

The consultation process: Where are we?

Background

Key stakeholder organisations are the primary audience for ACER's consultation plan. Other interested parties may access this information and are encouraged to contribute to current discussions about senior assessment and tertiary entrance in Queensland.

A list of the key stakeholder organisations can be found on the review website. Constituents of those peak bodies are encouraged to look out for information supplied by their respective bodies through their normal communications channels.

The original public consultation plan appeared on ACER's website on 12 August 2013, was circulated at the first key stakeholder meeting (12 September 2013), and updated on the review website on 13 September 2013. Further revisions were foreshadowed in a message that appeared on the review website on 3 February 2014.

Communication, conversation and engagement remain the defining features of this review's consultation process. What follows is the next iteration (6 February 2014) of the public consultation plan.

What has happened so far?

The period September 2013 to February 2014 involved communications and conversations as described below.

Letters to key stakeholders

- Introduction from the reviewers together with Terms of Reference
- Invitation to an introductory meeting held on 13 September 2013
- Announcement of the launch of a website dedicated to the review (1 August 2013)
- Announcement of the launch of survey (1 November 2013)
- Notification of a four-hour forum to take place on 13 March 2014

Conversations with key stakeholders

1. First meeting of key stakeholder organisations (most senior person invited) on 12 September 2013 The aim of the meeting was to set the scene for ACER's working relationship with key stakeholders over the duration of the review.
2. Offer of meetings with a consultant (Yvana Jones) to gain insights and gather information from the field
3. Offer of attendance of one of the reviewers (Gabrielle Matters) at key stakeholders' board meetings, education committees, meetings of university registrars, and so on for the purpose of gaining insights and gathering information about relevant issues. Working principles for the review were shared at those meetings.

Survey

An on-line survey from 31 October 2013 to 13 December 2013 provided a mechanism for teachers, stakeholders and the wider community to express their opinion on various aspects of the current systems of senior assessment and tertiary entrance in Queensland.

Informing papers

Papers were released as they became available and included the following titles:

- Strengths and weaknesses of Queensland's OP system today (Reg Allen)
- Overview of senior assessment and tertiary entrance in Australia and overseas (Doug McCurry)
- Analysis of selected previous reports into tertiary entrance in Queensland (David Kelly)
- The Queensland assessment system in a nutshell (Gabrielle Matters)

A document to stimulate discussion within the education community

An ACER document written by Geoff Masters and Gabrielle Matters was posted on the review website on 5 February 2014. The document outlines some of the reviewers' preliminary thinking based on evidence and deliberation to date, and identifies a range of options to be explored with stakeholders. The document does not cover the full scope of the review's Terms of Reference.

It is important to note that the document forms part of an independent review process. The Queensland Government will compose its own response to the final review report, which will be provided to the Minister by ACER at the end of July 2014.

What will be happening soon?

The period February 2014 to June 2014 will concentrate on the engagement aspect of the consultation process as described below.

Meetings with the three school sectors

A consultant to the review (Yvana Jones), in conjunction with the relevant stakeholder organisation, has devised a plan for meetings with principals and teachers either face-to-face or by teleconference in early 2014 to canvass opinions and provide the reviewers with feedback to inform their deliberations.

Consultations with universities

ACER reviewers (Geoff Masters and Gabrielle Matters), in conjunction with universities, will devise a plan for (a) meetings with the Vice-Chancellor, university registrar, and senior academic staff in each of the universities, and (b) meetings with groups of Vice-Chancellors

and university registrars across universities, in the period March–April 2014 (and beyond if appropriate) for in-depth discussions about all aspects of the review's Terms of Reference, and especially about the secondary–tertiary interface.

Key Stakeholder meeting

A meeting of key stakeholders is planned for 13 March. It will be a forum to enable the diverse group of stakeholders to share understandings and insights about current and desired senior assessment and tertiary entrance procedures. It will test and review the key components of the preliminary findings and options paper and the Terms of Reference, and provide the opportunity for ACER to gauge the breadth and depth of these views, considering them in the context of the spectrum of possible changes – from none, to some specific ones, to more fundamental changes to the systems.

Summary of survey findings

A summary of the results from an analysis of responses to the 2013 survey will form part of conversations at the various meetings scheduled for the beginning of 2014.

Written submissions

Peak bodies and the broader community will be invited to respond to a set of focus questions through written submissions. The focus questions will be circulated by 28 February. The use of focus questions for structuring written submissions is considered to be an efficient process for writers of submissions. The deadline for receipt of submissions will be 24 April. (Details will be provided on procedures for delivering written submissions to ACER.) An analysis of the submissions will inform the reviewers' deliberations and will also be included in the review report.

Third meeting of key stakeholders

The aim of this meeting will be to consolidate the principles underpinning the reviewers' deliberations, understand the factors influencing the reviewers' deliberations including research findings, analyses of systems in other jurisdictions, technical advice received, knowledge of and experience in the field, the views of key stakeholders, the education community and the wider Queensland community, and the financial implications for Government. The desired outcome of the meeting will be a common understanding of the drivers for recommending change, some change or no change in the senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems in Queensland.

Closed consultation

At this stage it is envisaged that there will be a closed consultation in June 2014 with key stakeholders. The aim of the closed consultation will be to seek agreement on the set of recommendations that will be contained in the reviews' report to Government for consideration.

Summary of events in 2014

Meetings with three school sectors	During February
Meetings with universities	March onwards
Circulation of focus questions	By 28 February
Key stakeholder forum	13 March Hilton Hotel, Brisbane
Deadline for written submissions	24 April
Third meeting of key stakeholders	April Specific date to be advised
Closed consultation - one senior person per key stakeholder organisation to attend	June Specific date in June to be set in conjunction with university Vice-Chancellors
Completion of the review report	31 July 2014

Please note

This paper describes the consultation process only. It does not describe any other aspects of the review such as research and evaluation activities or arguments in support of proposals and positions taken.

Please do not hesitate to contact Gabrielle Matters (Gabrielle.Matters@acer.edu.au) should you have queries about the review process or require clarification of the contents of this document.