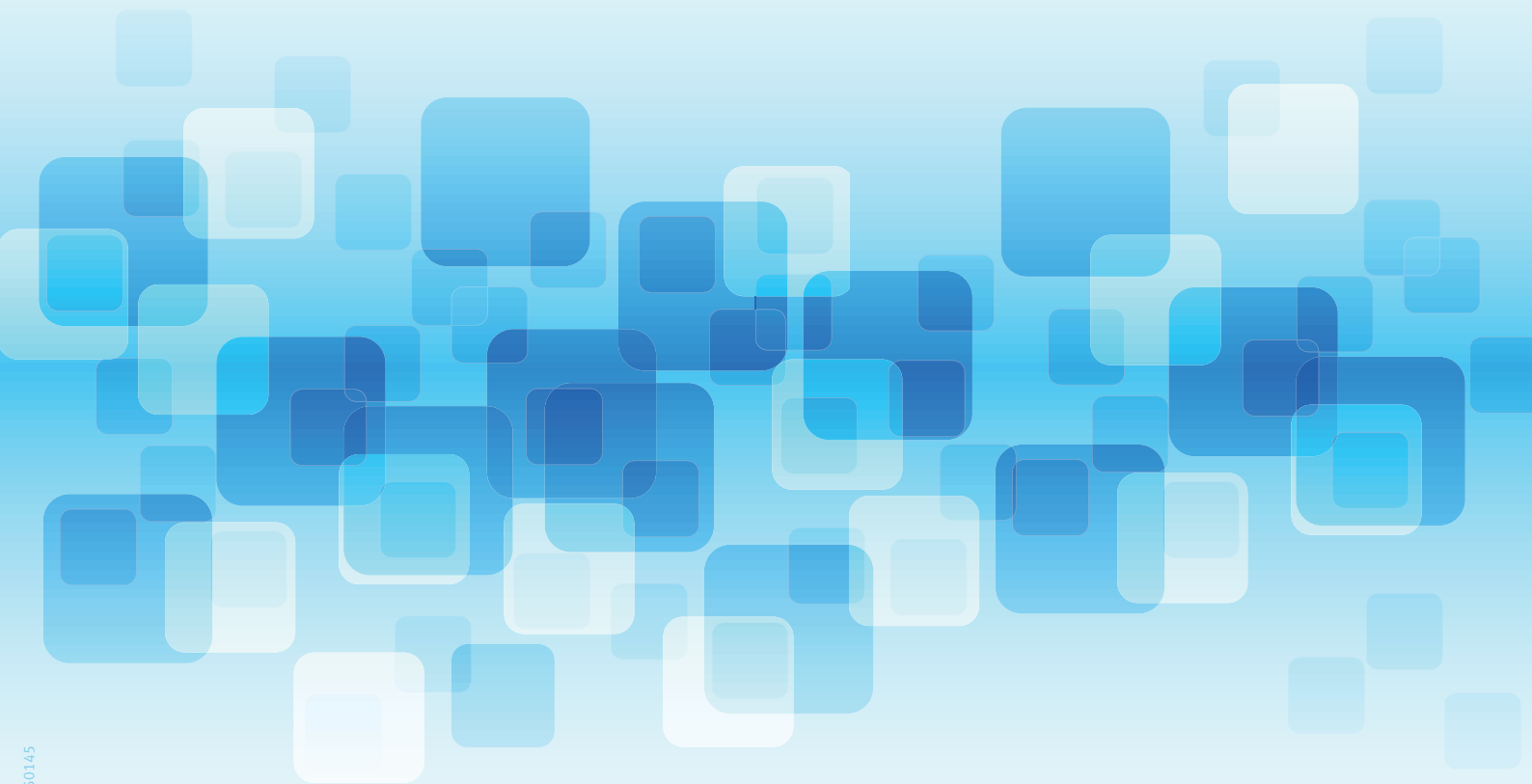




Queensland state schools

School Performance Assessment Framework

2015



Message from the Director-General.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Reviews at a glance.....	5
Differentiated support.....	5
Review tool.....	5
Reports and follow-up support	5
Self-determined reviews	6
Priority support reviews.....	7
Full school reviews.....	8
Emergent reviews	10
Reviewers	10
Internal and external reviewers.....	10
Principal peer reviewers	10
Sharing successful practice.....	11
ATTACHMENT A: Review process flowchart.....	12
ATTACHMENT B: Comparing the different reviews	13
ATTACHMENT C: Glossary	14





Message from the Director-General

Queensland state schools are great schools.

Our aim is to make them even better by ensuring every Queensland child makes progress at school regardless of their starting point.

The School Performance Assessment Framework includes some important changes to the way we monitor, support and review the performance of Queensland state schools.

The new School Improvement Unit (SIU) and school reviews replace the teaching and learning audits.

The reviews build on the good work of the audits and are about identifying and matching support to the needs of schools. They will also help to uncover and share successful practice for the benefit of all Queensland school communities.

Under the School Performance Assessment Framework, every state school, including independent public schools, will have a review at least every four years. This is the same frequency as the teaching and learning audits, but it's not a one-size-fits-all approach.

In the same way Queensland teachers support the individual needs and learning styles of students, so too must we differentiate the support we provide to schools.

The new school reviews are tailored to the circumstances and context of schools. High-performing schools will have autonomy to organise their own reviews. This includes choosing reviewers. Schools identified as needing extra support will get the help they need.

The SIU administers the reviews, including training and appointing reviewers to ensure quality and consistency. It is independent from the delivery arm of state schools.

Thank you to the schools and staff who took part in the review trials in 2014. Your contribution is valued and has helped to shape the school reviews and the future work of the SIU.

We look forward to continuing to work together as a system to improve outcomes for students.

DR JIM WATTERSTON
Director-General, Department of Education,
Training and Employment

Introduction

The Department of Education, Training and Employment is committed to supporting and improving the performance of Queensland state schools.

In 2014 the department released a draft School Performance Assessment Framework that outlined the performance monitoring and review system for state schools from 2015.

The framework included some important changes to the way school performance is monitored and supported in Queensland, including the establishment of the School Improvement Unit (SIU), tailored reviews and differentiated support for schools.

The framework has been updated following trials of school reviews in Term 4 2014.

SIU overview

The SIU administers the School Performance Assessment Framework and school reviews.

The unit is an independent monitor of state school performance, separate from the delivery arm of schools (State Schools Division). It reports to the Director-General.

The unit is led by an executive director who oversees a small team of internal reviewers and support staff.

School reviews overview

Under the School Performance Assessment Framework, all state schools, including independent public schools, have a review at least every four years.

This is consistent with the teaching and learning audits and aligns with the [School Planning, Reviewing and Reporting Framework](#).

The majority of schools will receive a review in the fourth year of their quadrennial review cycle. More than 300 reviews are expected to be conducted each year.

The reviews do not replace a school's internal review and improvement processes, but support and inform these activities in a similar way to the teaching and learning audits.

The type of review a school receives is determined by the SIU following consideration of the school's performance data and context, and further consultation with regions. The SIU consults with the Director-General or their delegate with regards to independent public schools.

Reviews are conducted in a professional manner by trained reviewers, with the principal and school leadership team involved and kept informed throughout the process.

Each review involves an analysis of the school's performance data and other information, as well as interviews with the school community including staff, parents, students and relevant external stakeholders.

At the completion of the review, the review team presents its findings to the school. This is followed by a written report to guide their school improvement activities into the future.

The SIU continues to support schools after a review is completed, checking in periodically to monitor the progress of the school's improvement journey.

See **Attachment A** for an overview of the review process.

Reviews at a glance

Based on their performance and level of support they require, schools are designated for one of three review types:

- **Self-determined reviews** for high-performing schools
- **Priority support reviews** for schools identified as needing additional support
- **Full school reviews** for all other schools.

See **Attachment B** for a comparison of the different reviews. More detailed information on each of the reviews follows over the page.

The SIU also conducts emergent reviews as required and case studies of effective school practice. These fall outside of the four-year review cycle. For further details please see pages 10 and 11.

Differentiated support

The intention of the reviews is to ensure support and intervention is matched to the needs and context of schools. Every school is different and reviews are tailored accordingly.

The SIU takes into account a school's context and needs when selecting a review team.

Review tool

Reviewers use the [National School Improvement Tool](#) that was developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in consultation with states and territories, including Queensland.

The tool is similar to the teaching and learning audit tool but with two important differences: the inclusion of an additional, ninth domain, School and Community Partnerships; and the SIU will not apply the performance levels that were used in the teaching and learning audits to measure schools against the domains.

Reports and follow-up support

After a review is completed, the review team presents its findings to the school's leadership team, and to the assistant regional director for priority support reviews.

This is followed by a written report which provides schools with further information to support their improvement agenda. Schools publish the reports online for their school community.

The region, through the assistant regional director, works closely with schools to develop and implement improvement strategies in response to the review's findings.

In the case of priority support reviews, the SIU has a formal monitoring role and will check in with the school at three and six months, and revisit the school at 12 months.



Self-determined reviews

At a glance

- For high-performing schools
- Schools given autonomy and funding to organise reviews and appoint reviewers
- SIU provides framework and guidance to support reviews
- Schools select review team in consultation with SIU
- Schools publish final report online and provide a copy to SIU.

High-performing state schools are given autonomy to organise their own reviews. These are called self-determined reviews.

Schools undertaking self-determined reviews are given funding for the review.

The SIU provides a framework and guidance for schools to ensure quality and rigour.

Review process

Principals are responsible for ensuring the quality and delivery of self-determined reviews. This includes establishing the scope, focus and duration of the review, and appointing a review team.

They can engage reviewers from outside the state school system if they wish, in line with government procurement policy. This may include, for example, external reviewers from another school system, from universities or overseas. They can also engage the SIU to conduct the review.

Schools conducting self-determined reviews are to consult with the SIU regarding their review, including timing, areas of focus, and composition of the review team. They must also inform their regional office.

Following the completion of a self-determined review, the school publishes the final report to their website and discusses the findings and recommendations with their school community.

The principal is also responsible for overseeing the school's response to the review, including implementing any recommendations into their four-year school plan.

A copy of the report must also be sent to the SIU to contribute to the department's research base.



Priority support reviews

At a glance

- For schools identified as needing additional support
- Reviews consider the nine review domains and identify where school needs to improve
- Reviews generally conducted by a team of at least two internal reviewers and an external reviewer
- Reviews can take up to six days depending on school size and complexity
- Region supports school to develop detailed action plan in response
- SIU continues to monitor and support school following review.

Schools identified by the SIU, in consultation with regions, as requiring extra assistance will have a priority support review.

The reviews are an acknowledgment that some schools need more support than others and that the department has a responsibility to support these schools as a priority.

Review process

Priority support reviews are conducted by a review team appointed by the SIU. The team usually consists of at least two internal reviewers from the unit and an external reviewer.

Generally, priority support reviews are conducted over four to six days, depending on the school's size and complexity.

The reviews are a thorough examination of a school's performance and operations, and identify where and how the school can improve. The assistant regional director is interviewed as part of the review.

At its conclusion, the review team presents its findings and recommendations to the school's leadership team and assistant regional director.

A written report follows, detailing the findings and recommendations for the school to respond to with the support of the region. The report is to be published on the school's website.

The SIU continues to support the school after the review, regularly monitoring the implementation and progress of the school's improvement strategies. It revisits the school after 12 months.



Full school reviews

At a glance

- Reviews consider the nine review domains and identify areas for further improvement
- Reviews conducted by a team appointed by SIU
- Review team usually consists of one internal reviewer from SIU, an external reviewer and a principal peer reviewer
- Reviews can take up to three days, depending on school size and complexity
- School works with region to incorporate review findings into four-year school plan.

The majority of Queensland state schools will receive a full school review under the School Performance Assessment Framework.

Full school reviews are for schools that are performing at a satisfactory standard but with potential for further improvement.



Review process

Full school reviews are conducted by a review team appointed by the SIU in consultation with the school and region.

The review team is chaired by an internal reviewer from the SIU and generally includes an external reviewer and a principal peer reviewer.

This ensures the independence and rigour of the reviews. It also allows the department to build the school improvement knowledge and capabilities of its school leaders.

Generally, full school reviews take up to three days depending on the school's size and complexity. The assistant regional director is interviewed as part of the review.

At the completion of the review the review team presents its findings and recommendations to the school leadership group. A written report follows.

Using the report, the school works with its assistant regional director to incorporate the review findings into its four-year school plan.

The final report is to be published on the school's website.



Emergent reviews

The SIU also conducts emergent reviews as necessary.

These reviews are for schools that have been identified as facing urgent issues, for example, a sudden decline in their performance data or a significant level of community concern.

Emergent reviews are similar in scope and focus to priority support reviews, with the school supported by the SIU after the review is completed.

Reviewers

The SIU accredits and trains school reviewers, and appoints review teams for full school and priority support reviews.

Internal and external reviewers

Internal school reviewers are experienced principals with a solid background in school improvement. They are seconded to the SIU for a period of time, ranging from a number of weeks up to several school terms.

External school reviewers have a similar role to internal reviewers but are from outside the department. They can include experienced educators from universities or former school principals.

The introduction of external reviewers is an important point of difference from the teaching and learning audits and supports the independence and rigour of the reviews.

The SIU trains and accredits internal and external reviewers to ensure quality and consistency.

Principal peer reviews

All Queensland state school principals are invited to be trained as peer reviewers and take part in full school reviews. This is designed to strengthen the capacity, skills and knowledge of the department's school leaders for the benefit of all school communities.

The SIU provides peer reviewer training in the regions throughout the year.





Sharing successful practice

One of the core responsibilities of the SIU is to identify and share successful practice to support system-wide improvement.

As part of this, the SIU conducts a number of effective practice studies each year. These studies focus on schools that have shown strong improvement in a particular area of student learning.

Effective practice studies

Effective practice studies are performed by an internal reviewer from the SIU who spends up to three days in the school gathering information.

The reviewer considers the school's performance data and other information, and speaks to a range of staff, students and other school community members.

The studies focus on school performance and outcomes across a broad range of circumstances — from schools driving excellence with high-performing students, to schools that achieve against the odds.

Typically, the reviews focus on a particular practice or area of strength within a school. This may include operational or cultural factors as well as teaching and learning.

The SIU shares findings from effective practice studies via its website. Information is also published in the unit's annual report.

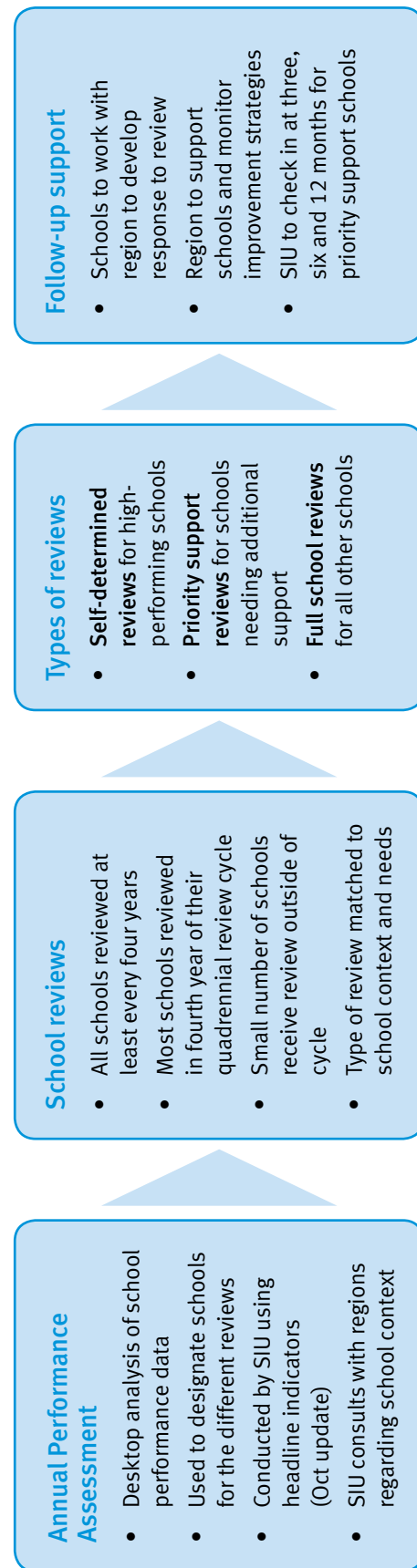
Annual report

The SIU's annual report is a comprehensive snapshot of school performance trends across the state.

The reports are published in Term 4 with every state school to receive a copy.

In time, the reports will become a longitudinal study that tracks and compares trends from previous years, and identifies where Queensland state schools have improved and areas for future focus.

Review process flowchart



Comparing the different reviews

Review type	School type	Review team	Duration	Final report	Response to review	Monitoring and follow-up support
Self-determined reviews	For high-performing schools	School selects team in consultation with SIU	School determines duration in consultation with SIU	School publishes online and shares with community Copy provided to SIU	School incorporates findings into four-year school plan	School monitors progress and improvement
Priority support reviews	For schools needing extra support	Generally: 2 x internal reviewers 1 x external reviewer	Up to six days	School publishes online and shares with community	Region works with school to develop action plan	SIU monitors progress and improvement
Full school reviews	For all other schools	Generally: 1 x internal reviewer 1 x external reviewer 1 x principal peer reviewer	Up to three days	School publishes online and shares with community	School works with region to incorporate findings into four-year school plan	Region monitors progress and improvement
Emergent reviews	For schools facing urgent issues	SIU appoints team based on needs and context of school	Based on school size and complexity	Report provided to school and region	Region works with school to develop appropriate response	SIU monitors progress and improvement
Effective practice studies	For schools that have generated significant improvement	1 x internal reviewer	Up to three days	SIU publishes case study online and in annual report	N/A	N/A

Glossary

Term	Definition
Annual performance assessment	Desktop audit of performance data for all Queensland state schools. Conducted by SIU using headline indicators (Oct update).
Domains	Key focus areas of the National School Improvement Tool used to conduct reviews.
Effective practice studies	Studies of school practices that have led to significant improvements in a school's performance data or student outcomes. Conducted by SIU and shared via its website and annual report.
Emergent reviews	Reviews conducted by SIU in response to urgent issues such as sudden declines in performance data or significant community concern. Undertaken as required.
External reviewers	Experienced educators from outside the department engaged by SIU to participate in reviews.
Full school reviews	The standard review for most Queensland state schools. Review team appointed by SIU.
Headline indicators	Snapshot of school performance data. Updated twice a year.
Internal reviewers	Experienced state school principals seconded to SIU to chair and conduct reviews.
National School Improvement Tool	Framework used by reviewers to conduct school reviews. Developed by ACER in consultation with department.
Principal peer reviewers	State school principals trained by the SIU to participate in full school reviews.
Priority support reviews	For schools identified as needing additional support – generally, longer and more in-depth than full school reviews. Review team appointed by SIU.
Quadrennial school reviews	Internal process Queensland state schools undertake every four years – a requirement of the School Planning, Reviewing and Reporting Framework.
Review reports	At the end of each review the review team prepares a final report which details key findings and recommendations. A copy is provided to the school and SIU.
School Improvement Unit (SIU)	Dedicated unit established to administer the School Performance Assessment Framework, including school reviews. Operates independently from State Schools Division and reports to Director-General.
SIU annual report	Snapshot of Queensland state school performance trends at a statewide/ system level. All schools receive a copy.
School Performance Assessment Framework	Outlines how Queensland state school performance is monitored, reviewed and supported by SIU.
School Planning, Reviewing and Reporting Framework	Outlines the internal school planning, review and reporting processes of Queensland state schools.
Self-determined reviews	High-performing state schools are given some funding by SIU to organise their reviews and appoint reviewers.
Teaching and learning audits	Previous model of assessing teaching and learning in Queensland state schools. Conducted from 2010 to 2014.