consideration in grading responses.

3 Administration of the QCS Test

3.1 Test centres

Under Section 72 of the Regulation, the QCAA must decide the places at which a core skills test can be taken and publish them on the QCAA website.

Test centres are, under normal circumstances, Queensland secondary schools that have Year 12 students.

A school must seek approval from the QCAA to use, as a test centre, a room that is not part of a secondary school. This must be done annually.

If the distance an OP-eligible student would have to travel to the closest existing test centre is excessive, exemption from the requirement to sit the test is available (see Section 4 for information about special provision).

3.2 Appointed officials

Chief supervisor

The chief supervisor is the person responsible for the proper conduct of the QCS Test at a test centre. The principal of a school that is a test centre is the chief supervisor of the QCS Test for that test centre. However, the principal may delegate all or part of the chief supervisor's responsibilities to another member of the teaching staff. In this situation, the principal must inform the QCAA.

Supervisor

A supervisor is a person (including the chief supervisor) who administers the test and supervises students during test sessions. The chief supervisor will appoint supervisors from the teaching staff of the school that is a test centre.

Chief community representatives

Two chief community representatives for each test centre will be appointed by the QCAA from nominations made by the chief supervisor for each test centre. These positions are filled by people external to the test centre.

The role of chief community representatives is to observe the conduct of the test at designated test centres and to help the QCAA maintain the security of test materials at test centres before, during and after the administration of the test.

Community representatives

Community representatives for test centres where there are more than 150 students will be appointed by the QCAA from nominations made by chief supervisors. The role of community representatives is to observe the conduct of the test at designated test centres.

3.3 Timing of the test

The QCS Test takes place on the Tuesday and Wednesday in the third-last week of Term 3 of the school year.

Each testpaper is administered only once, on the date and at the time determined by the QCAA. Testpapers cannot be administered before or after the timetabled test session.

The scheduled dates for the 2019 test are Tuesday 3 September and Wednesday 4 September.

Each test session must start no earlier and no later than the times that the QCAA sets down. Within these times, the actual starting times for the test may be set to suit local circumstances as determined by the chief supervisor.

Note: The QCS Test will be administered for the final time in 2019. Queensland is introducing a new QCE system starting with Year 11 students in 2019. Further information is available at: www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-qce.

Testpaper	Session time
Day One: Tuesday	
Writing Task (WT)	The chief supervisor will begin the perusal time no earlier than 8:50 am and no later than 9:20 am. Perusal time: 10 minutes Working time: 2 hours
Multiple Choice I (MC I)	The chief supervisor will begin the perusal time no earlier than 12:30 pm and no later than 1 pm. Perusal time: 10 minutes Working time: 1 hour 30 minutes
Day Two: Wednesday	
Short Response (SR)	The chief supervisor will begin the perusal time no earlier than 8:50 am and no later than 9:20 am. Perusal time: 10 minutes Working time: 2 hours
Multiple Choice II (MC II)	The chief supervisor will begin the perusal time no earlier than 12:30 pm and no later than 1 pm. Perusal time: 10 minutes Working time: 1 hour 30 minutes

A test session begins when the chief supervisor admits students into the test room, and ends when the chief supervisor has dismissed all students.

3.4 Directions for the administration of the test

The QCAA will publish documents detailing the directions for the administration of the test. The publications will be made available to the appointed officials of a test centre by the end of July.

The QCAA will provide each test centre with:

- an attendance roll listing the names of all Year 12 students enrolled at the school and any other student allocated to sit the test at the test centre
- place cards for each Year 12 student enrolled at the school and any other student allocated to sit the test at the test centre.

3.5 Student number

The QCS Test student number for:

- a Year 12 student will be the QCAA student number allocated to the student by the school in the Student Data Capture System (SDCS)
- a private-entry candidate will be the number allocated to the candidate by the QCAA.

3.6 Student responsibilities

A student is required to:

- comply with all reasonable directions given by a supervisor
- bring into a test room only the authorised pens, pencils, erasers, rulers and other such equipment permitted for the test session as specified in the information provided by the QCAA to students and on the front cover of the testpaper
- deposit any personal belongings, bags, electronic devices including mobile phones, paper, books, manuscripts and other unauthorised materials in the place designated by the chief supervisor
- move quickly and quietly to the allocated desk for the test session, as directed by a supervisor. A student may also be required to move to another desk, at any time, if asked by a supervisor to do so
- keep the place card, located on top of the allocated desk, clearly visible
- communicate with supervisors only. A student is not to communicate or try to communicate with another student during a test session
- ensure that their ID barcode label is attached and their student number is entered onto their response book/sheet.

3.7 Student equipment

Students must carry their authorised test equipment in a transparent container. A clear plastic bag is sufficient.

The publication *Student Information Bulletin*, which is distributed to students in February, includes a list of equipment that can be used during the test.

Students must check the finalised list of equipment in the *Instructions to students*, which is sent to schools by late July. A supervisor may inspect equipment at any time before, during and after a test session.

3.8 Supervisor responsibilities and powers

A supervisor:

- will not, other than in exceptional circumstances, allow a student to leave a test session within 30 minutes of the start of the working time regardless of whether the student is abandoning the test session. If a student has left the test room because of exceptional circumstances, the chief supervisor will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that no communication occurs, through any medium, between that student and any other student or any outside agency
- will not, during the administration of a test session, give testpapers to any persons other than the students sitting the test
- is required to make every effort to ensure that students have suitable conditions in which to sit the test and to give students every opportunity to complete the testpapers
- will have, and may exercise, such powers as are necessary for the proper and official conduct of a test session
- may ask a student for proof of identity if it is considered necessary to do so

- may take possession of any unauthorised material or equipment (e.g. mobile phones, bags, writing paper) brought into a test room. The chief supervisor is to provide a safe area where students are to leave their personal belongings.

3.9 Access to testpapers

A supervisor:

- must ensure that no-one other than a student reads or works through the testpaper during the test session
- may examine a testpaper only to check when a student indicates that a testpaper is faulty
- must not relay or discuss through any medium, details of the content of a testpaper until the end of the particular session
- must not act in any way that may be deemed a breach in security or cause advantage or disadvantage to one or more students.

3.10 Access to a test room

No-one other than students listed on the attendance roll, the chief supervisor, supervisors, appointed chief community representatives, community representatives and QCAA test observers is allowed into a test room during the administration of a test session, unless authorised by the chief supervisor as directed by the QCAA.

No-one other than the chief supervisor, supervisors, appointed chief community representatives, community representatives and QCAA test observers is allowed into a test room during the 45 minutes immediately before or immediately after a test session, unless authorised by the chief supervisor as directed by the QCAA.

Members of the media are not to be given access to test rooms at any time during test sessions.

A person, whether a student or not, who is given permission to enter or leave a test room shall comply with all conditions on which the permission is given.

A student:

- may not enter or leave a test room before being given permission to do so by a supervisor
- will not be allowed to enter a test room after the test session has begun except by express permission of the chief supervisor or of the supervisor then in charge of the test room. Such permission will not be given more than 30 minutes from the start of the working time (other than on re-entry after temporary absence with permission) except in special circumstances and after providing an explanation that satisfies the chief supervisor.

A supervisor:

- will not give permission to a student to leave a test room temporarily unless the student agrees to remain under supervision while out of the room
- will not, unless previously authorised by the QCAA, give permission to a student to leave a test room within 30 minutes from the start of the working time or within 10 minutes of the finishing time, even if the student has completed the test or is abandoning the test session
- may allow a student to leave a test room because of illness or other emergency.

3.11 Refusal of entry to a test room

Section 77 of the Regulation prescribes the conditions under which a student may be refused entry to or be expelled from a test centre.

While entry by a student may be refused by a chief supervisor, students should be afforded every opportunity to sit the test. Therefore, chief supervisors are instructed to follow a modified procedure indicated below. Entry by a student may be refused by a chief supervisor if:

- the person presenting for the test is not listed on the attendance roll for the test centre. In this situation the chief supervisor is to contact the QCAA for advice on what action to take. If the QCAA is satisfied that the person is not eligible to sit the test, the person is to be refused entry to the test room; otherwise, the QCAA may give permission for the person to sit the test pending further investigation
- a student attempts to bring unauthorised material into a test room or refuses to deposit his or her personal belongings and unauthorised material in the area designated by the chief supervisor. In this situation the chief supervisor is to tell the student that, upon relinquishing the unauthorised material, the student will be allowed to sit the test but the circumstances will be reported to the QCAA, and the QCAA will decide whether or not to award a QCS Test grade. If the student will not surrender the unauthorised material, they are to be refused entry to the test centre.
- a student arrives 30 minutes after the beginning of the working time for a test session. In this situation the chief supervisor of the test centre may allow the student to be admitted if there are special circumstances and a satisfactory explanation. If there are no special circumstances or if a satisfactory explanation is not given, the chief supervisor is to tell the student that they will be allowed to sit the test but the circumstances will be reported to the QCAA, and the QCAA will decide whether or not to award a QCS Test grade.
- at any time after the start of a test session, whether initially or after temporary absence, the chief supervisor considers that the student has had an opportunity for cheating while outside the test room. In this situation the chief supervisor is to tell the student that they will be allowed to sit the test but the circumstances will be reported to the QCAA and the QCAA will decide whether or not to award a QCS Test grade.
- a student is considered to have had prior access to test content. In this situation the chief supervisor is to tell the student that they will be allowed to sit the test but the circumstances will be reported to the QCAA and the QCAA will decide whether or not to award a QCS Test grade.

See Section 3.13 for further information about cheating, and Section 6 for information about reviews and appeals.

3.12 Expulsion from a test session

A chief supervisor may expel a student from a test room if:

- the student is found to be impersonating an eligible person, and is not eligible to sit the test on their own behalf
- the student creates a disturbance that distracts other students attempting to complete a testpaper. If a student is deliberately disturbing other students through his or her behaviour, a supervisor is to make every effort to prevent the student from causing further distraction e.g. by moving the student to another test room to complete the testpaper. The chief supervisor is to make every effort to allow the student and all other students to complete a

testpaper. If the student refuses to follow the directions of a supervisor in this matter and continues to disturb others, the chief supervisor is to expel the student from the test room.

- the student is found to have unauthorised material on their person. In this situation, the unauthorised material is to be removed from the student and the student informed that they will be allowed to complete the test session, but the circumstances will be reported to the QCAA, and the QCAA will decide whether or not to award a QCS Test grade. If the student will not surrender the unauthorised material, they are to be expelled from the test centre, and the circumstances reported to the QCAA.
- the student acts in any way that prevents the test from being conducted fairly. The chief supervisor may move the student to another test room to complete the testpaper and is to make every effort to allow the student to complete a testpaper. If the student refuses to move to another test room or to follow the directions of a supervisor in this matter, the chief supervisor is to expel the student from the test room.

A chief supervisor should *not* expel a student from the test session in the following circumstances. The student should be allowed to complete the test, but warned that the circumstances will be reported to the QCAA and the QCAA will decide whether or not to award a QCS Test grade.

- the student is found to have had prior access to the test content
- a student cheats by copying from another candidate or communicating with other students during the test.

See Section 3.13 for further information about cheating, and Section 6 for information about reviews and appeals.

3.13 Cheating and other forms of academic misconduct

Students must not cheat. Cheating is an act of academic misconduct and is contrary to the rules of the test. Candidates may be observed cheating during the test or the QCAA may identify them after the test. Each year, the QCAA compares the MC results of each pair of students sitting the QCS Test for the number of correct and identical incorrect responses. Where pairs of students have similar response patterns, the QCAA also looks at SR and WT results, the Temporary absence register (which records temporary absences from the test room) and the seating plan for students who are at the same school. Where there is an extremely high number of matching correct and incorrect responses for students from the same school — well beyond what could have happened by chance alone — the school is contacted and the situation is investigated.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not confined to:

- making it possible for another student to copy responses — deliberately or knowingly. Students should be vigilant about covering responses, particularly MC response sheets that are separate from the testpaper. A response sheet should be covered or turned face down unless it is being written upon
- looking at another student's work
- copying another student's work
- plagiarising someone else's work. A student's response must be the student's own work and not a reproduction of someone else's writing

- beginning to write during perusal time or continuing to write after the instruction to stop work was given. Either of these would constitute having an unfair advantage over other students
- bringing unauthorised equipment or materials – such as non-approved calculators, mobile phones or other electronic devices – into the test room. Students must remove mobile phones from their pockets before entering the test room. Phones must be left outside or handed to a supervisor immediately upon entry to the test room. Only permitted materials that are needed for a particular test session are to be brought into the test room
- a student having any notation written on their body, clothing or other object brought into the test room. Students' own paper is not permitted for any of the subtests
- communicating with any person other than a supervisor, e.g. through talking or whispering, passing notes, making gestures or sharing equipment with another student.

A student who engages in academic misconduct will not receive a QCS Test grade nor will their test results be included in the scaling parameters for their school.

4 Special provision

The QCAA recognises that some students are affected by a medical condition, an impairment, or exceptional circumstances that may act as a barrier to their access to the test or to their demonstration of their achievement in the test. To minimise such barriers special provision is made available.

The rationale for the policy and procedures for special provision is based on:

- principles of justice and equity
- the need to make every effort to give students with impairments the opportunity to participate in the test on the same basis as students without impairments
- the need to ensure that special provision does not provide an unfair advantage to any student
- the need to assess actual achievement, not perceived ability or potential
- compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Commonwealth)
- compliance with the Queensland *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*.

The following provisions are available.

Before the test

- **special arrangements** are practical adjustments to the test conditions, e.g. restbreaks, A3-size test materials, use of a computer
- **exemption** allows a student to be absent from the test and remain OP-eligible

After the test

- **absentee exemption** allows a student who was unavoidably absent from the test to remain OP-eligible
- **declaring a test grade null and void** allows a student who sat the test to choose not to receive a test grade but to remain OP-eligible.

4.1 Effect of special provision on OPs

Approved special provision (including exemption) has no effect on a student's OP eligibility or on the manner of the calculation of their OP.

If exemption is approved or a test grade is declared null and void, the student's OP and FPs (if applicable):

- will be calculated in the same way as for OP-eligible students who sat the test
- will not be directly affected by the student not being awarded a QCS Test grade.

4.2 Further information

For details, see the *Special provision handbook: Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test 2019* www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/qcs-test/special-provision.

Applications must be submitted online via the QCS Test special provision applications area of the QCAA secure website. Information about the application process will be published in a QCAA Memo in mid-March. Memos are available at www.qcaa.qld.edu/about/publications.

5 After the QCS Test

5.1 Marking of responses

All WT, SR and MC responses are marked in Brisbane. The QCAA recruits, trains and monitors the work of WT and SR markers.

Writing Task

Each response will be marked by at least three different markers who have undergone intensive training in applying the specified criteria and standards. Markers work independently, that is, without knowing the grades awarded by other markers. Referee marking will occur as necessary.

Short Response

Each response will be marked at least twice by different markers who have undergone intensive training in applying the item-specific marking schemes. A marker marks only a subset of the responses — not the whole response booklet. Markers work independently, that is, without knowing the grades awarded by other markers. Referee marking will occur as necessary.

Multiple Choice

The MC response sheets will be electronically marked. Each correct answer will be given one mark credit. Each incorrect answer will be given no credit. Unattempted items will be given no credit. There will be no penalty for an incorrect response.

Return of scripts

Test scripts become the property of the QCAA. Test scripts are not returned to students after the test.

Students should retain their copies of the WT and MC testpapers, and the SR miniature testpaper. Students are encouraged to retain the draft copies of their response to the WT.

Retrospective

The *Retrospective*, published in January each year, provides feedback on the QCS Test, the keys to multiple-choice items, marking schemes and selected student responses. Retrospectives are available at www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/qcs-test/retrospectives.

5.2 Markers

The QCAA appoints reliable and qualified persons to mark responses to the QCS Test.

Qualifications of markers

QCS Test marker applicants must satisfy the following criteria:

- be a registered (or previously registered) teacher
- demonstrated understanding of assessment based on criteria and standards
- ability to apply a prescriptive marking model
- demonstrated ability to follow instructions correctly
- satisfactory achievement in the recruitment tests. WT marker applicants submit their marking of sample student scripts. SR marker applicants sit a test of spelling, vocabulary, comprehension and use of mathematical operations.

5.3 Determining and reporting test results

Determining an individual result

A student may be awarded a test grade only after sitting the whole test, that is, after having attended all four test sessions. Attendance at a test session is indicated by being marked present by the supervisor, regardless of whether the student has made any attempt on the testpaper.

Coursework assessments, such as assignments and tests conducted by schools, have no influence on the judgment of a student's QCS Test grade.

Special consideration in the assessment of achievement

No special consideration is given when marking responses or assessing achievement. The grading of a student's responses is based only on the merits of the work. No other factors are considered. Markers are not allowed to guess what students may have achieved in other circumstances.

If a student believes that their test performance was impaired through illness, injury or some other relevant factor that affected them at the time of the test, or a short time before the test, they can apply to the QCAA to have the grade for the test declared null and void (see Section 7 for information about reviews and repeals).

Reporting an individual result

QCS Test grades are reported to students:

- on the Senior Statement/Statement of Results (or Statement of Achievement for private-entry candidates)
- without reference to any special provision that may have applied.

5.4 Determining not to report a result

The QCAA is required to award a grade to each student who sits the QCS Test unless one of the following applies:

- there are reasons to refuse to award a grade, for example, in cases of cheating
- due to exceptional circumstances, the QCAA decides to declare a grade null and void (this will not affect the student's OP eligibility).

Refusal to award a grade

The QCAA may refuse to grade a test in any of the following circumstances:

- in cases of cheating/academic misconduct
- in cases of refusal of entry
- in cases of expulsion from the test room
- because of exceptional circumstances (e.g. the QCAA decides to declare a grade null and void because of unexpected illness when sitting the test).

If the QCAA refuses to award a grade for a candidate:

- the candidate/student and the school, if applicable, will be told of the proposed decision in writing (a *show cause* notice) that states:
 - the proposed decision
 - the grounds for the proposed decision
 - an outline of the facts and circumstances forming the basis for the grounds
 - an invitation to the candidate/student to show within a stated period (the *show cause* period) why the proposed decision should not be made
- the candidate/student will have at least 14 days to make a written statement in response to the QCAA's show cause notice
- the QCAA will make its decision whether or not to refuse to award a grade within seven days of the deadline for receiving the candidate's response.

If the QCAA's decision to refuse to award a grade is upheld:

- the candidate/student will be told in writing
- the QCAA will not use the student's data in the group data for the calculation of OPs.

A candidate/student may appeal the QCAA's decision not to award a grade (see Section 6 for information about reviews and appeals).

Declaring a grade null and void

A candidate or a Year 12 student who believes that exceptional circumstances significantly affected their ability to complete all or part of the four testpapers may apply to the QCAA to have the grade for the test declared null and void.

If the QCAA declares a grade null and void for a candidate/student:

- the candidate/student will be told in writing
- the QCAA will not use the student's data in the group data for the calculation of OPs
- the student's OP eligibility will not be affected as the QCAA will approve exemption from the requirement to have a grade.

If a test grade is declared null and void, the student's OP and FPs (if applicable):

- will be calculated in the same way as for OP-eligible students who sat the test
- will not be directly affected by the student not being awarded a QCS Test grade.

Further information

For details, see the *Special provision handbook: Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test 2019* at www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/qcs-test/special-provision.

Applications to have a test grade declared null and void are made online after the test is administered. See the handbook for details.

6 Reviews and appeals

Part 5 of the Act provides for reviews of certain decisions made by the QCAA.

If a candidate/student wants to appeal a decision made by the QCAA, they must do so in writing within seven days of receiving the letter outlining the decision.

The candidate/student must state fully the grounds for the appeal and provide additional supporting evidence.

In the first instance the appeal will be treated by way of an internal review. An internal review officer will be appointed to conduct the review. If practicable, this person will not have assisted in making the original decision and will not be less senior than the person who assisted in making the original decision.

The internal review officer will come to a decision based on **all** of the following:

- the material that led to the original decision
- the reasons for the original decision
- any other relevant material.

The internal review officer will report to the QCAA on the review.

The QCAA will then do **one** of the following:

- confirm the original decision
- amend the original decision
- substitute another decision for the original decision.

The candidate/student and the school principal, if applicable, will be told in writing of the outcome of the appeal.

If the candidate/student is not satisfied with the reviewed outcome they can, within 28 days of receiving the letter outlining the reviewed decision, appeal externally to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

7 Resources

Resource	Sent to Qld secondary schools to distribute to students	Available on QCAA website*	Hard copy available for purchase from QCAA	Sent to Qld secondary schools
Student Information Bulletin	Year 12	✓		Mid-January
A guide for parents and carers		✓		
Calculating OPs: The basic principles		✓		
Common curriculum elements		✓		
QCAA news for schools		✓		
Memos, information statements and policy statements		✓		
OP fast facts		✓		
OP myths (HTML only)		✓		
QCS Test past testpapers			✓	
Preparing for the QCS Test: sample questions that draw on assumed mathematical knowledge		✓		
QCS Test Retrospective		✓		
Directions for Administration		✓		Late July
Visa student procedures: Equivalent Overall Positions (OPs) and Field Positions (FPs)		✓		

QCAA website: www.qcaa.qld.edu.au.

8 How to contact us

For information about	Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> administration of the test 	Team Leader (QCS Test Operations), Assessment Operations Unit Phone: (07) 3864 0408 email: qcs.admin@qcaa.qld.edu.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> register of markers marking operation community representatives 	Senior Assessment Operations Officer, Assessment Operations Unit Phone: (07) 3864 0367 email: qcsmarkerinfo@qcaa.qld.edu.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> special arrangements exemption absentee exemption declaring a grade null and void 	Senior Assessment Operations Officer, Assessment Operations Unit Phone: (07) 3864 0227 email: qcs.spc@qcaa.qld.edu.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of the test 	Manager, QCS Test Unit Phone: (07) 3864 0270 email: office@qcaa.qld.edu.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OP and FP calculations 	Manager, Performance Analytics Unit Phone: (07) 3864 0439 email: analysis.reporting@qcaa.qld.edu.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviews and appeals 	Manager, Performance Information and Monitoring Unit Phone: (07) 3864 0438 email: analysis.reporting@qcaa.qld.edu.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Data Capture System (SDCS) 	Client Services Phone: (07) 3864 0278 email: clientservices@qcaa.qld.edu.au

QCAA staff are available Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, excluding public holidays.

Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

154 Melbourne Street, South Brisbane

PO Box 307, Spring Hill Qld 4004

Phone: (07) 3864 0299

Email: office@qcaa.qld.edu.au

Website: www.qcaa.qld.edu.au

9 Glossary of terms

For the purpose of this guideline and associated publications, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
candidate	a person who is eligible to sit the test
OP-eligible student	a Year 12 student who meets the eligibility requirements for an OP or equivalent OP (visa student). The basic eligibility requirement is completion of 20 semester units of credit in Authority subjects with at least three subjects taken for four semesters. The other requirements are completion of Year 12 and sitting all four testpapers of the QCS Test
WT	Writing Task
SR	Short Response
MC I	Multiple Choice I
MC II	Multiple Choice II
group data	<p>To make it possible to compare the achievement of students in one subject in a school with the achievement of students in other subjects in the school and in different schools, the QCAA needs a standard baseline of comparison.</p> <p>The QCS Test provides this baseline of comparison (group data of OP-eligible Year 12 students) in order for the QCAA to calculate Overall Positions (OPs) and Field Positions (FPs).</p> <p>The QCS Test data of the following students will not be used in a school's group data for OP calculations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students who have not been awarded a QCS Test grade (e.g. because of cheating/academic misconduct, incomplete sitting of the test, QCS Test grade declared null and void) • students who are ineligible for an OP (including visa students eligible for an OP equivalent). <p>Detailed information about OP and FP calculations is available at https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/tertiary-entrance/op.</p>