The Queensland Government commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to conduct a major review of senior assessment and tertiary entrance processes in Queensland. A final review report is available on the ACER website.

The Queensland Government has provided its own draft response to ACER’s findings and recommendations.

The current system

Tertiary entrance
- The Overall Position (OP) tertiary entrance rank has been used in Queensland since 1992.
- Students are ranked by schools, based on their senior subject results.
- The Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test is used to compare students doing different subjects or attending different schools.
- All other Australian states and territories use the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) rather than the OP.

Senior assessment
- Since 1972, Queensland has employed school-based senior assessment, in which assessment activities are developed and marked by teachers.
- A system of external moderation is used, in which samples of completed student work are validated by panels of expert teachers.
- All Australian states and territories use some form of school-based assessment.
- Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory are the only jurisdictions which do not also use subject-based external examinations.

Changes proposed in the draft government response

The draft government response supports key proposals put forward by ACER. These proposals are now put forward for public consultation.

Tertiary Entrance
- The government supports, in principle, a transition away from the OP tertiary entrance rank and the QCS Test.
- Tertiary institutions, through the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC), would be fully responsible for tertiary selection and the tertiary entrance ranking. The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA), which currently administers the OP, would focus on school curriculum, testing and issuing senior certification.
- Queensland tertiary institutions would most likely adopt the ATAR.
- QTAC would produce students’ ATARs from their subject results. They could use ‘inter-subject scaling’ instead of the QCS Test to rank students doing different subjects.

Senior Assessment
- Senior subject results would come from four assessment activities:
  - three school-based assessments, developed and marked by teachers
  - one external assessment developed and marked by the QCAA.
- The marks from these four assessments would be added up to produce an overall mark for each subject.
- The external assessment would contribute 50 per cent of the overall result in senior mathematics, chemistry and physics subjects.
- ACER proposed that external assessment would be used for all senior subjects unless there are strong educational reasons to the contrary. The government proposes further work to see if there are subjects where 50 per cent external assessment may not be applicable.
- ACER proposed that school-based assessments be developed by teachers using a common format and administered under common conditions. The QCAA would endorse these assessments before they were used. The current moderation processes would be replaced by new processes to ensure the quality and comparability of school-based assessments.
- The government proposes evaluating the feasibility of ACER’s ideas for quality assurance.
- The government proposes further work to ensure subject results are reported in a way that provides meaningful information on what students know and can do.

Timing
The government recognises that schools, teachers and higher education providers will need to prepare for these changes. Students will need time to plan their subject choices and study pathways. The earliest possible date of commencement would be for students entering Year 11 in 2017.

Next steps
Key stakeholders and the general public are invited to provide their views on the draft response until 31 March 2015. This will assist the development of a final Queensland Government response, to be released in the first half of 2015.

Visit the DETE website for further information or to have your say by completing the draft government response online survey or providing a detailed written submission.