



SUBMISSION

in response to the

**THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT
EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE
Inquiry into assessment methods for
senior maths, chemistry and physics**

May 2013

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Independent Education Union of Australia – Queensland and Northern Territory Branch (IEUA–QNT) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Queensland Government’s Education and Innovation committee inquiry into assessment methods for senior maths, chemistry and physics.
- 1.2 IEUA-QNT consistently engages in education debate at both State and National levels through its Education Committee (a group of registered and practising teachers) and through its national counterpart, the Independent Education Union Education Committee, which receives input from teachers in all States and Territories.
- 1.3 In preparing this submission IEUA-QNT has drawn on the findings from a survey conducted in late 2012 in relation to syllabus requirements and assessment and moderation processes mandated by the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA).
- 1.4 IEUA-QNT represents teachers, support staff and ancillary staff in non-government education institutions in Queensland. IEUA-QNT (Queensland Division) currently has a membership approaching 15,500.

2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE IEUA-QNT ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION SURVEY

- 2.1 The survey opened on Monday, 22nd October 2012 and closed on Monday, 26th November 2012.

A copy of the survey questions is attached as Attachment 1.

The survey was conducted electronically. The invitation to participate in the survey was distributed to all teachers in Queensland secondary schools within the non-government sector by email, where an address was available, and through a Chapter Briefing distributed to each secondary school.

There were 764 responses, of these approximately 80% provided their name and the name of the school at which they teach. This provided a high degree of certainty that responses were not sent multiple times from the same person. Moreover, the responses were checked manually to ensure that where respondents had pressed the “send” key twice the multiple responses were not included in the data.

The data was sorted by major subject area: Maths, Science, English, History/Geography/Business Studies/Studies of Religion, Languages, Arts/ Drama/other subjects, subjects not indicated.

Maths respondents: n= 146
Science respondents: n= 173.

The total number of responses received and the disaggregated subject specific responses are statistically significant and robust.

3. RESPONSES TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

3.1 Ensuring assessment processes are supported by teachers.

The IEUA-QNT survey found that Maths and Science teachers were generally supportive of the assessment processes currently in place. However, there was a significant minority that did not support these processes. Moreover, the responses in the mid-range (Agree, neutral, disagree) suggest that the processes need further refining to achieve greater teacher support.

The major concern raised in the individual feedback sections was the lack of time for preparation of programmes of work and assessment tasks and for the assessment of student work. Given that it is not uncommon for teachers to have to assess the work of several classes of students in more than one subject at the end of a unit of work, and that typically these assessments fall fairly close together (often close to the end of a term) and that they continue to have to prepare for the following units of work and the teaching of them it is not surprising that some teachers feel the processes are not working well. This finding was true for all subjects, not just Maths and Science.

See Attachment 2 for further details of specific data from the survey.

3.2 Student participation levels

The IEUA-QNT has no comment in respect of this term of reference.

3.3 The ability of assessment processes to support valid and reliable judgments of student outcomes.

The data from the IEUA-QNT survey showed a falling off in support of the processes involved in arriving at student achievement levels and moderation processes.

When asked if current internal moderation processes (in school processes) are working well in the subjects taught, 43.8% of Maths teachers and 45.1% of Science teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that they are. However, 32.2% of Maths teachers and 31.2% of Science teachers indicated that they were not working well. There was also a fairly high “neutral” response 19.2% Maths and 19.7% Science.

When asked about external moderation processes (that is District and State Review Panel processes) only 33.6% of Maths teachers and 32.9% of Science teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they were working well whereas 41.8% of Maths teachers and 39.3% of Science teachers indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that these processes are working well. Here, too, there was a high “neutral” response in both subject areas: Maths, 21.2% and Science, 24.3%.

The IEUA-QNT understands from this data that while there is widespread confidence in the current processes delivering valid and reliable judgments of student outcomes there is scope for reviewing the processes to ensure consistency. This may well require more effective professional development and support for staff in schools as well as regular, systematic training for panellists and a more transparent and better publicised process for validating panel judgements.

For more information about specific responses see Attachment 2.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The IEUA-QNT recommends that the current system of school based assessment and moderation is continued across Queensland.

It is our long held view that the professional judgements of teachers are more accurate in providing:

- appropriate programmes of work that are relevant to the particular context of each school; and
- assessment tasks that better enable students in particular contexts to demonstrate their skills and understandings.

4.2 The IEUA-QNT recommends that the Queensland Government take steps to ensure that teachers are provided with realistic preparation and correction time within current hours of duty to develop programmes of work, assessment tasks and to ensure quality time is allocated to the task of assessing student work.

4.3 The IEUA-QNT recommends that the QSA be funded to engage in a programme of professional development for teachers to ensure they fully understand the intention of the syllabus documents and the processes of assessment and moderation that are clearly working well for some but not for all teachers.

4.4 The IEUA-QNT recommends that the QSA undertakes a detailed review of the processes of external moderation – District and State Panel processes – to ensure that there is consistency in understanding and application of processes. This should include the processes for selection of Panel members, their induction into the work of Panels and their ongoing in-service for this work.

4.5 The IEUA-QNT recommends that appropriate provision of time and remuneration be made to ensure quality outcomes from District and State panels.

5. CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

IEUA-QNT would like to express our thanks for the opportunity to engage in consultation through this submission.

We would be pleased to engage in further discussion and consultation about these matters with the Education and Innovation Committee and with the QSA as appropriate.

As we speak for our 15,500 members in the Queensland non-government education sector who are keenly concerned to ensure the best possible education for Queensland's students, we are pleased to contribute our considered advice and comment.

Authorised by



Terry Burke
Secretary

QIEU Assessment and Moderation Survey

The purpose of the survey is to obtain reliable data to inform input into a review of the assessment and moderation processes currently mandated by the Queensland Studies Authority.

- All responses will be strictly confidential to those members of staff responsible for collating the data.
- No individual will be identified in any way or for any purpose as a result of completing this survey.
- Your assistance in completing this survey is greatly appreciated.

For further information, please contact Miriam Dunn at the IEUA-QNT Brisbane Office:

1. Phone Toll Free: 1800 177 938 or (07) 3839 7020; or
2. E-mail Miriam Dunn – mdunn@qieu.asn.au

This survey will close on Monday, 26 November, 2012.

If you experience any technical difficulty completing this survey, please email ecuthbertson@qieu.asn.au for assistance.

Personal Information. This data will be kept strictly confidential. However, please note that supplying personal information is optional if you would prefer to answer this survey anonymously.

Please include your name.

Please include the name of your school.

Please include your best means of contact (either an email address or phone number).

Section One: Demographic Information

1. For how many years have you taught senior subjects?

2. Please list the subjects that you teach (or have taught) that inform your responses to the current assessment system in Queensland.

3. Are you trained in the disciplines you have taught?

- Yes
 No

4. What is your role within your department?

- teacher with no responsibility for designing assessment items
 teacher with responsibility for designing some assessment items

- teacher with responsibility for a section of the syllabus
 Head of Department

If you hold a role not listed, please specify.

5. In which sector are you employed?

- Catholic
 Anglican
 Lutheran
 Christian
 PMSA

If employed in another sector, please specify.

6. Which of the following best describes the location in which you work?

- Brisbane Metropolitan
 Metropolitan (South East Corner)
 Regional Centre
 Rural
 Remote

7. Please indicate the enrolment level at your school.

- 0-400
 401-800
 801-1200
 1201-1500
 greater than 1500

8. Please indicate the number of year 11 and 12 students currently enrolled in each subject you teach (e.g. Year 12 English = 25 students).

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Section Two. Many of the below questions ask you to express your level of agreement on a five point scale. Please remember that selecting '1' will indicate you STRONGLY AGREE with the statement and selecting '5' will indicate you STRONGLY DISAGREE.

9. The number of assessment items required by the syllabus is appropriate for the subject(s) I teach.

What, if any, issues do you have with the number of assessment items required?



What could be done to resolve the problems you identify?



10. The range of assessment techniques required by the syllabus is appropriate for the subject(s) I teach.

What, if any, issues do you have with the range of assessment techniques required?



What could be done to resolve the problems you identify?



11. The application of the idea of "fullest and latest" is appropriate in determining the exit grade for students.

What, if any, issues do you have with this aspect of determining the exit grade for students?



What could be done to resolve the problems you identify?

12. The range of criteria covered is appropriate in the subjects I teach.

What, if any, issues do you have with the range of criteria covered?

What could be done to resolve the problems you identify?

13. The word length for assessment items (maxima and minima) as outlined in the syllabus are appropriate for the subjects I teach.

What, if any, issues do you have with word length for assessment items?

What could be done to resolve the problems you identify?

14. Supervised Assessment conditions (e.g. time limits) as outlined in the syllabus are appropriate for the subjects I teach.

What, if any, issues do you have with supervised assessment conditions?

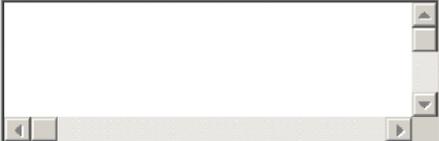


What could be done to resolve the problems you identify?



15. Assignment conditions as outlined in the syllabus are appropriate for the subjects I teach.

What, if any, issues do you have with the range of assessment conditions permitted?



What could be done to resolve the problems you identify?



16. Current internal moderation processes are working well in the subjects I teach.

What, if any, issues do you have with current internal moderation processes?



What could be done to resolve the problems you identify?

17. I am confident that this process delivers accurate grades for my students.

What, if any, issues do you have with the processes used to arrive at overall grades for individual pieces of student work?

What could be done to resolve the problems you identify?

18. Briefly describe the processes used in your department(s) to arrive at the exit grade for students and their placement on the SAI? Please indicate which subject area(s) use the process(es) you describe.

19. I am confident that this process delivers accurate grades and placements for my students.

What, if any, issues do you have with the processes used to arrive at exit grades and placement on the SAI for students?

What could be done to resolve the problems you identify?

20. I am provided with appropriate preparation and correction time to manage the demands of the current assessment and moderation processes required by the QSA.

What, if any, issues do you have with current arrangements?

What could be done to resolve the problems you identify?

21. Current external moderation processes (district and state panel processes) are working well in the subjects I teach.

What, if any, issues do you have with current external moderation processes?

What could be done to resolve the problems you identify?

22. My department head has never had to dispute a panel decision regarding a submission.

If your department has had disputes with a district or state panel, briefly outline the processes and outcomes of the dispute.

23. I am fully aware of the avenues of appeal open to our school should we have a dispute about a panel decision.

24. I am fully aware of the range of support available to me from the QSA in relation to issues with work programmes and/or assessment tasks/processes and how to access that support.

Briefly outline the support that you are aware of and the means by which you can access it.

ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION SURVEY

Subject specific responses to some questions

Attachment 2

Question	Subject	Total no of respondents	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree Strongly Disagree	No response supplied
The number of assessment items required by the syllabus is appropriate for the subject(s) I teach.	Maths	146	81 55.5%	26 17.8%	36 24.7%	3 2.1%
	Science	173	94 54.3%	30 17.3%	45 26%	4 2.3%
	English	159	105 66%	14 8.8%	37 23.3%	3 1.9%
	Hist Geog Bus SOR	224	148 66.1%	20 8.9%	52 23.2%	4 1.8%
	Languages	31	25 80.6%	2 6.5%	4 12.9%	0
	Arts Drama & misc. Subjects	163	114 69.9%	20 12.3%	25 15.3%	4 2.5%
	Undefined subjects	16	6 37.5%	1 6.3%	0	9 56.3
The range of assessment techniques required by the syllabus is appropriate for the subject(s) I teach.	Maths	146	72 49.3%	23 15.8%	48 32.9%	3 2.1%
	Science	173	88 50.9%	20 11.6%	61 35.3%	4 2.3%
	English	159	108 67.9%	15 9.4%	33 20.8%	3 1.9%
	Hist Geog Bus SOR	224	152 67.9%	17 7.6%	52 23.2%	3 1.3%
	Languages	31	27 87.1%	1 3.2%	3 9.7%	0
	Arts Drama & misc. subjects	163	121 74.2%	10 6.1%	29 17.8%	3 1.8%
	Undefined subjects	16	6 37.5%	1 6.3%	0	9 56.3%

Question	Subject	Total no of respondents	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree Strongly Disagree	No response supplied
The application of the idea of “fullest and latest” is appropriate in determining the exit grade for students.	Maths	146	62 42.5%	27 18.5%	53 36.3%	4 2.7%
	Science	173	79 45.7%	34 19.7%	57 32.9%	3 1.7%
	English	159	95 59.7%	21 13.2%	41 25.8%	2 1.3%
	Hist Geog Bus SOR	224	135 60.3%	33 14.7%	53 23.7%	3 1.3%
	Languages	31	22 71%	5 16.1%	3 9.7%	1 3.2%
	Arts Drama & misc. subjects	163	107 65.6%	18 11%	36 22.1%	2 1.2%
	Undefined Subjects	16	6 37.5%	0	1 6.3%	9 56.3%
The range of criteria covered is appropriate in the subjects I teach.	Maths	146	58 39.7%	24 16.4%	59 40.4%	5 3.4%
	Science	173	81 46.8%	28 16.2%	61 35.3%	3 1.7%
	English	159	97 61%	28 17.6%	32 20.1%	2 1.3%
	Hist Geog Bus SOR	224	141 62.9%	34 15.2%	45 20.1%	4 1.8%
	Languages	31	24 77.4%	1 3.2%	5 16.1%	1 3.2%
	Arts Drama & misc. subjects	163	122 74.8%	12 7.2%	25 15.1%	4 2.4%
	Undefined Subjects	16	7 43.8%	0	0	9 56.3%

Question	Subject	Total no of respondents	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree Strongly Disagree	No response supplied
The word length for assessment items (maxima and minima) as outlined in the syllabus is appropriate for the subjects I teach.	Maths	146	51 34.9%	39 26.7%	35 24%	21 14.4%
	Science	173	69 39.9%	41 23.7%	56 32.4%	7 4%
	English	159	84 52.8%	32 20.1%	39 24.5%	4 2.5%
	Hist Geog Bus SOR	224	117 52.2%	42 18.8%	61 27.2%	4 1.8%
	Languages	31	24 77.4%	2 6.5%	3 9.7%	2 6.5%
	Arts Drama & misc. subjects	163	95 58.3%	30 18.4%	37 22.7%	1 0.6%
	Undefined subjects	16	6 37.5%	0	1 6.3%	9 56.3%
Supervised Assessment conditions (e.g. time limits) as outlined in the syllabus are appropriate for the subjects I teach.	Maths	146	82 56.2%	21 14.4%	37 25.3%	6 4.1%
	Science	173	99 57.2%	28 16.2%	40 23.1%	6 3.5%
	English	159	105 66%	18 11.3%	32 20.1%	4 2.5%
	Hist Geog Bus SOR	224	156 69.6%	14 6.3%	47 21%	7 3.1%
	Languages	31	23 74.2%	3 9.7%	2 6.5%	3 9.7%
	Arts Drama & misc. subjects	163	115 70.6%	17 10.4%	24 14.7%	7 4.3%
	Undefined subjects	16	7 43.8%	0	0	9 56.3%

Question	Subject	Total no of respondents	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree Strongly Disagree	No response supplied
Assignment conditions as outlined in the syllabus are appropriate for the subjects I teach.	Maths	146	68 46.6%	25 17.1%	43 29.5%	10 6.8%
	Science	173	86 49.7%	21 12.1%	59 34.1%	7 4%
	English	159	97 61%	20 12.6%	37 23.3%	5 3.1%
	Hist Geog Bus SOR	224	145 64.7%	23 10.3%	46 20.5%	10 4.5%
	Languages	31	17 54.8%	5 16.1%	2 6.5%	7 22.6%
	Arts Drama & misc. subjects	163	114 69.9%	17 10.4%	24 14.7%	8 4.9%
	Undefined Subjects	16	6 37.5%	0	1 6.3%	9 56.3%
Current internal moderation processes are working well in the subjects I teach.	Maths	146	64 43.8%	28 19.2%	47 32.2%	7 4.8%
	Science	173	78 45.1%	34 19.7%	54 31.2%	7 4%
	English	159	86 54.1%	34 21.4%	35 22%	4 2.5%
	Hist Geog Bus SOR	224	119 53.1%	48 21.4%	49 21.9%	8 3.6%
	Languages	31	16 51.6%	9 29%	4 12.9%	2 6.5%
	Arts Drama & Misc subjects	163	104 63.8%	25 15.3%	28 17.2%	6 3.7%
	Undefined Subjects	16	7 43.8%	0	0	9 56.3%

Question	Subject	Total no of respondents	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No response supplied
I am confident that this process delivers accurate grades for my students.	Maths	146	66 45.2%	25 17.1%	52 35.6%	3 2.1%	
	Science	173	74 42.8%	35 20.2%	59 34.1%	5 2.9%	
	English	159	92 57.9%	24 15.1%	39 24.5%	4 2.5%	
	Hist Geog Bus SOR	224	134 59.8%	27 12.1%	53 23.7%	10 4.5%	
	Languages	31	21 67.7%	3 9.7%	6 19.4%	1 3.2%	
	Arts Drama & Misc subjects	163	113 69.3%	20 12.3%	22 13.5%	8 4.9%	
	Undefined subjects	16	7 43.8%	0	1 6.3%	8 50%	
I am confident that the processes used in my department(s) to arrive at the exit grade for students and their placement on the SAI delivers accurate grades and placements for my students.	Maths	146	63 43.2%	34 23.3%	43 29.5%	6 4.1%	
	Science	173	84 48.6%	30 17.3%	45 26%	14 8.1%	
	English	159	86 54.1%	30 18.9%	32 20.1%	11 6.9%	
	History, Geography Business, SOR	224	124 55.4%	32 14.3%	53 23.7%	15 6.7%	
	Languages	31	20 64.5%	4 12.9%	3 9.7%	4 12.9%	
	Arts, Drama & Misc. Subjects	163	107 65.6%	21 12.9%	19 11.7%	16 9.8%	
	Undefined Subjects	16	7 43.8%	0	0	9 56.3%	

Question	Subject	Total no of respondents	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree Strongly Disagree	No response supplied
I am provided with appropriate preparation and correction time to manage the demands of the current assessment and moderation processes required by the QSA	Maths	146	43 29.5%	18 12.3%	79 54.1%	6 4.1%
	Science	173	51 29.5%	17 9.8%	101 58.4%	4 2.3%
	English	159	43 27%	31 19.5%	76 47.8%	9 5.7%
	History, Geog, Business SOR	224	69 30.8%	50 22.3%	94 42%	11 4.9%
	Languages	31	11 35.5%	8 25.8%	9 29%	3 9.7%
	Arts, Drama & misc subjects	163	51 31.3%	40 24.5%	65 39.9%	7 4.3%
	Undefined subjects	16	7 43.8%	0	1 6.3%	8 50%
Current external moderation processes (district and state panel processes) are working well in the subjects I teach	Maths	146	49 33.6%	31 21.2%	61 41.8%	5 3.4%
	Science	173	57 32.9%	42 24.3%	68 39.3%	6 3.5%
	English	159	66 41.5%	45 28.3%	35 22%	13 8.2%
	History, Geog, Business SOR	224	97 43.3%	56 25%	61 27.2%	10 4.5%
	Languages	31	17 54.8%	6 19.4%	6 19.4%	2 6.5%
	Arts, Drama & Misc Subjects	163	79 48.5%	43 26.4%	33 20.3%	8 4.9%
	Undefined subjects	16	7 43.8%	1 6.3%	0	8 50%

Question	Subject	Total no of respondents	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree	No response supplied
My department head has never had to dispute a panel decision regarding a submission.	Maths	146	43 29.5%	23 15.8%	67 45.9%	13 8.9%
	Science	173	36 20.8%	28 16.2%	97 56.1%	12 6.9%
	English	159	65 40.9%	25 15.7%	52 32.7%	17 10.7%
	History, Geog, Business SOR	224	81 36.2%	41 18.3%	84 37.5%	18 8%
	Languages	31	16 51.6%	1 3.2%	12 38.7%	2 6.5%
	Arts, Drama & Misc Subjects	163	70 42.9%	20 12.3%	65 39.9%	8 4.9%
	Undefined subjects	16	7 43.8%	0	1 6.3%	8 50%
I am fully aware of the avenues of appeal open to our school should we have a dispute about a panel decision.	Maths	146	87 59.6%	14 9.6%	40 27.4%	5 3.4%
	Science	173	108 62.4%	18 10.4%	41 23.7%	6 3.5%
	English	159	95 59.7%	22 13.8%	33 20.8%	9 5.7%
	History, Geog, Business SOR	224	146 65.2%	25 11.2%	46 20.5%	7 3.1%
	Languages	31	23 74.2%	2 6.5%	5 16.1%	1 3.2%
	Arts, Drama & Misc Subjects	163	114 69.9%	20 12.3%	21 12.9%	8 4.9%
	Undefined subjects	16	8 50%	0	0	8 50%

Question	Subject	Total no of respondents	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree Strongly Disagree	No response supplied
I am fully aware of the range of support available to me from the QSA in relation to issues with work programmes and/or assessment tasks/processes and how to access that support.	Maths	146	76 52.1%	22 15.1%	42 28.8%	6 4.1%
	Science	173	84 48.6%	37 21.4%	47 27.2%	5 2.9%
	English	159	85 53.5%	25 15.7%	42 26.4%	7 4.4%
	History, Geog, Business SOR	224	136 60.7%	37 16.5%	44 19.6%	7 3.1%
	Languages	31	21 67.7%	4 12.9%	5 16.1%	1 3.2%
	Arts, Drama & Misc Subjects	163	99 60.7%	25 15.3%	33 20.2%	6 3.7%
	Undefined subjects	16	7 43.8%	1 6.3%	0	8 50%