How long does it take to implement each QCAT?
Each QCAT takes approximately 90 minutes for students to complete. Schools will determine the timing of the implementation of the QCAT within the nominated implementation period of 8 weeks.

What will the QCATs look like?
Each QCAT is designed to be an authentic performance-based assessment task. The task will require students to use relevant and useful knowledge, thinking and practical skills, to create a product or a response to a meaningful problem.

Each QCAT begins with a group discussion during which students with their teachers explore the context of the problem to be solved. This discussion is designed to support all students in the class so that they have the best opportunity to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do, in relation to the selection of Essential Learnings for the QCAT.


How are QCATs reported to students and parents/carers?
Schools will provide students and parents/carers with information about student achievement from the QCAT as part of the twice-yearly reporting process.
What are QCATs?
The acronym QCAT stands for Queensland Common Assessment Tasks. QCATs are a component of the new Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) Framework.

QCATs are very different assessments to the national Literacy and Numeracy tests which students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 will sit in May. QCATs are state-based assessments not national tests. Students in Years 4 and 6 will sit QCATs early in the year between March and May. Students in Year 9 will sit QCATs later in the year during Term 3. The results of the QCATs are unable to be used to provide state-based statistics of performance so they are ‘low-stakes’ assessment instruments.

Another major difference between QCATs and the national tests is that teachers will mark the QCATs for their students and then get together with other teachers from different Catholic schools in the Diocese to discuss and compare their judgments.

QCATs for Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic schools
There are some differences between how the QCATs will be implemented in 2009 across different state and independent systems. The Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Education Office and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission have negotiated a staged introduction of the QCATs in our schools for 2009.

There are three QCATs for each of the years 4, 6, and 9: one in English, one in Mathematics and one in Science. For 2009 Catholic schools are required to do only one of the three QCATs and the choice of which particular QCAT that students will do in years 4, 6 and 9 is a school-based decision. Schools are free to decide to do more than one QCAT if they wish to do so. In 2009 students at {School Name} will do the following QCATs:
Year 4: {state which QCAT}  
Year 6: {state which QCAT}  
Year 9: {state which QCAT}

Why do Catholic schools have a choice of QCAT?
There are two important reasons why the Catholic Education Office has decided on a staged implementation of the QCATs in 2009 for Catholic schools. The first reason is that Catholic schools will only be fully implementing the QCAR Framework essential learnings and standards in 2010 and 2009 is a transition year from the KLA outcomes-based syllabuses. Doing one QCAT will enable the teachers in Catholic schools to explore and develop the QCAR Framework without generating unnecessary pressure for teachers who are already working very hard with the current programs.

One of the main reasons that the QCATs are being introduced is to support the process of teachers getting together to discuss student achievement and to compare their assessment judgments. This process is an important element of professional learning for teachers. The criteria-and-standards based assessment system in years 11 and 12 has used these moderation processes for almost 30 years. Many primary schools and junior secondary departments, however, have never had an opportunity to engage in these processes.

The second reason that Catholic schools may choose to do only one QCAT this year is that all teachers in Catholic primary schools in our Diocese have engaged in interschool professional conversations about student assessment for many years, unlike Queensland schools in other systems. We have been doing the Consistency of Teacher Judgment Process for almost ten years which culminates in teachers right across the Diocese coming together in Term 4 each year to discuss assessment judgments and teacher planning. Together with the QCATs we will also be doing the Consistency of Teacher Judgment process in 2009.

When will QCATs be implemented?
Schools have eight school weeks to implement QCATs. This allows sufficient time to organize school programs and provides flexibility to implement the 2009 QCAT.

How are teachers preparing students for QCATs?
The Year 4, 6 and 9 QCATs involve knowledge that students will have developed in the previous year of schooling. Teachers will ensure that students have revised the relevant knowledge before they attempt the QCAT.

Teachers will also orient students to the QCAT which could involve ensuring that students practice or revise any specific skills they have not used for a significant period of time. This does not mean that teachers will actually rehearse the assessment task itself with the students.

The teacher guidelines provide information for teachers on how to accommodate and make adjustments for those students who have been identified as having specific educational needs. If you are interested in these please refer to: http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/assessment/3163.html

What resources will teachers receive?
QCAT packages will be delivered to schools, these will contain materials for QCATs in the three target KLA’s. Each package will include:
• Student booklet (one per student)  
• Guide to making judgments (provided both in the Student Booklet and the Teacher Guidelines.)  
• Teacher Guidelines which contains specific information for teachers to support the administration of QCATs. A model response is included.

In addition to the QCAT Packages, teachers are provided with a range of examples of Sample student responses on the QSA Assessment Bank website.  