



**QIEU POLICY AND POSITION STATEMENT
ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF QUEENSLAND STUDIES AUTHORITY (QSA)
SYLLABUS DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION
IN NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

1. Statement of Intent

This Policy provides:

- (i) a position statement for all levels of the organisation to support a campaign to address concerns relating to QSA syllabus development, implementation and operation in Queensland Non-Government schools.
- (ii) a framework for QIEU nominees on syllabus advisory committees (SACs) to help them consider issues beyond the subject content of QSA syllabuses.

2. General Principles underpinning the writing and revision of QSA Syllabus Documents

These specific statements are intended to guide and advise QIEU and its nominees on syllabus advisory committees (SACs). The statements are predicated on the following general principles and the statements should be read in conjunction with the principles set out below:

- (i) Accountability is an integral part of the education process. Educational providers and schools are responsible to their students for ensuring they have an effective learning environment and students and their parents are entitled to know from teachers how well their students are learning.
- (ii) Syllabus writing or revision needs to:
 - be based upon research;
 - be fair and equitable for all students and teachers;
 - ensure educational validity and integrity;
 - support teacher professional judgement; and
 - provide access to relevant syllabus guided and self determined professional learning prior to syllabus implementation and in an ongoing way which can support and strengthen professional practice.
- (iii) Approaches to pedagogy should acknowledge and take account of and respect individual learning styles, local needs and cultural and social contexts. Successful schools are those which involve students and families in their development, operations and decision making.
- (iv) Teachers are best placed to make professional judgements about relevant and appropriate approaches to syllabus revision, the curriculum and to the assessment and reporting of student achievements.

- (v) All students are entitled to intellectual and personal development in a context of respect for identity and culture.
- (vi) Educational change should be implemented in a timely way, following broad consultation with key stakeholders in order to build and achieve consensus. This requires an approach to educational reform that builds on the strengths of existing policy and procedures in order to achieve stronger comparability and consistency across jurisdictions.
- (vii) There must be a commitment of resources and support structures to ensure there is high quality professional development for teachers linked to syllabus revision including those related to assessment, evaluation and reporting of student achievement. There must also be a comprehensive strategy to inform all stakeholders about the revisions. To not do so is to jeopardise the policy implementation, to undermine confidence on the part of students, their parents and the broader community and to increase the level of work intensification within the profession.

3. Scope of the Policy

3.1 QSA syllabuses should be reviewed and developed with consideration of:

- the impact on teacher workload;
- adequate resourcing of appropriate and timely professional development;
- competing expectations on teachers in relation to their school commitments, panel requirements; and
- the correlation between syllabuses and the developing standards and essential learning arising out of the Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Framework (QCAR).

3.2 Consistent with the above, members have expressed concern that QSA syllabus development and documentation should include:

- a workload impact statement;
- clearer statements in the syllabus of what needs to be taught;
- clear and precise correlation between competing and contradictory QSA documentation;
- structured feedback from relevant stakeholders including practising teachers on the quality, implementation and applicability of syllabuses;
- clarity around the level of professional development for teachers and clarity about the resourcing to implement such professional support; and
- teacher consultation and support in the identification of pilot schools not just the employer.

4. Specific statements underpinning the development, implementation and operation of QSA Syllabuses in Non-Government Schools

To address the above concerns and to provide a framework to critique syllabus development and review, the following general statements should be applied:

4.1 Statement One – Teacher Workload

The revision of QSA syllabuses must take account of the impact of syllabus revision and implementation on teacher workload through a Workload Impact Statement incorporated into the syllabus document.

4.1.1 To meet this statement the following should be recognised and implemented:

- A workload impact statement should be included in the syllabus document.
- The syllabus review writing team, in consultation with the relevant syllabus advisory committee, should audit the anticipated numbers of hours required to meet the requirements of the syllabus revision in terms of school program review and development, school implementation, assessment and reporting. This audit outcome will be provided to teachers and employers at the point of initial dissemination of the revised syllabus.
- The workload impact statement should recognise time to build consistency of teacher judgement, internal program writing and optimum professional development requirements to effectively implement the syllabus in individual schools.
- require employers in the non-government sector to provide ongoing resourced opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively together and have access to quality professional development.

Implications for Employers:

- Employers, noting the workload impact statement, should negotiate appropriate time release with teachers to manage the effective implementation of the revised syllabus in their schools in a controlled way which is mindful of teacher workload.
- Employers must recognise their responsibility to adequately resource new syllabus initiatives without causing increases in teacher workload which will impact negatively on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.
- In addition employers will need to give consideration to the need for a systematic review of the impact of individual student programming and excessive testing and reporting arising out of both State and Federal Government initiatives when giving consideration to the funding of professional development and teacher release.

4.2 Statement Two – Syllabus Revision

Syllabus revision should:

- provide clear and precise correlation with other QSA documentation; and
- contain clear statements of what needs to be taught and assessed.

Syllabus documentation should be compatible with and cross referenced to:

- the Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Essentials and Standards;
- the National Statement of Learning.

4.2.1 To meet this Statement the nature of the revision should be determined as a minor or major revision:

- (i) A minor revision of the syllabus only includes a cross-referencing to the QCAR essentials and standards and national statements of learning; or
- (ii) A major revision of the syllabus includes process to make it consistent across a suite of KLAs, incorporate the QCAR essentials and the national statements of learning into the outcomes and core content, and includes advice about course organisation and about assessment related to the QCAR Standards.

4.2.2 Having determined the scope of the revision, the following should be recognised and implemented:

- The revisions must be explicit about what teachers should teach;
- The revisions must provide clear and explicit statements (in terms of skills, content, processes, etc) of essential knowledge, attributes and skills in sufficient detail to assist schools and teachers in curriculum planning;
- The revisions must be written in language which is accessible to all teachers who might need to use the syllabus;
- The revisions must provide a strong and explicit foundation for the development of assessment items and tools to assist teachers in assessing student achievement;
- Some of the team employed to revise the syllabus must have current expertise in primary / middle schooling, including the implementation of whole school developmental approaches;
- The support materials (if applicable) must be developed in a variety of primary, secondary, P-10 and P-12 school settings;
- There must be a plain language glossary, as part of the syllabus document, to define the terms of the subject's metalanguage; and
- The need to accommodate, in the review of the syllabus, a diversity of backgrounds and experience in teaching.

Implications for Employers:

Pilot Schools

When selecting pilot schools teachers in relevant departments should be consulted about their readiness to participate and the adequacy of employer funded additional resourcing to support the trial pilot identified.

4.2.3 Consultation

- (i) The revision of QSA Syllabuses must invite broad teacher consultation and recognise their professional expertise and experience, not just through syllabus advisory committees but more broadly across school communities.
- (ii) Consultation must be genuine and initiated and programmed within reasonable timelines and not during inappropriate times such as examination / reporting periods / school vacation times.

Implications for Employers:

Employers need to support the consultative process by facilitating classroom teacher and PAR participation in consultation processes.

4.3 Statement Three – Professional Development

The revision of QSA syllabuses must be supported by appropriate and timely professional development.

The issue of reliability and consistency of teacher judgement is critical in the current syllabus arrangements. Teachers have reasonable expectations that new syllabuses or major revisions will be supported by professional development and time in a school or cluster setting to interpret new or revised syllabuses. They wish to be confident that they are familiar with the new or revised syllabus materials and be confident that assessment in their school is consistent with the demands of the syllabus.

To address these concerns a primary consideration in any syllabus review should be the resourcing, adequacy and effective implementation of professional development.

4.3.1 To meet this statement the provision of professional development should:

- Identify appropriate and timely professional development that reflects the needs of teachers in primary, secondary, P-12 and P-10 settings as appropriate;
- take account of the resourcing needs as well as the availability and efficacy of any professional development for teachers including rural and remote locations; and
- recognise professional development activities in the Workload Statement.

Implications for Employers:

Employers in the non-government sector should ensure appropriate levels of school officer support to teachers and that adequate technology be provided at the school level.

4.4 Statement Four – Publication and Dissemination of Syllabus Documents

The revision of QSA syllabuses must consider geographic location, resourcing available in schools and ease of access for teachers when determining the medium or combination of media for the publication and dissemination of syllabus documents.

4.4.1 To meet this statement the following should be recognised and implemented:

- Clarification of the intended publication medium for KLA syllabuses giving consideration to geographic location, resourcing and ease of access;
- Consideration of the implications of the medium of availability of syllabus documents on teacher workload and the ease of access;
- Consideration of combinations of medium to meet the needs of teachers, client schools and employing authorities;
- Suggested combinations may be sourced from:
 - Print
 - Multi-media CD-Rom
 - Interactive web-based;

- Syllabus documents should also be considered from the perspective of ease of teacher use. Consideration should be given to the following combinations:
 - KLA syllabuses published as separate documents
 - KLA syllabuses published as one document
 - KLA syllabuses published as one document for each phase of schooling (Levels 1 and 2, Levels 3 and 4, Levels 5 and 6) but including scope and sequence tables from Level 1 to Level 6.

4.4.2 Noting the disparity of access to high speed internet and the paucity of resources in some small schools a “one size fits all” approach should be rejected and teacher consultation sought on the most appropriate combination of making syllabus documents available.

Implications for Employers:

Employer must facilitate teacher access to appropriate technology to support syllabus dissemination.

4.5 Statement Five – Assessment

As an integral part of syllabus revision the approaches to assessment should aim for a systematic and integrated model that links assessment with curriculum and pedagogy based on contemporary theories of cognition, teaching and learning.

4.5.1 To meet Statement Five assessment and reporting should be:

- **aligned with the curriculum** and, over a set of assessments, be representative of the full curriculum. Assessment practices are integral to the teaching and learning process and must be matched to the teaching and learning goals;
- **integrated with learning** – assessment methods should be planned as an integral part of course developments and be undertaken in a manner which is supportive of the learning process;
- **reliable, fair and equitable** – assessment processes should also cater for a range of student learning styles and cultural bias should be removed from assessment;
- **authentic** – based on an understanding of how students learn and requiring them to apply their relevant skills, knowledge and understanding to real-world challenges. Assessment must involve the examination of the processes as well as the products of learning;
- **relevant** – the assessment ensures that tasks are realistic, meaningful and worthwhile;
- **diverse** – effective assessment practices involve a range of measures and provide students with opportunities to display their knowledge, skills, understandings and attitudes.

Implications for Employers:

Assessment Resourcing and Professional Development

The capacity and skill of teachers to provide fair, consistent and accurate assessments of student achievement is central to effective classroom teaching and to the reporting and monitoring of educational outcomes for students.

In addition to the issues raised in 4.5.1 above, the following should be recognised, resourced and supported by employing authorities:

- Education employing authorities and schools must provide ongoing resourced opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively together and have access to quality professional development.
- Education employing authorities must ensure that teachers have access to quality assessment and reporting resources and materials.
- Education employing authorities and schools must ensure appropriate levels of school officer support to teachers and access to the relevant technology being used in the reporting process.

4.5.2 Policy Review

This policy was developed in February 2007 and will be subject to periodic review by the QIEU Education Committee and consideration by QIEU Council.