



QUEENSLAND  
TEACHERS' UNION  
OF EMPLOYEES

QTU Policy  
2023 - 2025

## Class size staffing

Booklet

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## Queensland Teachers' Union Policy

QTU policy is adopted by the Union's Biennial Conference. Amendments to Union policy may be made at the intervening meetings of State Council.

### Guidelines for changes to existing policy

Motions designed to change or create policy should be sent to Council. Under Rule 7.5 (Decisions of Conference), policy adopted by Conference remains in effect unless amended by Council, where a two-thirds majority decision is necessary. Thus, a proposal to contradict the sense of, or change the wording of existing policy, needs a two-thirds majority, ie 66.6 per cent, for such a proposal to be successful. A proposal to change existing policy should:

- be presented as an amendment to existing policy, and
- state its location in the existing policy.

If no policy exists on a matter, a simple majority decision, ie >50 per cent, is needed for such a proposal to be added to policy.

### Implementation of existing policy

Motions to implement existing policy are usually directed to Executive for consideration. However, where the implementation would involve a significant allocation of QTU resources (eg a major campaign), or where a branch wishes a major emphasis to be put on an aspect of policy, it would then be appropriate to direct such a motion to Council. These guidelines are designed to facilitate debate on policy issues. If branch officials require explanation of these guidelines or assistance with the formulation of policy motions, they should contact the QTU office in Brisbane.

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## QTU Class size and staffing Policy

2023 -2025

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# QTU class size and staffing policy

## 2023 - 2025

### SECTION A: CLASS SIZES

#### 1. Rationale for smaller class sizes

There is a body of evidence demonstrating that:

- students in small classes out-perform students in regular classes in all cognitive measures;
- students in small classes exhibit relatively fewer examples of poor discipline; and/or
- students in small classes are more engaged and participative in their schooling.

In the light of the evidence, the QTU's class size policy aims to provide the broad framework for campaigning around class sizes as a major factor influencing learning outcomes for students.

Class sizes need to be urgently reviewed to take into account contemporary issues such as the impact of societal changes and increased integration of learning needs, special needs, EALD and mental health students, as well as curriculum imposts and the impact of Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) issues.

#### 2. General staffing principles

The QTU supports a staffing model which is transparent, inclusive and provides for stability and predictability in staffing for schools and their students.

Schools with enrolment growth should be staffed in excess of the day eight model, to avoid the need for changes to the timetable or for reconfiguration of class drafts during the year. Where class sizes exceed the target after the semester two census date, additional staff will be allocated to the school, with the department bearing the cost. Staffing for growth through the year, including growth in the numbers of students with disabilities, should be allocated fully at the point the school's enrolment guarantees the entitlement.

If there is a decrease in enrolment, any reduction in staffing or other resource provision linked to enrolments should not take place before the end of the current school year.

Where students with special educational needs are included in regular classrooms, class sizes will be reduced in recognition of their support needs. The QTU defines students with special educational needs as including students:

- with disabilities;
- with learning difficulties/disabilities;
- who demonstrate significant behavioural and adjustment difficulties; and/or
- with significant medical conditions.

The staffing model recognises that registered teachers are trained personnel with responsibility of the organisation and delivery of the curriculum.

The staffing model, in all school settings, should provide sufficient flexibility to allow for a broad range of subject choices. Small classes established for specific purposes should not be offset by oversized classes elsewhere in the school.

The staffing model must also provide for non-contact time for all teachers, as well as additional noncontact time for staff with additional responsibilities (e.g. heads of departments, coaches, subject area coordinators, school music coordinators, work experience coordinators etc).

This provision of entitlements must be inclusive of routine operational and administrative functions; these may include parent liaison, liaison with external bodies/organisations, asset management (loan/maintenance/stocktake/replacement) internal consultation, and the conduct of meetings and other matters which arise.

Small primary schools, small special schools, and small secondary departments should be allocated more staff than suggested by the staffing model, to meet the educational needs of the setting.

### **3. Social justice and equity**

For reasons of social justice, the staffing model should provide additional support for schools with a significant population of students from minority groups, who are typically identified as experiencing disadvantage in their schooling. Schools should be staffed above the model in line with a needs based funding model if they have a significant number of students who:

- are from rural and remote areas;
- are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students whose first language is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language, Torres Strait Creole or Aboriginal English;
- live in poverty;
- are part of an itinerant population;
- have disabilities or learning difficulties/disabilities;
- are from low socio-economic backgrounds;
- identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ+);
- are in care; and/or
- have trauma, mental health, and wellbeing concerns.

### **4. Class sizes - primary**

The QTU supports the continuation of a well-resourced pre-prep and prep program as a critical foundation for children entering the universal preparatory year.

#### **4.1 Pre-prep programs**

The QTU recommends a maximum class size of 15 students for the preparatory program.

## **4.2 Prep year**

Prep classes should be taught by a qualified early childhood-trained teacher with the support of a full-time teacher-aide.

The QTU recommends a maximum class size of 20 students for the preparatory year.

## **4.3 One teacher, single-year level classes**

Years 1 to 3	23
Years 4 to 6	25

## **4.4 One teacher, multi-year level classes**

Two or more year levels	22
One teacher with three or more year levels	20
Two or more year levels years 1-3	20

## **4.5 Instrumental music**

For same instrument groups	5
For mixed instrument groups	3

## **5. Class sizes - secondary**

The maximum class sizes in secondary schools shall be as follows:

### **5.1 One teacher, single-year level classes**

Years 7 to 9	26
Years 10 to 12	23
Composite year 7, 8, 9, 10	20
Alternate sequence delivery 11/12 classes	20
Concurrent delivery classes	18

### **5.2 Practical/vocational education classes/centres for excellence**

Student numbers in practical classes should take into account the learning environment, including available space and fixed design features of the teaching area (workstations or workbenches) and the nature of the equipment that is to be used by students.

Therefore, maximum class sizes for practical classes will vary according to the mode of delivery, the needs of students, the physical resources available and safety considerations.

In line with the department's policy on inclusive education, class sizes for practical classes will also take into account the inclusion of students with disabilities or special needs, including behavioural disorders.

These ratios for students in high-risk subjects (such as workshops and kitchens) need to be reflected in the department's staffing allocations to schools as expressed in the staffing planner.

However, where circumstances allow for these limits to be exceeded, teachers must undertake a risk assessment of all relevant factors, including the age, ability and disposition of the students, physical workshop space, ability to physically supervise a class that is split into theory/practical groupings.

Discrepancies between RTO class sizes and actual class sizes in the CA must not cause a detriment to the conditions of QTU members on the same line on the timetable.

## 6. Class sizes - distance education and virtual schooling

The QTU understands that alternate modes of delivery can be necessary to allow all students to access the curriculum. Distance education caters for students who cannot attend school or for whom their school cannot provide the curriculum they need. However, face to face delivery of teaching and learning should always be the preferred mode of delivery where possible. Information technology can be useful as a tool to support student learning but it should not be seen as replacing face to face learning and must only be used at the discretion of class teachers. In exceptional circumstances where classes need to be taught via online delivery, class size limits must be adhered to or reduced.

Access to distance education and virtual schooling is an important aspect of equitable state-wide delivery of comprehensive curriculum.

Prep year	12 students per teacher
Primary years 1 – 3	12 students per teacher
Primary years 4 – 6	15 students per teacher
Secondary years 7 – 10	40 subject enrolments per teacher
Secondary years 11 – 12	25 subject enrolments per teacher

Student enrolment numbers and student full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments will be counted for distance education and virtual schooling in the same way as for all schools in the state.

Enrolments will be counted as follows.

- Students who are enrolled at an SDE for all of their schooling shall be counted as one enrolment (one FTE).
- Students who are enrolled at both an SDE and another school for their schooling shall be counted as 0.2 of an enrolment (0.2 FTE) for each subject provided by the SDE.
- The enrolments used for grants and staffing purposes shall be the total enrolments on a year to applicable date basis, rather than enrolments on a particular date.

### 6.1 Online

Access to Instrumental Music is an important aspect of equitable state-wide delivery of comprehensive curriculum.

All Year Levels - 15 students per teacher per day

## 7. Special educational needs

### 7.1 Special schools

To ensure quality outcomes for students with special needs, staffing levels must be appropriately determined on the basis of the individual needs of students, rather than on a strict formula based on a teacher-student ratio.



In accordance with the Occupational Violence and WHS requirement, the needs of the student must be resourced at an appropriate level and promptly allocated to the school. Consultation with school based practitioners should be fundamental to determination of resource levels and areas of need.

## **7.2 Special education programs (SEPs)**

Special education programs should be staffed by teachers trained in special education. The specific mix of staff expertise should be appropriate to the roles undertaken. To ensure quality outcomes for students with special needs, staffing levels must be appropriately determined on the basis of the individual needs of students, rather than on a strict formula based on a teacher-student ratio.

## **7.3 Students with special needs in regular classrooms**

The QTU recognises that many students with special educational needs undertake the majority of their schooling in a regular “mainstream” classroom. Class sizes need to be considered by schools and should be reduced appropriately where students with special educational needs are included in regular classes. In order to meet the needs of all students, additional staff must be supplied as and when required to meet reduced class size maximums and should not be tied to a specific student.

## **7.4 Positive Learning Centres**

The QTU values Positive Learning Centres’ ability to support student needs and wellbeing in accordance with the Occupational Violence and WHS requirements.

Positive learning centres should be staffed to allow for a teacher-student ratio that takes into account the age and complexity of the students, but which is limited to a maximum of 2:15.

# **8. Instrumental Music**

Access to Instrumental Music is an important aspect of equitable state-wide delivery of a comprehensive curriculum.

Primary years 3 – 6	4/5 students per 30 min lesson	7 lessons per day	28/35 students per day	210 mins NCT per week pro rata
Secondary years 7 – 10	4 students per 35 min lesson	6 lessons per day	24 students per day	
Secondary years 11 – 12	3 students per 35 min lesson	6 lessons per day	18 students per day	

For large ensemble rehearsals, which may or may not include multiyear levels, groups larger than 28 students require additional supervision. An additional staff member should be assigned to the ensemble if this number is exceeded.

Travel between schools needs to be part of rostered duty time when travelling between schools during the school day.

## SECTION B: SCHOOL STAFFING

### 1. Classified officers

#### 1.1 Principals

The maximum teaching load of principals in schools with fewer than 100 enrolments must not exceed 0.5 FTE.

#### 1.2 Heads of School Campus

The QTU's firm position is that there is no distinction between the funding of a Head of School compared with a Head of Campus. The two positions are not manifestly distinct in terms of roles or responsibilities.

##### 1.2.1 Primary/Secondary/Special Schools/combined sector (P-10/12)

Levels 8, 9 and 10 schools have the capacity to self-fund level 5 Heads of School Campus. Levels 5, 6 and 7 schools have the capacity to self-fund level 4 Heads of School Campus.

##### 1.2.2. P–12 and Large &/or Complex Schools Levels 8 to 10

The QTU defines a superschool (large and or complex) as levels 8 and above. For the purposes of this section, the resource allocations of classified officers are and able to be utilised as a fit for purpose for the school.

For Large &/or Complex Schools with an enrolment of more than 2000 students, the allocation of Deputy Principals and Heads of Department will be no less than the resources that would be allocated to two schools of half the size. For example, a school of 3000 students would receive the equivalent classified teacher (DPs and HODs) resourcing of two schools of 1500 students.

For Level 8 Schools under 2000 students, a Level 5 Head of School / Campus must be allocated.

Students	HODs	Deputy Principals
2000	20	6
2500	24	6
3000	26	6
3500	26	8

P-10/12 Combined sector schools are currently complex learning environments that need additional operational support to fund classified officers above and beyond the current funding model.

### **1.3 Deputy principals - primary**

The following table clarifies primary deputy principal allocations:

<b>Students</b>	<b>D.P allocation</b>
200-300	0.5
300-500	1
500-700	2
700-900	3
900-1,100	4
1,100-1,300	5
1,300-1,500	6

An additional deputy principal should be allocated to schools serving areas where particular social issues affect the school's behaviour management capabilities.

### **1.4 Deputy principals - secondary**

The following table clarifies secondary deputy principal allocations:

<b>Students</b>	<b>D.P allocation</b>
200-400	1
400-800	2
800-1,200	3
1,200-1,600	4
1,600-2,000	5
2000+	See 1.2.2
200-400	1
400-800	2

An additional deputy principal should be allocated to schools serving areas where particular social issues affect the school's behaviour management capabilities.

### **1.5 Heads of Department – Curriculum**

The following table clarifies the head of department curriculum role in primary schools:

<b>Students</b>	<b>Head of Department Curriculum allocation</b>
100-300	1
300-500	2
500-700	3
700-900	4
900 – 1100	5
1100 – 1300	6
1300 +	7

## 1.6 Head of Department

Prep enrolments must be included in calculations for P-10 and P-12 schools.

The department must resource superschools commensurate with the staffing and student responsibilities associated with their size. For Level 9 and 10 schools with an enrolment of over 2000 the staffing methodology for Heads of Department must not be less than the resources that would be allocated to two schools of exactly half the size of the super school. An example would be a school of 3000 students would be resourced as two schools' of 1500 students. The table below reflects examples of schools at 2000, 2500 and 300 students.

The following table clarifies secondary Heads of Department allocations:

Students	Heads of Department
0-200	2
250-350	3
350-450	4
450-550	5
550-650	6
650-750	7
750-850	8
850-950	9
950-1,050	10
1,050-1,250	11
1,250-1,400	12
1,400-1,550	13
1,550-1,700	14
1,700-1,850	15
1,850-2,000	16
2000+	See 1.2.2
Students	Heads of Department
0-200	2

## 1.7 Head of special education services

All schools with a special education program (SEP) are entitled to classified officer positions as follows:

Level of SEP	Classified officers
3	1 DP inclusion + 1 FTE HOSES (0.8 non-teaching) + 0.8 FTE HODC
2	1 FTE HOSES (0.8 non-teaching) + 0.8 FTE HODC
1 cluster SEP	1 FTE HOSES (non-teaching)
1 single location	1 FTE HOSES (0.6 non-teaching)

## 1.8 *Classified officers in special schools*

Staffing models that are transparent, fully funded, flexible, needs and context-based must be developed for students with special educational needs.

Special schools should be entitled to classified officer positions as follows:

Level of school	Classified officers
7	Principal + 3 DPs + 4 HODs + 4 HOCs (0.5 teaching load)
6	Principal + 2 DPs + 4 HODs + 4 HOCs (0.5 teaching load)
5	Principal (non-teaching) + 2 DPs + 2 HODs + 2 HOCs (0.5 teaching load)
-3-4	Principal (non-teaching) + 1 DP + 2 HODs + 2 HOCs (0.5 teaching load)

Special schools and all schools with a SEP should be entitled to guidance officer support services as follows:

Level of school	Classified officers
7	2.0 FTE guidance officer
6	1.6 FTE guidance officer
5	1.2 FTE guidance officer
-3-4	1.0 FTE guidance officer

Level of SEP	Classified officers
3	0.8 FTE guidance officer
2	0.6 FTE guidance officer
1 cluster SEP	1.0 FTE guidance officer
1 single location	0.6 FTE guidance officer

These classified positions must also access non-contact time commensurate with their teaching load, and in addition to their administration time. HOSSES working in clusters or hubs require additional non-teaching time reflecting both the workload and the travel required in these settings.

These models should be applied consistently across the state and in line with other sectors' staffing allocations. Schools should be advised of their indicative staffing allocation and provided with relevant staff by the middle of November of the previous year, however staffing needs to be adjusted to reflect increased enrolments during the year.

## SECTION C: SPECIALIST STAFF

### 1. Professional

#### ***1.1 Instrumental music regional coordinator***

The QTU supports the extension of regionally based classified instrumental music coordinator positions to oversee the instrumental music program in schools and to provide professional support to instrumental music teachers and instructors. The QTU supports the establishment of this position state-wide.

<b>Staff FTE</b>	<b>RMC allocation</b>	<b>IM HOD-C Allocation</b>	<b>DRT</b>
0-25	1.0*	1.0	1.0
26-50	1.0	2.0	2.0
51-75	1.0	3.0	3.0
76-100	1.0	4.0	4.0

#### ***1.2 Instrumental music teachers and instructors***

The QTU supports the provision of instrumental music instruction by teachers with specialist training, experience and/or qualifications in all primary and secondary schools.

#### ***1.3 Instrumental music school coordinator***

The QTU supports the provision of a school based instrumental music coordinator position to manage the running of the school program to provide support and assistance to the instrumental music teacher/instructor in administrative aspects of the program. The QTU believes the person in this position should be awarded additional NCT time in their weekly timetable in order to undertake such coordination tasks. Preferably having one IM school coordinator in each school within a role, for example Head of Department.

As a guide, coordination time should be allocated to schools as:

<b>IMT allocation</b>	<b>Minimum coordination time</b>
<.4 – 0.4 FTE Instrumental music teachers	0.1 FTE
0.8 FTE Instrumental music teachers	0.2 FTE
1.5 FTE Instrumental music teachers	0.4 FTE

#### ***1.4 Specialist teachers – physical education, music and languages***

Staff employed as primary and/or special school specialist teachers, namely physical education, music, and languages, must have specialist training, experience and/or qualifications.

All students in primary and special schools should have weekly access to specialist teachers in physical education, music and languages. Physical education, music or languages simply cannot be dropped in any given year as this combination forms the basis for non-contact time. Delivery must be continuous in nature, by providing music for every child, every week, with a trained music specialist.

These teachers should be deployed in schools in accordance with an agreed enrolment-based allocative model. Non-contact time is an exact formula entirely comprised of physical education, music and languages:

**i. Non-contact time FTE allocation for school**

Non-contact time FTE allocation for school = Number of classroom X 2.5 hours / contact hours of non-contact time teachers – (% of languages teacher contact X languages teacher allocation).

**ii Physical education and music teacher allocation calculation**

Physical education and music teacher allocation + (NCT allocation – languages allocation) / 2

The proportion of the TL allocation that will contribute to NCT relief is 40% of the allocation to schools.

Any use of specialist services (other than physical education, music and languages) to deliver noncontact time in in primary and special schools should be viewed as additional to the non-contact allocation of the school. The QTU support the reinstatement of trained specialist classroom music teachers to deliver music for every child, every week, in primary schools. Immediate permanency should be granted to all trained specialist teachers and such roles should be appointed as a matter of priority over the additional NCT positions.

**1.5 Advisory visiting teachers**

Advisory teachers should be appointed to each region in a permanent capacity to provide consistency and appropriate support for teachers in the various curriculum/key learning areas and to provide support for the inclusion of special needs students.

**1.6 Teacher-librarians**

Schools with fewer than 100 students shall be serviced on a cluster basis by itinerant teacher-librarians. The fractional entitlement will vary according to the enrolment of the school but shall be no less than one day per week.

A 0.5 FTE teacher-librarian shall be appointed to schools with enrolments of between 100 and 200 students.

A 1.0 FTE teacher-librarian shall be appointed to schools with an enrolment above 200 students.

**1.7 School based youth health nurses**

The QTU demands the reinstatement of school-based youth health nurses to once again be based in schools. School-based youth health nurses should be appointed to all large primary and secondary schools and extended to small schools. Nurses must be appointed to all school settings in a ratio of approximately 1.0 FTE nurse per 1,000 students and extended to small schools or pro rata for smaller settings (including cluster arrangements).

**1.8 Youth support co-ordinators**

Qualified youth support co-ordinators should be appointed to support students in all school settings. Youth support co-ordinators should be permanent employees of the department.

The role of the youth support co-ordinator should be to assist in the counselling of students and to provide a liaison between home, school, and welfare agencies.

### **1.9 Social workers and/or chaplains**

The QTU position is that all school settings have the option to choose between a trained, experienced and/or qualified social worker or chaplain to reflect school community needs and to be reviewed annually at the Local Consultative Committee.

The role of the social worker should be to assist in the counselling of students and to provide a liaison between home, school, and welfare agencies.

### **1.10 Guidance officers**

All schools must have access to guidance officer services, on the basis of an agreed allocative methodology which takes into account the needs of the school and its community.

Funding for the establishment of permanent ongoing guidance officer positions in regions must be allocated centrally and the number of positions adjusted annually in line with enrolment growth. Additional positions funded by regions should represent an enhancement of the central allocation as opposed to the current practice, which is to address centralised funding shortfalls by creating additional ongoing temporary positions to meet critical service demands.

### **1.11 Agriculture teachers**

Schools which offer agricultural programs should be allocated additional staffing above the existing entitlement. In schools without an agriculture head of department, the subject area coordinator should receive additional non-contact time for farm management and to induct staff.

### **1.12 Coordinators in schools**

The staffing model should provide for agreed non-contact time and/or an allowance for teachers who undertake co-ordination roles, for example, subject area, work experience, VET industry/work placement, School Music Coordinator (Instrumental Music), senior schooling and/or other co-ordination roles.

### **1.13 Behaviour management support teacher**

The QTU demands the establishment of a behaviour management support teacher position in all schools. The allocation should be based on needs and be a stand-alone position funded by the department. Behaviour management support teachers have explicit knowledge or are supported to engage in training in the areas of either disruptive behaviour disorders, cognitive behaviour disorders and behaviour therapy.

### **1.14 Special education specialist staff**

The QTU supports the provision of a broad range of specialist staff in special schools, including speech and language pathologists, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists.

Students with special needs in mainstream school settings should be able to access therapy services at a level commensurate with that available to students in special settings.

Health plan needs are to be informed by Queensland Health.



A full-time registered nurse must be employed on site, in all settings where students require an emergency health plan. Nurses (employed either by the education or health departments) in schools provide a range of services including:

- medical management of students with complex medical needs;
- special programs based on a needs assessment in the school and carried out in consultation with the school community; and/or
- screening/developmental health checks.

All nursing staff employed in schools should work within a consultative model and under the direction of the principal.

### ***1.15 Outdoor and environmental education centres***

The department must provide consistent staffing between outdoor environmental education centres.

### ***1.16 Instrumental Music Staffing***

The department must provide a consistent staffing allocative model state-wide.

## **2. School support staff**

### ***2.1 Teacher-aides***

The QTU supports an enhanced allocative model for the deployment of teacher-aides in schools, relieving teachers of routine non-professional tasks such as playground duty which detract from their teaching role. These duties should be in addition to their classroom support role.

In line with this rationale, the QTU believes that all playground duty supervision should be undertaken by teacher-aides.

In schools with significant First Nations populations and a predominantly non-Indigenous teaching staff, the employment of First Nations teacher-aides and ancillary staff is highly desirable.

Teacher-aides should be appointed to secondary schools to work in areas of the curriculum with a large practical component.

The QTU supports an enhanced allocative model for the deployment of teacher-aides in special schools, to ensure quality outcomes for students with special needs. The QTU recommends a minimum teacher-aide allocation in special schools, SEUs and SECs of 30 hours per week per teacher. Teacher-aide time in prep classes should be 30 hours per week. The prep teacher-aide shall be assigned to a specific class for consistency.

### ***2.2 Schools officers (grounds and facilities)***

The QTU supports a substantial increase in the (notional) allocation for grounds care in school grants responsive to severe climate conditions. This should be indexed in line with inflation and other relevant cost indicators.