

Subject Achievement Indicators (SAIs)

Fact Sheet 3: How QCAA checks SAIs

What does the QCAA check?

SAI distributions should be compatible with information on the Form R6 because they are derived from the same source — students' folios of work. QCAA's checking processes aim to maintain this compatibility and represent relative differences between students.

If SAIs are about teacher judgment, why are they checked?

Only teachers know whether the SAIs are the best representation of the differences and similarities between their students. Sometimes, though, there are mistakes or misunderstandings and decisions are made that could potentially disadvantage students. The QCAA checks SAIs purely for the benefit of students: to ensure their OPs reflect their achievements.

How are SAIs checked?

QCAA staff, as well as trained visiting teachers, use BonSAI to check SAIs submitted by schools. Every SAI distribution is checked. BonSAI uses a simple 'average points per rung' calculation and these averages are then used to compare different parts of the SAI distribution with each other and the Form R6. There is also a graph that easily identifies any potentially 'odd gaps' in the distribution. For more information about using the SAI checking tools in BonSAI, see the BonSAI User Guide available on the QCAA website

<http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/4903.html>

What is the QCAA looking for?

QCAA staff check for three main things:

Gaps between students' SAIs should represent the actual difference between them. For example, if students are close together on the Form R6, their SAIs should be close together.

The amount of difference between students (shown by SAI points) should increase from the lower levels of achievement to the higher levels of achievement, because students' work in the lower levels of achievement is likely to be more similar than students' work in the higher levels of achievement.

There should never be more than 'double the difference' between any two places in the SAI distribution. Over many years of comparing students' folios of work, subject experts have never seen 'double the difference' between sets of student folios. In fact, there is often much less difference between students than this, particularly if an SAI distribution covers less than half of the Form R6. 'Double the difference' is a limit, not something to aim for.

What happens if there are issues?

If required, a QCAA officer will phone a school to ask for clarification about SAI distributions; if necessary, schools may submit revised distributions.