

Report on a page

This report summarises the audit results of entities in Queensland's education sector, including the Department of Education; the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training; TAFE Queensland; seven universities; eight grammar schools; and some other statutory bodies.

Financial statements are reliable

The financial statements of all education entities are reliable and comply with relevant reporting requirements. Entities have mature financial statement processes and were able to prepare good quality financial statements, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic.

Entities reacted quickly to risks from COVID-19

International border closures resulting from COVID-19 had a significant impact on universities. This year, revenue from international students decreased by \$134 million (nearly nine per cent of total international student revenue). Universities responded quickly to reduce costs.

Grammar schools received assistance through federally funded COVID-19 assistance programs to support their financial results this year. They will need to reassess the cost of their services as government assistance reduces.

State schools adopted new technology to support remote learning for the five weeks of COVID-19 lockdown, and made alternate learning resources available for students with limited or no access to computers and/or the internet. The Department of Education is reviewing its response to the pandemic to develop approaches for using technology to deliver learning in the future.

Entities need to cope with funding uncertainty

Across the sector, future revenue streams remain uncertain. In order to remain viable, all entities need to understand the cost of delivering their services over the medium and longer term and monitor the efficiency of their service delivery.

Asset management is essential for future planning

Education entities invest significant funds in maintaining, replacing or upgrading assets. It is important this is done at the most cost-effective point in an asset's life. Entities need a good understanding of the condition of their assets and future demand for their services to plan for effective asset management. To meet forecast demand and reduce pressure on existing schools, the Department of Education is building schools in regions with strong population growth. This investment needs to be integrated with its digital strategy.

Strong information systems are critical

While we were able to rely on entities' systems and processes used to prepare financial statements, we identified some deficiencies. Security of information systems continues to be the area where we find the most issues.

Given the sensitive nature of information held about students and research, education entities are an attractive target for cyber attacks. They must update their systems promptly to respond to changes within their entity and to remain vigilant from external threats.

