

Assessments administered by guidance officers

One of the core responsibilities of a guidance officer is to assess the needs of students referred to them and work collaboratively with staff to ensure appropriate support plans, interventions and reasonable adjustments are in place. The information gathered through the assessment process is used to develop recommendations and strategies to support the student's educational, mental health and wellbeing needs at school.

Depending on the reason for the referral to the guidance officer, information might be gathered on the student's academic, behavioural, cognitive, social and emotional functioning or their mental health and wellbeing.

Guidance officers use a range of methods to collect information from students, parents/carers and school staff. These include, but are not limited to, informal and semi-structured interviews, observations, and the administration of psychoeducational assessment tools such as questionnaires and tests.

Assessment process

The assessment process used by guidance officers is comprehensive and includes:

- Careful consideration of the reason for the referral and the main concerns identified
- Establishing the relevant information held at the school by reviewing records and interviewing, where appropriate, school staff, the student and their parents
- Clarifying additional information to be gathered that would assist in responding to the referral and developing a comprehensive understanding of the student's needs
- Determining whether the administration of an assessment tool to gather additional information is required
- Administering the identified assessment tool
- Analysing the assessment results and synthesising all information in order to inform the development of student support plans, targeted interventions and reasonable adjustments.

Psychoeducational assessments will only be undertaken with students enrolled or about to be enrolled in state schools. A guidance officer determines the appropriateness of using psychoeducational assessment tools such as questionnaires and tests.

Prior to the use of any assessment tool the guidance officer will discuss with parents, and where appropriate the student, the purpose, nature and implications of its administration and gain informed, written consent.

Psychoeducational tests

Guidance officers should only select and administer culturally appropriate psychoeducational tests that have been approved for use by the department.

Tests must be administered strictly in accordance with test manual instructions.

Psychoeducational assessment information is used to assist in developing recommendations and strategies to support students' educational and mental health needs. If a psychoeducational assessment indicates the need for referral to an external professional or agency for specialist support, the guidance officer will facilitate the referral.

A signed written report is provided to relevant school staff, parents, and if appropriate, students. Where possible this occurs in conjunction with a meeting held at school to ensure clear explanation of the results and the educational implications.

Signed written report/s and supporting documentation, including test proformas, are stored securely in OneSchool. Once scanned and uploaded to OneSchool, completed proformas/record



forms are stored in a secure, hard copy Guidance file. They are not stored in student general school files.

Confidentiality of information obtained through the psychoeducational assessment process is protected in accordance with legislative requirements (*Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) Section 426*).

Restricted psychoeducational tests

Some tests administered by guidance officers require tertiary studies in psychoeducational assessment and participation in department training as a prerequisite for their use. These are considered restricted tests. Senior guidance officers supervise the training and administration of restricted psychoeducational tests.

To administer a restricted psychoeducational test, guidance officers must have:

- completed tertiary study in psychoeducational assessment
- demonstrated their proficiency in test administration, interpretation and report writing through the department's test training and accreditation process.

Guidance officers are required to participate in departmental training under the supervision of a senior guidance officer and must demonstrate proficiency in two administrations of the restricted test. When satisfied that the guidance officer meets test accreditation requirements the senior guidance officer:

- completes a Certificate of Authorisation
- stores a signed version of the Certificate in the department's records management system
- provides copy of the Certificate of Authorisation to the guidance officer.

Where a senior guidance officer is not an authorised user of the restricted psychoeducational test, an authorised senior guidance officer is nominated to ensure and authorise that the psychoeducational assessment capabilities of the guidance officer have been met.

Supervision

Senior Guidance Officers provide ongoing professional supervision to guidance officers in the use of restricted psychoeducational tests, interpretation of results and report writing.

The department produces and endorses training materials in conjunction with test publishers and distributors and annually publishes a list of approved restricted psychoeducational tests for use by guidance officers.

Restricted psychoeducational tests are not available for borrowing by staff or for use outside the staff member's departmental role.

Restricted psychoeducational test ordering and storage

Senior guidance officers:

- consider requests to access or purchase restricted psychoeducational tests,
- register and manage the regional collection of restricted psychoeducational test materials,
- ensure the arrangements for the secure storage of restricted psychoeducational test materials and
- ensure that school and regional staff are aware of the protocols for keeping materials secure.

Senior guidance officers collaborate with each other and liaise with test suppliers to purchase restricted psychoeducational tests for the region, in line with the current list of approved restricted psychoeducational tests.