

## WHITE PAPER SERIES

Transforming Queensland Education:

Why we need to move our focus from careers to capabilities

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The education sector is undergoing a time of great change. At a Federal level, the last two years have seen a renewed focus on transparency of information, driving ownership and accountability in the provision of quality information so students can make informed choices. At a State level, 2020 will herald the introduction of ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) which will assess students' eligibility to progress into further study and the QCAA is developing a new senior assessment system to take effect in 2019.

In less than four years, students will leave secondary school and enter tertiary study in a new climate. To navigate these changes, the education sector will need to shift focus away from preparing students for traditional career destinations and concentrate more on ensuring students have the capabilities to tackle the challenges that face them.



This white paper discusses what role QTAC will claim in this space, and how a first-in-market innovation created by QTAC will support and inform students so they can shape their future in terms of capabilities rather than traditional careers.

## CURRENT CLIMATE

On 1 February 2016, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Education and Training, asked the Higher Education Standards Panel (HESP) to provide options to improve the transparency of higher education admissions policies. By November 2016, a report had been finalised with 14 recommendations for implementation. HESP was then asked to examine trends and factors driving student success at university, which resulted in the release of a discussion paper in June 2017 looking at improving retention, completion and success in higher education. The Admissions Transparency Implementation Working Group has a final agreed plan which identifies actions that higher education sector stakeholders and relevant government agencies have committed to delivering over the remainder of 2017 and 2018.

Australian universities are facing significant change in how and what they communicate with future students and QTAC is playing a key role in the provision of good quality information to these students. QTAC intends to continue playing a key role in the provision of information to students so they can make informed decisions to equip them for a future of unimagined possibilities.

## A FUTURE OF UNIMAGINED POSSIBILITIES

In 2016, Klaus Schwab, the founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum observed:

*“We stand on the brink of a technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work and relate to one another. In its scale, scope and complexity, the transformation will be unlike anything humankind has experienced before. We do not yet know just how it will unfold, but one thing is clear: the response to it must be integrated and comprehensive, involving all stakeholders of the global polity, from the public and private sectors to academia and civil society.”*

Let us focus for a moment on this concept that a transformation is coming that will have an *unknown* and *unknowable* impact. Parents with children in secondary school today will appreciate that their children will live in a future of unimagined possibilities. They are learning with tools that were unheard of a generation ago and will occupy careers which have not yet been developed. Young people today are digital natives. They have grown up on iPads and smart phones, live in a world of instant gratification, are globally aware and want their collective voice to be heard to make a difference.

Conversely, most young people (unlike their parents and teachers) will not have bought a stamp, posted a letter, conducted banking transactions in person, used a home phone with a dial or had to wind a car window down manually.

With the magnitude of social, employment and educational transformations in less than a generation, how do parents and schools prepare young people for a future that we cannot imagine, for jobs that don't exist and where mass collaboration will be the norm?

Educational leaders at all levels have an obligation to prepare our young people for future opportunities by shifting our focus away from traditional careers and think more about equipping our young people with the capabilities which will enable them to embrace new opportunities.



## CAPABILITIES RATHER THAN CAREERS

One of QTAC's roles in this transformation is to support students to think about their future in terms of capabilities rather than traditional careers. In June 2017, The Guardian UK published a list of least safe jobs and professions at greatest risk of automation.

### The least safe jobs

Telemarketer

Chance of automation **99%**

Loan officer

Chance of automation **98%**

Cashier

Chance of automation **97%**

Paralegal and legal assistant

Chance of automation **94%**

Taxi driver

Chance of automation **89%**

Fast food cook

Chance of automation **81%**

The pace of technological change is getting faster and the impact of this change will be felt across all sectors and careers.

So why do we need to focus on capabilities? The answer is because most young people will end up working in roles which either don't exist yet, or ones that will change in ways that we cannot plan for. So rather than training young people to perform specific jobs or roles, we need to arm students to be resilient to change and ensure they are equipped to perform in changing environments.

While we may not know what these careers of the future will be, we do have some idea of what capabilities will be in high demand. The ability to build strong and engaging relationships will be critical, as will the ability to solve complex problems, think laterally and innovate in a range of areas. Young people will need to be multitaskers as their career pathways will take many twists and turns, and will not follow a traditional linear path with lifelong employment with just a few employers.

QTAC will be helping young people to think in terms of these capabilities of the future rather than supporting an outdated, narrow focus on career choices that may well not exist by the time they enter the workforce.

## MYPATH – REDEFINING CAPABILITIES

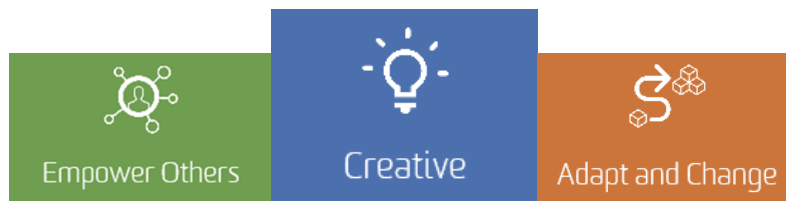
We appreciate that by the time most young people get to the end of their time at secondary school, they have an idea of what further study or training they want to do, and how that relates to their goals. What they may not have given much thought to are the capabilities they already hold and the benefits they will provide, as well as doors they will open.

From 2018, QTAC will provide a new resource called **MYPATH** for students in secondary school to help with identifying future options in more depth.

**MYPATH** is an online tool which will identify a student’s existing strengths and interests as well as identifying those which they can develop through further education and training.

By flipping the paradigm from career to capability, **MYPATH** encourages a student to learn more about themselves in the context of skills and abilities.

### Explore Capabilities



Rather than only asking students to select their preferred courses, QTAC will provide an opportunity for students to reflect on what they enjoy doing, what they are good at and how they think. A series of stepped questions will be asked to guide students through the discovery process.

The suite of questions has been developed by leading psychologists from the Centre for Leadership Advantage and senior academics at the Institute for Working Futures. QTAC, in partnership with these industry leaders, has designed an innovative tool which lets students explore key employability capabilities such as their ability to empower others, to be creative or to adapt and change.

## “I” Clusters

Each student choosing to use **MYPATH** will be given tailored feedback about what kind of work roles may suit them based on their answers.

They will be given a unique profile in terms of how they align with one of more of the “I” clusters.



By creating eight clusters, QTAC can group together roles that connect, administer, grow, create, serve, inform, care and build.

For instance, one student may align strongly with the “I Create” cluster, indicating that they draw strongly from personal insights and emotions and may want to consider further study in arts or design. This student may also have strong alignment with the “I Connect” cluster, suited to roles that interact with technology, computing or digital networks.

The resulting cluster profile will be linked to recommendations about further study which are ideally suited to the specific capability cluster, such as a role in social media management which balances the create and connect clusters.

The objective is to encourage young people (as well as parents and teachers) to start making connections with their capabilities and linking their further study options with those capabilities.

## Additional Capacity

Not only does **MYPATH** provide access to the capability self-assessment tool, it offers three additional tools for students, schools and parents.

### 1. Senior Subject Selection

To provide a value-added tool for our school partners, QTAC has ensured that **MYPATH** can be fully integrated as a SET planning tool. Schools can enter all senior subjects that are available for their students to take, including using subject lines to ensure that students take a certain cluster of subjects for timetabling purposes. Schools can also include additional rules such as directing that religion must be one of the options selected.

Students will be able to see what subjects are general subjects, which are applied subjects and which are vocational options. This will assist students who aim to be ATAR ready to identify the five subjects for eligibility or the four subjects plus an applied or vocational subject.



### 2. ATAR Eligibility

The second part of the additional capacity within **MYPATH** is the ability for a user to check ATAR eligibility. To obtain an ATAR on leaving secondary school, students need to take one of three subject combinations. Each combination needs to include an English subject. The three subject combinations are:

- Five general subjects
- Four general subjects and an applied subject
- Four general subjects and a vocational qualification.

**MYPATH** takes all the guesswork out of helping students plan a path which will ensure the subject combination they have chosen will earn an ATAR. As students are adding subjects as part of their SET planning, **MYPATH** will immediately advise if the combination is ATAR eligible.

This functionality will put careers staff in the driver's seat and will give school leaders oversight of the year cohort, enabling schools to see at a glance what proportion of students in a particular cohort are on track to receive an ATAR.



### 3. Course Eligibility

The final aspect of the additional capacity within **MYPATH** allows the students to check whether their Year 11 and 12 subject selection meets the prerequisites for the courses they may want to pursue after they complete secondary schooling. Just by clicking on the prerequisites button, all the prerequisite subjects for the chosen courses are highlighted and when all of the subjects are chosen for study, **MYPATH** will send positive feedback to the student.

The screenshot displays the MYPATH web interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the QTAC MY PATH logo, a 'My Plans' dropdown menu, and a 'LOGOUT' link. Below the navigation bar, there is a breadcrumb trail showing 'Subjects' and a 'Need help' icon. The main content area is titled 'Choose your subjects' and features a 'School Rules' section with a red arrow pointing to it. Below this, there are several buttons: 'Prerequisites' (highlighted in blue), 'General', 'Applied', and 'VET'. On the right side, there are two green buttons: 'ATAR' and 'PREREQUISITES', both with checkmarks. The main area shows six rows of subject selection options, each with a number and a list of subjects in colored boxes. Row 1: German, German Extension. Row 2: Accounting, French, Mathematical methods, Chemistry. Row 3: General Mathematics, Chinese, Health. Row 4: French, Philosophy & Reason, Earth & Environmental Science. Row 5: French, Mathematical methods, Legal Studies, English, Specialist Mathematics. Row 6: Essential Mathematics, Ancient History, Psychology.

This three-in-one additional capacity tool is a time-saving option for students, teachers and parents to reduce the hassle of trying to coordinate from printed reference books, subject selection tools and ATAR eligibility rules.

Once students are happy with their subject selection, the final choices can be printed off and discussed with both the school and parents. Multiple plans can also be created as students explore study options and map out the next phase of their education journey.



## SUMMARY

QTAC has developed a reputation for being an innovative and responsive organisation, dedicated to working with its partners to achieve increased higher education application and offer outcomes. We are excited to be able to introduce **MYPATH** to help ease the uncertainty for students, schools and parents as we head toward 2020 and the introduction of ATAR as the new Queensland education ranking tool for those students wanting to progress onto further education or training.

**MYPATH** is completely free of charge and will be available in all schools by March 2018. If you or your school is interested in engaging with this innovative and first release tool, please contact us for further information at [atar@qtac.edu.au](mailto:atar@qtac.edu.au)

## About QTAC and Dr John Griffiths

QTAC offers a centralised tertiary education application and information service for a range of partner institutions across Queensland and Australia. We have been industry leaders in this space for over 40 years, managing over 75,000 applications a year across 1,600 undergraduate courses.

Further information can be found at [qtac.edu.au](http://qtac.edu.au)



Dr John Griffiths has been the CEO of QTAC since 2011. John has led sector wide initiatives including the introduction of daily offers, Queensland's response to the Federal Government's transparency of higher education admissions and initial teacher education. As a thought leader in the higher education admissions space, John continues to engage and innovate as Australia navigates new waters in education.

His previous roles as Assistant Vice-Chancellor at Massey University and General Manager Corporate for the New Zealand Army ensure John is uniquely positioned to provide in-depth and meaningful commentary on utilising innovation in education.

You can follow John on Twitter (@DrJohnGriffiths) or on LinkedIn for regular updates.