

External assessment guide for Year 12 students

2026



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External assessment and the QCE system

The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) develops syllabuses for a wide range of senior subjects, including General subjects, Applied subjects and Short Courses.

In the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) system, how you are assessed depends on the type of subjects you choose. If you are studying QCAA General subjects, you will sit external assessments at the end of Year 12 as part of your assessment for each subject.

External assessments are subject-specific written examinations that are:

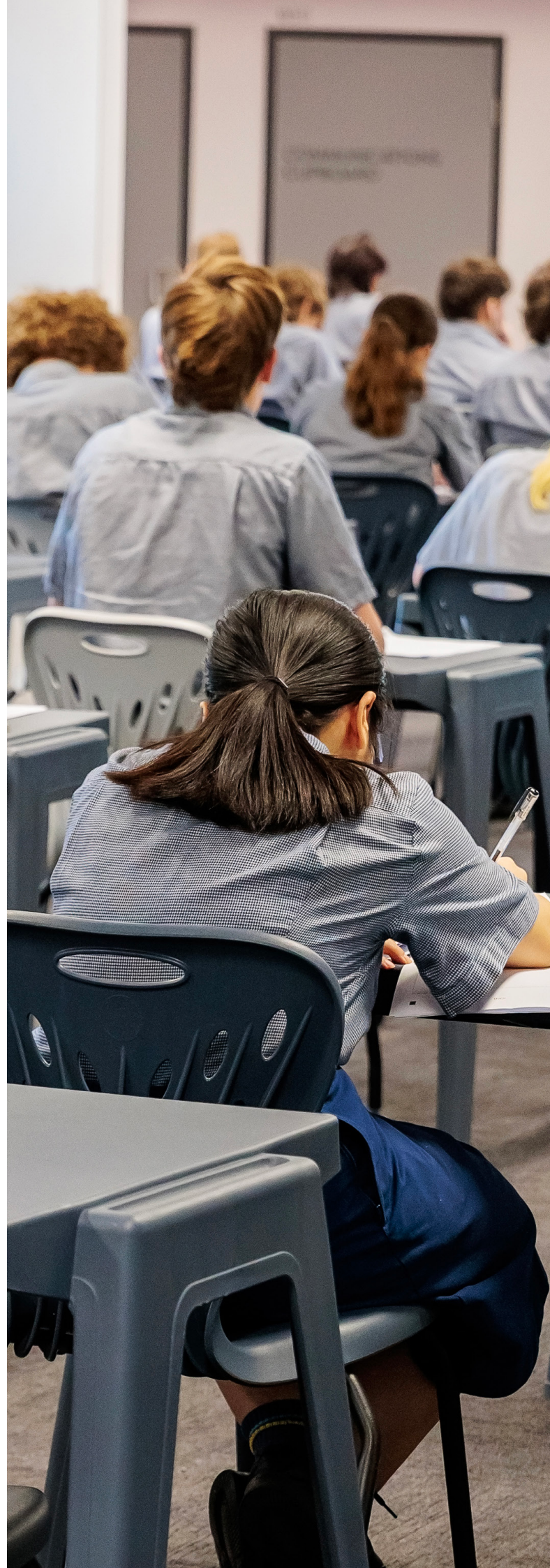
- common to all schools
- summative — they count towards overall results for General subjects
- developed and marked by the QCAA using a common marking scheme.

Final results for each General subject are based on your achievement in three internal assessments, which are set and marked by your school, and an external assessment.

In most General subjects, external assessment contributes 25% towards your final subject result. In Mathematics and Science subjects, external assessment contributes 50%.

Your external assessment result is not used to scale your internal assessment results. In other words, the marks you received for your internal assessments won't change because of your external assessment result.

This guide gives you general information to help you prepare for external assessment. It includes tips and strategies for success, details about what to expect, and links to important documents and resources.



Who sits the external assessments

Year 12 students sit external assessments for all General and General (Extension) subjects they study. Applied subjects do not have external assessment.

Some Year 11 students may also sit external assessments if they are studying a compressed curriculum or an alternative sequence for a senior subject.

A small number of students who undertake the General (Senior External Examination (SEE)) program will also sit external assessments. The General SEE program is only for adult learners and Year 12 students who are unable to access particular senior subjects at their school. It also enables the QCAA to offer Languages subjects where there are likely to be small enrolments.

When the external assessments are held

In 2026, external assessments for General and General (Extension) subjects will run from Monday 26 October to Tuesday 17 November.

Two sessions will be held each day (morning and afternoon). Your school will tell you the exact start time and location for each of your assessments.

You can view the external assessment timetable on the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/external-assessment/timetable).

Timetable clashes

The timetable is designed to minimise clashes, but they can happen.

The QCAA will identify any timetable clashes and will reschedule assessment/s to another session. Where there is a clash within a morning or afternoon session, you will be allocated to the alternative session on the same day. The QCAA may conduct additional authenticity checks on your work if your assessment has been rescheduled.

Where the external assessments are held

Usually, you will sit external assessments at your school (main learning provider).

In some cases, a variation to venue may be required. For example, if:

- your main learning provider
 - does not have a suitable external assessment venue
 - is a distance education provider*
 - has students at multiple campuses
- you
 - are geographically isolated
 - are representing Australia or your state in an official capacity at a sporting, academic or cultural event
 - are currently living outside Queensland
 - have an illness or injury preventing you from attending your school.

*If you are studying a distance education subject, but the school of distance education is not your main learning provider, you will sit the assessment at your school.

Events such as family holidays, birthdays or weddings are not valid reasons to apply for a variation to venue.

In most cases where a variation to venue is required, your school will apply to the QCAA. If approved, you will need to show photo identification to the venue supervisor on the day of your assessment.

There are no costs associated with placement at Queensland secondary schools; however, students or parents/carers are responsible for costs associated with alternative venues. Additionally, the QCAA must be satisfied with the reason for the variation to venue and the nominated venue and supervisor. More information about variation to venue is available on the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/external-assessment/variation-to-venue).



What will be tested

Depending on the subject, external assessments will test your knowledge of the subject matter from either Unit 4 or Units 3 and 4 of the syllabus. The format of the assessment may vary — it may include multiple choice items, short response questions and/or an extended response task.

Most subjects have one assessment paper. Mathematics and Sciences subjects have two assessment papers which may be scheduled on the same or different days.

Each subject syllabus contains specific details about the external assessment, including what will be tested and the format of the assessment.

The syllabuses are available on the senior syllabuses page on the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/syllabuses).

How external assessments are developed and marked

External assessments are developed by teams that include Queensland teachers, academics and QCAA staff.

The process starts with an assessment plan for each subject that is checked against the syllabus. Writing teams then create questions and marking guides. Subject experts trial the assessments to make sure they are fair, accurate and clear. The assessments are edited and illustrations and/or graphics are added if needed. Alternative formats such as large font, braille or electronic formats are also created.

After multiple checks, the assessments are printed and securely delivered to schools. Completed assessment papers are securely collected each day, scanned and uploaded to an online marking platform.

More than 3,000 Queensland teachers are trained to mark student responses online. Marking is carefully monitored to ensure accuracy, with chief and lead markers providing support and checking consistency. Feedback and data from each year help improve future assessments.

For more information about how the QCAA develops and marks external assessments, watch the video on the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/external-assessment/about/how-qcaa-develops-marks-exams).



What equipment you will need

The equipment you need for each external assessment depends on the subject. As well as general items, you may need specific items, such as calculators or electronic devices.

It is important you have everything you need for each assessment. Supervisors will check your equipment, including calculators, before you enter the assessment room.

General items approved for all assessments

Students are permitted to take the following items to assessments:

- ✓ black or blue pens
- ✓ 2B pencils, sharpener and eraser
Note: 2B pencils are only required for multiple choice questions and drawing graphs or diagrams. Black or blue non-erasable pens must be used for all other written responses
- ✓ highlighters — students should not highlight their responses but may highlight stimulus or questions when permitted by the supervisor
- ✓ a clear plastic ruler
- ✓ water in a clear unlabelled bottle
- ✓ asthma inhaler.

Students may use a clear plastic container or clear plastic bag to carry equipment if needed.

Items not permitted in the assessment room

The items below are prohibited in any assessment room, except if specifically approved as access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA) or listed as approved subject-specific equipment for an assessment, e.g. for a subject that requires students to use a device or permits the use of a dictionary.

- ⊘ Bluetooth enabled devices
- ⊘ mobile phones
- ⊘ smart watches and fitness trackers
- ⊘ any other electronic device that stores, retrieves, displays or communicates digital information
- ⊘ correction fluid or correction tape
- ⊘ dictionaries
- ⊘ erasable pens
- ⊘ blank paper, notes, any printed/written material
- ⊘ tissues brought by students.
(Note: The assessment room must have tissues available for student use.)



Subject-specific equipment

Depending on your subject, you may need specific equipment. The External assessment equipment list includes information about subject-specific equipment, including QCAA-approved calculators, student devices or other items you may need. It is available on the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/external-assessment/administration).

QCAA-approved calculators

Calculators are only permitted for some assessments. They must be handheld and solar or battery powered.

Scientific and graphics calculators must:

- meet the requirements set out in the
 - Scientific calculator list (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior-qce/common/snr_syll_ea_scientific_calculators_list.pdf)
 - or
 - Graphics calculator list (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior-qce/common/snr_syll_ea_graphics_calculators_list.pdf)

- be cleared of memory before the assessment.

Calculators must not allow access to the following functions: computer algebra system (CAS), spellchecker, dictionary, thesaurus or translator (see Scientific calculator list).

For assessments that permit the use of a non-programmable calculator, the calculator should be able to perform addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square roots and powers. Make sure you check the External assessment equipment list, which specifies equipment approved for particular subjects. It is available on the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/external-assessment/administration).

Student devices

Some assessments require you to use a student device, such as a battery-powered laptop or tablet to access a digital stimulus. Your school will advise you of the arrangements that apply to student devices for your assessments — you will either bring your own device or your school will provide one.

Depending on the subject, digital stimulus may include audio (MP3) and video (MP4) files. Your school will either give you an individual USB with the required audio or audiovisual file or access to a folder containing the file.

The External assessment equipment list includes information about subjects that require student devices or other items. It is available on the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/externalassessment/administration). AARA-approved devices can also be used.

What you will need to access the digital stimulus

To access the digital stimulus, you will need:

- individual access to a student device (e.g. desktop computer, laptop) so you can listen to and/or view the files as many times as you choose throughout the assessment session
- the latest version of a media player that plays MP3 and MP4 files installed on the device you are using
- wired earphones/headphones consistent with the guidelines for academic integrity (wireless/bluetooth enabled earphones/headphones are not allowed).



How to prepare

Preparation is key when preparing for external assessments.

Your school will help you get ready, but it's also important to be proactive so you can manage your time and your study commitments, while also looking after your health and wellbeing.

What your school will do to help you prepare

Your school will help you prepare for external assessments by teaching the subject matter in the syllabus.

As 2026 is the first year the external assessments are based on the revised 2025 and 2026 syllabuses, schools have been provided with resources about the key changes to each syllabus to help prepare you.

The format of the external assessment books for Ancient History, Drama, Geography and Modern History has changed. Your school may use examples of the revised format to familiarise you.

Past papers

Your school may also use past papers as mock examinations. This gives you the opportunity to revise and test your subject knowledge, and helps you understand how syllabus objectives are assessed, the types of questions you may be asked and how you will need to respond.

It is important to note that past external assessment papers and marking guides were developed using earlier syllabus versions. While they remain useful reference points, they may not fully reflect:

- the revised syllabus requirements
- updated subject matter
- amended assessment specifications
- revised cognitive expectations or the structure and intent of the 2026 assessments.

You can find past papers in the Resources section of each General syllabus page on the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/syllabuses). A factsheet summarising the syllabus changes relating to external assessment is also available in the Associated material section of each syllabus webpage.

Past papers in alternative formats are also available. If you need large print, paper enlargement or digital assessment formats, use the Senior Syllabus resource search on the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/syllabus-implementation/senior-syllabus-resource-search) or ask your school EA coordinator for assistance.

Advice from previous students — getting the best out of class time

'Focus during class is the most important key to success. No amount of study at home can match the value of understanding the content when it's taught, and being able to clarify any queries immediately with the teacher.' **Jeongmin**

'Ask every question you have, no matter how small or large! Your teachers are more than happy to help pick apart and resolve any problems.' **Zhenghao**

'Ask as many questions as possible, even if it goes beyond what you're currently learning. Delving into a topic at a deeper level than what is expected will provide a greater breadth of knowledge and broaden your understanding.' **Annabel**

'Ask more questions! Question yourself if you have any deeper questions. Keep asking until you understand the 'why' and the rest follows.' **Andrea**



What you can do to prepare

Preparation is key for external assessments. Being proactive puts you in charge and will help you focus.

Get organised

Organising yourself and your study space will make it easier to stay on track when you're preparing for assessments. Here are our top tips:

- ☐ check the external assessment timetable so you know when your assessments will be held — your school will set the start time within the prescribed window for your assessment. You must check your school timetable, as start and finish times may vary slightly
- ☐ develop a study timetable to help keep you on track — remember to schedule regular breaks and allow time for things you enjoy so you can maintain a healthy balance
- ☐ create a space where you can study that is free of distractions and has everything you need
- ☐ limit online distractions, such as social media
- ☐ consider forming a study group with classmates
- ☐ check the equipment list to make sure you have everything you need
- ☐ speak to your school if you think you need and are eligible for AARA.

Advice from previous students — scheduling is key

'The things that seem the scariest to start now will end up being the experiences that have made you grow the most. So just get started, and make all the improvements you need along the way!' **Doris**

'Make a schedule and stick to it. Break big tasks into smaller parts. Schedule time for other activities you enjoy — it really helps you feel motivated and in control.' **Nevindie**

'Academically, it's really important that you have a plan, and be honest with yourself about where you are, where you should be, and what you need to do to get there. And be kind to yourself — do something to unwind before the next assessment.' **Nathan**

'Stay organised and plan when you will study each subject and when you will work on assignments. Always ask your teachers for help.' **Sunnie**

'Be consistent with studying. The best results come from putting in effort over a long period of time, rather than trying to cram for exams at the last minute.' **Harini**

'Plan ahead and stay organised by breaking down assignments and external exam preparation into small, manageable chunks. Consistently chipping away over time reduces stress and leads to a much stronger understanding and outcome.' **Omer**



Get academic

Creating and maintaining good study habits will make it easier for you to stay positive in the lead-up to external assessment. Here are our top tips:

- ☐ download the subject syllabus. You can find them on the General syllabus page on the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/syllabuses)
- ☐ check the external assessment description in the syllabus — it gives you an overview of how you'll be assessed, what the objectives are and what you'll be required to do
- ☐ review the subject matter to be assessed and look over the assessment techniques
- ☐ view the past external assessment papers and subject reports in the Resources section of each General syllabus page on the QCAA website:
 - past papers are based on the 2019 syllabuses but still provide some extra insight about the type of questions you may be asked and are available in alternative formats such as large print (see [Past papers](#))
 - subject reports also contain insights about previous external assessments — they're designed for teachers, but you may find them useful
- ☐ consider how much response space is provided for each item in past papers as this indicates the expected response length (see [Use response spaces](#)).

Advice from previous students — study like a pro

'Study at the library but go out for dinner with your friends afterwards. Break up your work by taking your laptop to a park.' **Finn**

'Work hard when you have some energy, so you can take care of yourself on the days that you really need it.' **Jonah**

'Don't be limited by the stereotypes of what a 'good' student should look like — success is personal, and it comes from consistent effort, persistence, and finding approaches that work for you.' **Tianyu**

'Dream big and aim high. The best way to predict the future is to do everything you can to create it. Focus on consistent effort and becoming the best version of yourself, rather than comparing yourself to others.' **Sarah**

'Plan out your goals and the volume of work you need to do to achieve them. It's important to work towards them consistently, well ahead of time.' **Benjamin**



Useful links to help you prepare

The University of Queensland has lots of study tips for Year 12 students
(<https://study.uq.edu.au/stories/good-study-habits-students-high-school>):

- How to create a study schedule
- How to create good study habits
- Study tips for Year 11 and 12 subjects
- Poor study habits and how to break them.

Griffith University has information to help you
(www.griffith.edu.au/library/study/study-skills):

- Manage your time
- Read effectively
- Make effective notes.

The Queensland Brain Institute has helpful resources that look at the science behind study
(<https://qbi.uq.edu.au/brain/learning-memory/good-study-habits-maximise-learning>):

- Good study habits that maximise learning
- Factors affecting learning
- Science-based tips to improve learning.

Headspace has information to help you
(<https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/for-young-people/prepare-for-exams>):

- Study for exams and reduce stress
- Get enough sleep for a healthy headspace.

The Conversation has some interesting articles about study and exams

(<https://theconversation.com/au/education>):

- Don't calm down! Exam stress may not be fun but it can help you get better marks
- Study habits for success: Tips for students
- Studying for exams? Here's how to make your memory work for you
- Curious Kids: Is it OK to listen to music while studying?

Health and wellbeing advice

Looking after your health and wellbeing is important. The myQCE website includes lots of information and advice, as well as links to further resources about nutrition, fitness and exercise, mental wellbeing, social and emotional support and youth services.

Health and wellbeing tips with Dr Judith Locke

Our video series with clinical psychologist Dr Judith Locke gives you practical tips to take control of your study while also looking after yourself.

Judith has more than 20 years experience in teaching, training and psychology. Her work has featured in numerous newspapers, magazines and media outlets. She has also written two books — *The Bonsai Child* and *The Bonsai Student*.

You'll find the videos on the myQCE website (<https://myqce.qcaa.qld.edu.au/get-motivated/get-healthy-and-happy/health-and-wellbeing-with-dr-judith-locke>). There are seven videos in the series:



Study balance

Did you know you can study too much? Get Judith's recipe for more effective study.



Procrastination

Do you struggle with procrastination? Hear Judith's simple hacks to help you focus.



Limiting distractions

Do you get distracted easily? Learn about Judith's tips to switch on to study.



Transforming information

Do you struggle to remember what you've studied? Discover Judith's strategies to make study stick.



Perfectionism

Is perfectionism holding you back? Listen to Judith's advice about staying open to opportunity.



Exam stress

Do exams make you freak out? Learn Judith's tip for de-stressing your brain.



Sleep

Are you losing sleep due to study? Watch Judith's experiment to see why sleep can help you study.



Looking after your physical and mental wellbeing

Maintaining your health and fitness and looking after your mental wellbeing can make it easier to maintain a school–life balance. We’ve included our top 10 tips to get you started. More information is available on the myQCE website (<https://myqce.qcaa.qld.edu.au/get-motivated/get-healthy-and-happy>).

Top 10 tips for health and wellbeing

1. **Stay active:** Aim for 30–60 minutes of activity every day.
2. **Mix it up:** Try different exercises or activities that you enjoy, so you work different parts of your body and don’t get bored.
3. **Hydrate:** Drink enough water throughout the day. It’s good for your body and your mind.
4. **Eat well:** Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious options from all the food groups.
5. **Eat regularly:** Avoid skipping meals as it can impact your concentration and mood.
6. **Get your Zs in:** Aim for eight hours sleep most nights. Try to get in a routine and avoid screen time directly before bed.
7. **Stay safe:** Maintain safe practices when exercising or playing sport.
8. **Avoid harmful substances:** Make healthy recreational and relaxation choices that prioritise your health and wellbeing.
9. **Get social:** Take time to connect with friends and family.
10. **Manage your mental wellbeing:** Find ways for positive relaxation and to reduce stress.

Advice from previous students — maintain a healthy balance

‘The moments outside of studying during extracurricular or social activities were just as valuable as studying. A healthy balance is crucial, as it set me up for efficient study.’ **Imira**

‘Keeping a balance with all aspects of your life, whether it be social, sporting or academics, can make a big difference and help with success in all areas.’
Cooper

‘I highly recommend building your skills and qualities through extracurriculars — the discipline learnt from music, resilience at work, and collaboration in sports will always be worth the time they take.’ **Lily**

‘Sleep! Sleep! Sleep! Your brain needs it to work at its best. Year 12 can get busy quickly, so taking care of yourself and getting the rest you need is something to keep in mind throughout the year.’ **Grace**



Top 10 tips for mental wellbeing

1. **Make time:** Dedicate some time each day to doing something you enjoy.
2. **Get active:** Exercise makes your brain release feel-good endorphins.
3. **Connect with others:** Take time to connect with friends, family or community. Spending time with others can energise you and means there's always someone to listen if you're struggling.
4. **Use stress-management and positive relaxation techniques:** Use strategies like breathing exercises, meditation or creative outlets to boost your mood and reduce stress.
5. **Set goals:** Setting small goals and sticking to them can give you a boost.
6. **Balance your schedule:** Build some 'me time' into your study schedule.
7. **Limit social media:** Try to switch off from time to time. While social media has loads of positives, it can impact your mental wellbeing.
8. **Manage academic pressure:** Organise yourself and your workload and remember your grades don't define you.
9. **Be grateful:** Look at all of the positives in your life and make a list of things you have to be grateful for.
10. **Educate yourself:** Learn about dealing with stress and anxiety, and become aware of signs that you may need to ask for mental wellbeing support.

Advice from previous students — find your happy place

'Keep doing the things you love while studying as it's important to have other interests. Don't surround yourself with people who don't support you and lift you up. Find the people that make you happy and that you can be yourself around.' **Zali**

'Maintain balance, and when school becomes challenging and overwhelming, remind yourself why you started and keep your end goals in mind.' **Chelsea**

'Take time for yourself. Enjoy high school, enjoy the time with your friends. Study with them and enjoy the experience.' **Shafin**

'It isn't all about school. Keep doing things that make you happy.' **Ee Lin**

'Enjoy all the little moments of your final year and don't stress yourself over things you can't change. Be able to say that you gave everything a shot and always ask your family, friends or teachers for help if needed.' **Jude**

'Pursue what you love, take time for yourself and find strategies to relax and calm your nervous system before exams.' **Matilda**

Smart study snacks

Good nutrition is important, not only for your body, but also your brain. For optimum health, the Australian dietary guidelines detail how many serves per day of these five food groups we need (www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines/about-australian-dietary-guidelines).



Vegetables

Vegetables and legumes/beans



Fruit

Fruit from the different fruit categories



Grain

Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high-cereal fibre varieties



Protein

Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds and legumes/beans



Dairy

Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives

When it comes to study, SBS Food notes the below foods can enhance your focus, memory and brain function (www.sbs.com.au/food/article/brain-food/617rnk8iu):

- salmon or oily fish
- blueberries
- eggs
- walnuts
- spinach.

Making a nutritious snack is a great way to break up study sessions. Here are some ideas from the five food groups and brain foods to get you started. If you have food allergies or intolerances, you may need to swap some ingredients.

Toppings or fillings for toasted bread, bagel, sourdough or English muffins

- Blueberries with cream cheese or cottage cheese
- Eggs — poached, boiled or scrambled with milk
- Avocado with lemon and pepper
- Peas, crushed with feta and mint
- Baked beans with wilted spinach
- Tinned salmon with avocado
- Tinned sardines with tomato
- Grilled cheese
- Shredded chicken, tomato and basil
- Banana with drizzled tahini and chopped walnuts
- Salmon with cream cheese or cottage cheese

Other snacks

- Hummus and carrot sticks
- Tzatziki with cucumber sticks
- Walnut/spinach dip with vegetable sticks
- Yoghurt with blueberries
- Oats with milk and banana
- Apple wedges with almond butter
- Celery sticks with almond butter or cottage cheese
- Omelette with chopped spinach
- Fresh fruit, poached fruit
- A handful of raw walnuts or other mixed nuts
- Fruit smoothie
- Tinned tuna/salmon with wholegrain crackers or mixed into brown rice
- Tofu and avocado dip
- Tomato salsa with veggie sticks
- White bean and feta dip

For more ideas, the Healthy Snack Generator (a joint initiative by Health and Wellbeing Queensland and the Queensland Office for Youth) gives you quick and simple suggestions. Choose from creamy, crunchy, fruity, savoury or sweet and get nutritious snack ideas using everyday ingredients (<https://hw.qld.gov.au/healthy-snack-generator-home>).



What to expect on examination days

The QCAA sets specific procedures for students, schools and supervisors to follow for each external assessment.

Directions for students

You must follow the QCAA's student directions as well as your school's rules and those of any other external assessment venue you attend. If you breach any of the directions, your external assessment result may be withheld. It is important that you check the directions for students to make sure you know what is expected of you. The directions for students are available on the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/external-assessment/administration).

Strategies for success

While preparation is key, it's also important to manage your time when you're sitting the external assessments. The following five strategies can help you stay focused and achieve your best.

1

Make the most of perusal and planning time

This is where you should read and consider the assessment. During perusal time, you're not allowed to write on the assessment paper or the response book, or use a calculator. Perusal time is your chance to get an overview before you start, so look over the paper thoroughly and think about your approach.

Planning time is different. You can make notes and plan your responses but you're not allowed to start writing in the response book. You will be given two pieces of blue planning paper to write on. Notes made during planning time are collected by your school but are not marked.

2

Manage your working time

Each assessment has a strict time limit, so you will need to plan your time and pace yourself. Set timeframes for each part of the assessment and try to stick to them. The assessment is designed to give you enough time for you to answer. If you get stuck on a question or think there might be an error, do your best to answer it and then move on so you don't lose too much time.

3

Think before you answer

Give yourself time to understand the meaning of each task or question and what it's asking you to do. Make sure you do everything that you're asked.

Your responses will be scanned for marking, so pay careful attention to instructions about writing spaces. If a page says, 'Do not write on this page', leave it blank — anything written there won't be scanned or marked. Do not write outside the response space as this will not be marked.

4

Use response spaces

Response spaces are designed to fit the response length, but if you have large handwriting or make an error and need extra space, there are spare pages at the back of the question and response book. You can also ask the supervisor for an additional response book.

For questions that use diagrams, graphs or maps, spare copies are usually included at the back of the response book. You can also ask the supervisor for another copy, if needed.

5

Check your work

Try to leave yourself a few minutes at the end to check your work and go back to any questions you were unsure about. If you have used additional response materials, remember to attach a barcode (from your place card) to each one so they can be scanned and marked.

For multiple choice items, these simple tips can help:

- use a 2B pencil and fill the bubbles completely
- check you haven't marked two bubbles on the same line
- make sure you haven't skipped a line
- switch back to pen after you finish the multiple choice questions
- make sure your answers are written in the response book (answers in the question book won't be marked).

Advice from previous students — believe in yourself

'Never underestimate the power of your intuition. For simpler questions, it can discount precious minutes off your thinking. For more challenging questions, it can be the spark that ignites uncertainty into progress.' **Eric**

'Never doubt yourself and always stay confident in your abilities.' **Advait**

'Give everything you try your best, so you won't have any regrets. Nothing is impossible.' **Chengzhi**

'Try your best, believe in yourself, and focus on the present.' **Mido**

Why the assessment instructions matter

All assessment papers include general instructions. Some are common to all subjects and others may be different depending on the subject and what you will be asked to do. It's important to read the instructions carefully, so you don't lose marks unnecessarily.

There are valid reasons for the instructions — most relate to how the assessment papers are scanned and then marked electronically.

Here are some examples of common instructions and why they are important.

Instruction	Why it's important
Answer the question/s in this response book or question and response book. Work in this book will not be marked. Planning paper will not be marked.	- Only the response book or question and response book and any additional response books used will be scanned and marked. - Question books, stimulus books and multiple choice question books are not scanned or marked. - Blue planning paper is not scanned or marked. - Responses should be written in the response book or question and response book or additional response book if you need extra space.
Write using a black or blue pen. Respond using black ink pen, black felt-tip pen, 2B pencil, and coloured pencils or pens	- Most assessment responses are scanned in black and white, and the electronic copies are marked. - Black-and-blue pens show up better on black-and-white scans so the markers can easily see your responses and allocate marks. - Highlighter pens should not be used in the response book or question and response book because they will not show up in scans or may appear black. - Erasable pens should not be used in the response book or question and response book because the heat from scanners can erase your work. - Responses for some subjects can use coloured pens, pencils or felt-tip pens. These are scanned in colour, so the markers will be able to see your responses. Highlighter pens should not be used as they may not show up in scans.
Respond in paragraphs consisting of full sentences.	Responding in paragraphs and full sentences gives you the best chance at receiving full marks for the question.
Do not write on this page. This page will not be marked.	- Selected pages in question and response books are left blank due to how they are printed, or to keep information/questions together. These pages are clearly identified. - It's essential you don't write on these pages as they are not scanned and will not be marked.
Continue to the next page.	- Selected pages in question books are left blank due to how they are printed or to keep information or questions together. - Always continue to the next page and check the full question book to make sure you haven't missed a question.
Do not write outside this box.	Responses written outside the box are not marked.*
If you need more space for a response, use the additional pages at the back of this book. - On the additional pages, write the question number you are responding to. - Cancel any incorrect response by ruling a single diagonal line through your work. - Write the page number of your alternative/additional response, i.e. See page ... - If you do not do this, your original response will be marked.	- Some students have larger handwriting or may make a mistake and want to correct it. - You can use extra pages at the back of the response book or ask for an additional response book.* *Follow the 'If you need more space ...' instructions to clearly show the markers you know you have made a mistake and don't want the original response marked, or that you have completed the response in a different part of the book.

Instruction	Why it's important
Respond in [language].	• Languages subjects often require you to respond in the subject language. • Some Languages subjects may also require you to respond to questions/ sections in English. • Read the instructions carefully so you don't lose marks for answers that do not use the correct language. • For some General (Senior External Examination (SEE)) Languages subjects, a multimodal element is required.
Respond appropriately.	• Respond within the response space. Write clearly without wasting time or including unnecessary information. • Spending too much time means you might: – run out of time for other questions – include unnecessary information or miss the focus of the question. This could result in a lower mark. • Tips to help you: – Plan before you write by listing your main points. – Answer what is being asked — don't go off topic. – Use clear, concise language. – Stick to one idea per paragraph. – Edit if needed — leave a minute or two and trim unnecessary words or sentences.

Important things to remember

- Stay positive — be well prepared and maintain a healthy attitude, so you can do your best work.
- Get plenty of rest the night before each assessment. Staying up late to study the night before an examination can make you tired and may affect your ability to concentrate.
- Double check when your assessments are and the equipment you will need.
- Check your transport arrangements so you can arrive well before the scheduled time.



Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

Students who have a disability or impairment, a medical condition or experience circumstances that may be a barrier to their performance in external assessment may be eligible for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA). These may include, but are not limited to, the following adjustments:

- extra time to complete the assessment
- rest breaks during the assessment
- alternative format papers, e.g. enlarged font size or braille
- using a computer or assistive technology to read or respond to the assessment.

Your school may have already made an AARA application on your behalf. Your teacher can provide you with an outcome letter from the QCAA. On the day of the assessment, you can choose to use all, some or none of the approved adjustments. Talk to your external assessment coordinator (EA coordinator) for more information.

For more information about AARA, visit the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/aara).

Illness and misadventure

If your ability to attend or participate in assessments is adversely affected by an illness or unexpected event (misadventure), your school may submit an illness and misadventure application on your behalf. This will only apply if the event:

- is unforeseen and beyond your control, e.g. death of a close family member
- is not of your own choosing or that of your parents/carers, e.g. not a family holiday
- has an adverse effect on your ability to attend or participate in the assessment.

If you are unwell or experience circumstances that prevent you from attending the assessment, you or your parent/carer should contact your school as soon

as possible. The EA coordinator will provide advice about the QCAA's illness and misadventure process and will notify the principal.

If you attend assessment and feel that your performance was adversely affected by illness or misadventure, you should let the school (e.g. assessment supervisor or EA coordinator) know as soon as possible. This should be before, during or immediately after the assessment session.

If unwell, you should seek medical advice and get a doctor's report to submit to your school. The school will then make an illness and misadventure application to the QCAA. To make an informed decision about an illness and misadventure application for medical reasons, the QCAA requires a report from an independent health professional that covers the three Ds:

- **Doctor** — it must be completed by a doctor (pharmacy or self-generated online reports are not sufficient)
- **Diagnosis** — it must confirm the illness or condition (a certificate noting simply that you have a medical condition and are 'unfit for duty' is not sufficient)
- **Dates** — it must confirm when you were sick and those dates should align with assessment included in the illness and misadventure application.

For non-medical applications, you will need written evidence from a relevant independent professional or an independent third party such as a social worker, member of the clergy, police officer, solicitor or funeral director. The person providing the documentation must not be a relative or have a close personal relationship with you. Contact your school's EA coordinator if you are unsure what documentation to provide in your circumstance.

For more information about illness and misadventure, visit the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/aara).

Academic misconduct

If you engage in academic misconduct in an external assessment, your result for that assessment may be withheld and may not contribute towards your final result for the subject. Academic misconduct can include a range of behaviours, including those listed in the table below.

Type of misconduct	Examples
Cheating while under supervised conditions	A student: - begins to write during perusal time or continues to write after the instruction to stop writing is given - uses unauthorised equipment or materials or AI - has any notation written on their body, clothing or any object brought into an assessment room - communicates with any person other than a supervisor during an examination, e.g. through speaking, signing, electronic device or other means, such as passing notes, making gestures or sharing equipment with another student.
Collusion	When: - more than one student works to produce a response and that response is submitted as individual work by one or multiple students - a student assists another student to commit an act of academic misconduct - a student gives or receives a response to another student.
Contract cheating	A student: - pays for a person or a service to complete a response to an assessment - sells or trades a response to an assessment.
Copying work	A student: - deliberately or knowingly makes it possible for another student to copy responses - looks at another student's work during a supervised assessment - copies another student's work during a supervised assessment.
Disclosing or receiving information about an assessment	A student or other person: - gives or accesses unauthorised information that compromises the integrity of an assessment, such as stimulus or suggested answers/responses, before a response to the assessment is completed - attempts to give or receive access to secure assessment materials.
Fabricating	A student: - invents or exaggerates data - lists incorrect or fictitious references, such as false or misleading information generated from the use of AI.
Impersonation	A student: - arranges for another person or technology to complete a response to an assessment in their place, e.g. impersonating the student in a performance or supervised assessment - completes a response to an assessment in place of another student.
Misconduct during a supervised assessment	A student distracts and/or disrupts others in an assessment room.
Plagiarism or lack of referencing	A student: - completely or partially copies or alters another person's work - creates work using AI and does not provide attribution (this may include text, audio or audiovisual material, figures, tables, design, images, information or ideas) - uses a translator (as the work produced is not the work of the student).
Self-plagiarism	A student duplicates work, or part of work, already submitted as a response to an assessment instrument in the same or any other subject.
Significant contribution of help	A student or other person arranges for, or allows, a tutor, parent/carer or any person in a supporting role to complete or contribute significantly to the response.



Results

How your external assessments will be marked

Multiple choice responses are scanned and marked electronically. You'll get one mark for each correct answer. Incorrect answers, unanswered questions, or questions where you select more than one answer receive zero marks. As you will not lose marks for incorrect multiple choice responses, it is recommended you attempt every question.

Extended response tasks are marked independently by at least two different QCAA-trained markers. They use specific criteria to assess your work, and the marking process is monitored to make sure it's fair and consistent.

Short response questions are also marked by QCAA-trained markers against a specific marking scheme. Their marking is checked as part of the QCAA quality assurance processes.

Your assessment response papers will stay with the QCAA and won't be returned after the assessment.

How final subject results are calculated

The results from your external assessments will give you a mark out of 25 (for most General subjects) or 50 (for Mathematics and Science subjects), depending on the subject. This result is added to your three internal assessment results (for Units 3 and 4) to give a mark out of 100 and a grade of A to E for each subject.

For more information about how results are calculated for General subjects, visit the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/results/calculating-results-general-subjects).

When and where you can view your results

Your external assessment results and final subject results will be available in your learning account on Wednesday 16 December 2026, together with your Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE), if eligible.

You can access your learning account through the Student Portal on the myQCE website. You'll need your 10-digit Learner Unique Identifier (LUI) the first time you register for the Student Portal. Then you can log in with your email and nominated password. It's recommended you use a personal email address instead of your school email when you register so you can easily reset your account if you forget your password and can no longer access your school email.

For more information about your learning account and the Student Portal, visit the myQCE website (www.myqce.qcaa.qld.edu.au).

Asking the QCAA to check your external assessment results

If you think there may have been a marking error, you can apply to the QCAA to have your external assessment or Senior External Examination (SEE) script reassessed. You will need to submit a reassessment form and the application fee (via the Verification and reassessment tab in your learning account in the Student Portal) by 13 January 2027.

A reassessment may decrease, confirm or increase your result. If your result changes, the QCAA will issue a new Senior Statement or Statement of Results, advise the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) of the new result and refund your application fee. If your result is lowered you can apply to the QCAA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for a review of the decision.

More information about results is available on the QCAA website (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/results/checking-results).

What contributes to your ATAR

QTAC is responsible for calculating your tertiary entrance rank, which is known as the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

QTAC only uses your final subject results to calculate your ATAR. It does not receive your individual external or internal assessment marks.

Your ATAR is calculated using either:

- your best five General subject results
- or
- your best four General subject results, plus either:
 - one Applied subject result
 - a completed VET qualification at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate III level or higher.

If you're eligible for an ATAR in both options, QTAC will use your higher ATAR.

To be eligible for an ATAR, students must satisfactorily complete a QCAA English subject. However, your English result does not have to be included in your ATAR calculation.

You can find more information about the ATAR on the QTAC website (www.qtac.edu.au/year-12-atar).

More information

myqce.qcaa.qld.edu.au

The myQCE website provides information about subjects and courses, assessment and results, study tips and more.

qcaa.qld.edu.au

The QCAA website provides information about senior secondary curriculum and assessment, including syllabuses for QCAA subjects and courses.