

Report on a page

This report summarises the results of our audits of the entities in Queensland's education sector, including the Department of Education; the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training; TAFE Queensland; 7 universities; 8 grammar schools; and other statutory bodies.

The financial statements are reliable

All education entities' financial statements are reliable and comply with relevant reporting requirements. The entities have mature financial statement processes, and they were able to prepare good quality financial statements, despite the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The security of their information systems needs to improve

We continue to identify weaknesses in the entities' information systems. While the entities are continually improving the security of their systems, the risk of cyber attacks continues to increase. The sensitive nature of information the entities hold about students and research makes them an attractive target. In response to this evolving risk, we have expanded our testing and identified more weaknesses. Given how much entities rely on their information systems, they all need to strengthen their security.

Universities' revenues have improved

This year, revenues for universities increased by \$497.1 million because of changes in Australian Government funding, and higher investment revenue due to improved market conditions. They also received assistance through Australian Government-funded research programs. Some of these revenue streams may not be guaranteed in the future. Revenue from international students decreased again this year – by \$186.7 million. Australia's borders reopened in 2022, but it remains uncertain whether international student numbers will return to their pre-pandemic levels. Universities continue to adapt to changing times to ensure they remain viable.

TAFE Queensland's financial sustainability remains a risk

TAFE Queensland's financial results have been deteriorating over the last 4 years, and based on current projections, this is expected to continue. It faces significant financial challenges in meeting government's service expectations while operating in a contestable market.

Reforms to the vocational education and training sector are currently being discussed, with a new national skills agreement expected to be developed in 2022. TAFE Queensland will need to reflect any changes from this in its longer-term strategy.

Investment in schools is aligned with population growth

The Department of Education is investing in construction and expansion projects for schools, focusing on regions expected to have strong population growth. However, it needs to keep up-to-date information on the condition of its assets to maintain them properly. This will help in planning the timing and cost of maintenance, and in decisions on building and expanding schools in future.

Some of the information in both the department's last asset condition assessment of schools and TAFE campuses is 5 years old, and another assessment is currently being performed.

