

## **THE NEW SENIOR ASSESSMENT AND TERTIARY ENTRANCE SYSTEMS**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **What will be different about the new systems?**

The new systems will include:

- A model that uses both school-based assessment and common external assessment
- Processes that strengthen the quality and comparability of school-based assessment
- A move away from the Overall Position (OP) rank to an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

#### **How will assessment change?**

A system of 100% school-based assessment has operated in Queensland for more than 40 years. In the new system, subject results will be based on a student's achievement in three school-based assessments and one external assessment that is set and marked by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA). This is fewer assessments than students sit currently - emphasising quality over quantity. In the new system, the external assessment results will contribute 25% towards a student's result in most subjects. In mathematics and science subjects, it will generally contribute 50%. The school-based assessments will not be scaled by the results of the external assessment when calculating a student's subject result. The new system will keep all the qualities inherent in school-based assessment while introducing greater consistency and the transparency of common assessments that are sat by students at all schools.

#### **How will tertiary entrance change?**

A student's OP is calculated by comparing their results in Authority subjects studied at school with those of other OP-eligible students. Subject results are scaled using Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test results. The final QCS Test will be held in 2019.

ATARs will also be calculated by comparing student results. But instead of the QCS Test there will be a process of inter-subject scaling. Scaling is necessary so that student results in different types of subjects can be compared. The method of inter-subject scaling to be used is still to be finalised by the Senior Secondary Assessment Taskforce.

### **When will the new systems start?**

The new senior assessment system will start with students entering Year 11 in 2019. These are the current Year 10 students. The first students to receive an ATAR instead of an OP will graduate from Year 12 in 2020.

### **Why are new senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems being introduced?**

The senior assessment system in its current form began in the early 1980s. The tertiary entrance system, commonly known as the OP system was introduced in 1992.

In a report released in 2014, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) found that while existing arrangements had served Queensland students well and remained fair and reliable, they would not be sustainable over the longer term. ACER recommended changes to achieve greater rigour and simplicity.

### **Why will there be 50% external assessment in mathematics and science subjects but 25% in others?**

Variation between subjects reflects the kinds of learning particular to those subjects and how achievement is most appropriately assessed. It would be inappropriate to assess all subjects in the same way. Variation exists in other states although few share exactly the same approach.

### **What's the difference between the OP rank and ATAR?**

The ATAR is a finer-grained rank order of students and is commonly used in other states and territories. It's a number between 0.00 and 99.95 with increments of 0.05, whereas the OP consists of 25 bands. The Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) will be responsible for calculating students' ATARs.

### **What preparations are being made for the new systems?**

The QCAA is developing new senior assessment processes through:

- Redeveloping senior syllabuses reflective of a new assessment model and 21st century skills
- Trialling external assessments with about 20,000 students at more than 250 schools
- Trialling processes for improving the quality and comparability of school-based assessment.

### **Will students be subject to more assessment and high stakes exams?**

Year 12 students typically complete up to seven assessments in each subject. Under the new model, students will be expected to complete four pieces of assessment per subject. Three will be school-based assessments and one will be externally set and graded. All four assessments will count towards a student's final result.

### **What is the eligibility criteria for an ATAR?**

To be eligible for an ATAR, a student must have:

- satisfactorily completed an English subject
- completed five general subjects, or four general subjects plus one applied subject or VET course at AQF Certificate III or above
- accumulated their subject results within a five-year period.

While students must satisfactorily complete an English subject to be eligible for an ATAR, the result in English will only be included in the ATAR calculation if it is one of the student's best five subjects.

### **Where can I find more information?**

The [QTAC website](#) and the [QCAA website](#) both feature more information regarding these changes.