

Teachers slam 'flawed' school assessments

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QUEENSLAND'S senior student assessment system is open to rorting, is prejudicial towards well resourced schools and creates unrealistic student and teacher workloads, a group of teachers claim.

But academics and the Queensland Teachers' Union say the system, set to be reviewed by the State Government, is world class.

The heated and long-running debate hit a new high last week with the Queensland Studies Authority releasing a defence on its website to teachers' claims.

"The QSA welcomes feedback from the education and wider communities ... However, it is vital that debate and discussion about curriculum and assessment is based on factual information," the

QSA website states, before addressing 11 "issues".

The *Courier-Mail* has heard from about a dozen of more than 100 teachers who met recently to step up claims against Queensland's externally moderated school-based assessment system.

Represented by James Cook University academic Professor Peter Ridd, the teachers dismissed the views of Stanford University's Linda Darling-Hammond and Australian College of Educators chair Professor Robert Lingard that Queensland's system inspired higher-order thinking skills among students and was world class.

However, the teachers say the system is open to rorting, with better-resourced schools able to facilitate continuous student drafts until written pieces are effectively done by

the teacher. They also claim teachers are more likely to teach to the tests because they are writing them and can more easily manipulate marks.

The teachers are calling for more external exams, for some maths and science assessments to have a lesser workload, and to be allowed to use numerical marks rather than "confusing" criteria.

Prof Ridd said academics who thought the system was world class lived "in fairyland".

"It is the overuse of writing, it is the overuse of assignments which is one of the biggest problems," he said.

A QSA spokeswoman said elite schools and those in disadvantaged areas had similar student result curves, proving there was no bias, and while any system had a potential for rorting, no evidence had been offered.