

Data access protocol

For the provision of data managed by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

December 2021

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Contents

- 1 Introduction _____ 1**
- 1.1 Overview1
- 1.2 Purpose1

- 2 Guiding principles _____ 1**
- 2.1 Purpose1
- 2.2 Personal information and privacy1
- 2.3 Data quality2
- 2.4 Accountability2

- 3 Access to QCAA data _____ 2**
- 3.1 Requesting data2
- 3.2 QCAA consideration and processing of data requests2
- 3.3 Conditions on use of data3
- 3.4 Breach of this protocol4
- 3.5 Process for requesting QCAA data4
- 3.6 Fees4

- 4 Contact _____ 4**

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) is the principal agency responsible for delivering school curriculum, assessment and certification and reporting services in Queensland. It provides a range of enrolment, assessment and certification data to various clients, and to the community. The QCAA is committed to providing these stakeholders with timely, accurate data via the data application process described in this protocol, and via the QCAA and Queensland Government data and information portals.

1.2 Purpose

While the QCAA recognises and complies with the Queensland Government's open data policy, this protocol primarily deals with data provided by the QCAA that cannot be published as open data. The purpose of this protocol is to clarify the requirements of the QCAA, and responsibilities of the applicants who request access to its data, to ensure that QCAA data is properly disseminated and managed.

2 Guiding principles

2.1 Purpose

The QCAA regularly publishes the datasets it owns, as well as those for which it is the custodian. It is committed to making certain data directly available to the community as open data, where it is lawful and practicable to do so. This data is available on the [QCAA website](#) and through data.qld.gov.au. Other data is available that does not meet the requirements for publication as open data.

Examples of uses of published QCAA data include:

- to support schools, other education providers, government agencies and researchers with high-quality and timely information for analysis, and to enable evidence-based decisions and strategies for improvements in student learning and wellbeing
- to strengthen school authorities' capacity to analyse and report on system and provider performance to improve system management and policy design.

2.2 Personal information and privacy

The QCAA will balance its obligations under the [Right to Information Act 2009](#) and the [Information Privacy Act 2009](#). This legislation recognises that it is in the public interest for the community to have access to data held by government, but also that government must protect the privacy of individuals.

Where it is lawful to do so, persons to whom the QCAA discloses personal information are bound by the requirements of this protocol and may also have to comply with privacy laws applicable to their activities, including when collecting, using, managing, storing and disclosing personal information contained in data provided by QCAA.

2.3 Data quality

The QCAA has implemented several measures to ensure that:

- all procedures undertaken in the collection and subsequent handling of data, including data linkage, are undertaken to high standards
- the data it holds, including personal information contained in the data, is as accurate and complete as possible
- requests for data are assessed in a consistent manner (see Section 3).

2.4 Accountability

Applicants are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of all information included in a data request to the QCAA. Data provided to approved users should only be used in accordance with this *Data access protocol* and only for the purposes described in their data request, unless approved in writing by the QCAA. Failure to comply with the protocol may result in the rejection of any future data requests made to the QCAA.

3 Access to QCAA data

3.1 Requesting data

Before making a data request to the QCAA, clients should always check whether the data they seek has been published. Aggregated data is available from the [QCAA website](#) and other associated sources. The following sites are a good starting point:

- QCAA statistics at www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/news-data/statistics
- Queensland Government at www.qld.gov.au
- ACARA My School at www.myschool.edu.au
- Australian Bureau of Statistics at www.abs.gov.au.

The QCAA has several standing arrangements for supply of specific data on a regular basis. All other requests for access to QCAA data will initially be received and assessed by the QCAA Policy Unit. The unit's staff may then contact the applicant to obtain further information. If approved, the Policy Unit will work with other QCAA business units to access the data and manage its release.

The QCAA's Data Request Application form sets out the information required to understand specific objectives of the proposed project or activity and the nature of the data being requested. A request that is incomplete or inaccurate may lead to a delay or an inability to supply the data.

3.2 QCAA consideration and processing of data requests

The QCAA will assess all data requests consistently to ensure risks and issues are identified and quickly addressed.

In the case of research requests, the following factors will be considered:

- the overall suitability of the research, particularly in terms of its alignment with the priorities of the QCAA and the Queensland Government

- the likely impact and demands of the research on participants and/or QCAA operations
- the potential benefits of the research, especially in the areas of teaching, learning and assessment and policy development
- the extent to which the research contributes uniquely to the existing knowledge base, avoiding duplication
- the extent of participation, funding and/or support from other government and non-government bodies
- the extent to which the research methodology aligns with the stated aims and objectives of the project
- the extent to which the research protocol contains the necessary safeguards to protect the safety, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of participants and their data
- approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee (if required)
- any potential risks to the QCAA arising from the proposed research.

Approval to disclose data for research is not to be interpreted as official QCAA support for or endorsement of any aspect of the project or its outcomes or recommendations.

Where a research application is for access to identifiable data from the QCAA, information statements must be provided to participants, and signed informed consent must be obtained. In the case of children and young people, the signed informed consent of parents/caregivers must also be obtained.

At the conclusion of the study, the researcher must provide one copy of an executive summary and a full report of the research results to the QCAA.

3.3 Conditions on use of data

To ensure compliance with legislative and contractual requirements, the QCAA will require approved users to:

- amend any requests that are considered by QCAA to be inconsistent with legislative and/or contractual requirements
- only use the data for the purpose for which it is provided and ensure it will only be accessed by those authorised to use it
- not engage in any data-matching activities involving the data without the prior consent of the QCAA
- not attempt to re-identify the data if it is provided in a de-identified or aggregated form
- not release data that identifies individuals unless specifically authorised or required by law to do so
- not release data to any third parties unless authorised by the QCAA
- not publish the data (in any medium) without providing prior notification to the QCAA
- store data securely and protect the data from loss and unauthorised use and access.

When seeking an individual's (or parent/carer in the case of minors) consent, it is strongly recommended that the method for obtaining consent is verified by the QCAA prior to distribution. This will ensure that the method meets the QCAA's expectations. Otherwise, it may result in consent not being accepted by the QCAA.

3.4 Breach of this protocol

Potential breaches of this protocol include, but may not be limited to:

- failure of an applicant to provide complete or accurate details in their application, or during subsequent communication with QCAA staff, that would be material to QCAA's decision to provide data and/or the terms under which data may be supplied
- failure of the recipient of the data to comply with the requirements of the *Data access protocol*, such as a breach of a requirement not to disclose or publish the data received without prior written consent from QCAA.

Any breach detected in relation to data supplied by the QCAA will be referred to the QCAA Chief Executive Officer.

3.5 Process for requesting QCAA data

Completed and signed *Data request applications* should be directed to the Policy Unit by email at pio@qcaa.qld.edu.au.

Alternatively, forms can be mailed to:

Senior Information Officer
Policy Unit
Strategic Engagement Branch
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority
PO Box 307
SPRING HILL QLD 4004

3.6 Fees

The QCAA may charge a cost recovery fee for applications that involve significant manipulation or customisation of data to meet an applicant's requirements. In these cases, the QCAA will contact the applicant prior to undertaking the work to propose the fee.

4 Contact

For further information about the *Data access protocol*, please contact:

Senior Information Officer
Policy Unit
Strategic Engagement Branch
Strategy, Planning and Corporate Support Division
Email: pio@qcaa.qld.edu.au