Capital Assistance Project Scoring Methodology

Evaluating merit

By what means is a project evaluated?

Projects are presented to the Capital Assistance Assessment Committee for scoring during a meeting in June each year.

Assessment Committee members, working independently, consider each project against three criteria. The three criteria are as follows:

1. Changes in demographics, enrolments and student characteristics
2. Educational planning
3. Infrastructure planning

Each criterion is instantiated by 'facets'. The facets are the '*point-at-able*' features of the criterion, expressed as '*the things I should see when I am evaluating this criterion*'.

There is no criterion that refers to educational disadvantage because educational disadvantage stands alone for special consideration.

How is a project scored by each member?

Each facet receives a score of 1, 2 or 3 depending on the level from 'not much' (1) to 'a lot' (3).

The project score is the sum of all the facet scores. There is no weighting of different criteria, each is equally important. Likewise, there is no weighting of facets within a criterion.

In this model, where there are three, two and three facets per criterion respectively, the project scores range from 8 to 24. The scores are only meaningful in that a higher score reflects more merit than a lower score. Hence there is no need to adjust the raw score.

For each project, for each Assessment Committee member, a project score is generated.

Weighting for disadvantage

'Educational disadvantage' is a term whose definition is elusive. QCEC will use the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA), calculated as part of the NAPLAN process, on the basis that, while not ideal, it is a recognised and widely used measure of educational disadvantage. ICSEA expressly quantifies the 'many non- policy, malleable characteristics of a school and its student cohort'[1].

The score from Stage 3 be weighted by a factor derived from the school's ICSEA value. The weighting factor reflects where in the overall ICSEA distribution the school lies. By design, the ICSEA values have a mean of 1000 and a standard deviation of 100. 68% of all schools lie within one standard deviation of the mean. The lower the ICSEA value, the greater the educational disadvantage.

In this calculation there will be three bands:

1. Schools more than one standard deviation below the mean

2. Schools with within one standard deviation of the mean

3. Schools more than one standard deviation above the mean

The weighting factor for band 1 is 1.1, for band 2 is 1, and for band 3 is 0.9.

New schools, that do not yet have an ICSEA score, will be allocated to one of the three bands based on the band classifications of surrounding schools.

There are two parameters in this weighting model: the threshold for the bands, and the weighting factor.

For each project, for each Assessment Committee member, there is a weighted project score.

Ranking of projects

Given that there are generally more requests for funding than there are funds available, QCEC has to prioritise projects. This is done by ranking projects on the basis of a combination of Assessment Committee members' scores.

How are the Assessment Committee members' scores combined?

In the evaluation process, each Assessment Committee member will approach the task from a common base of understanding and training. The training will include some sense of calibration.

There will always be a project for which an assessment of a facet falls near the boundary so that one member might score the facet a '2' and another a '3'. This variation is to be expected with judgments.

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[1] ACARA (February 2015) '*ICSEA 2015: Technical Report*' p 3.

Use a trimmed mean

The combined score for each project will be calculated as a 'trimmed mean'. A trimmed mean is a robust way of determining the true average as it discounts outlying scores.

For this merit evaluation, the trimmed mean requires simply excluding the highest and lowest score. Where two or more members give an equal highest or lowest score, only one of those is excluded. The trimmed mean is often seen in sporting competitions.

> *Worked example*: Suppose an 8-person committee gave a proposal the following scores (sorted in ascending order):
>
> 21 27 28 29 29 30 31 31
>
> The histogram at right shows the distribution. The average of all eight scores is 28.3. The score of 21 seems to be an outlier and pulls the mean down.
>
> Visually, the 'centre of mass' of the distribution is around 29. In calculating the trimmed mean, the lowest score of 21 and one of the two scores of 31 are excluded. The trimmed mean is the average of the 'inner' six scores and is 29.0.
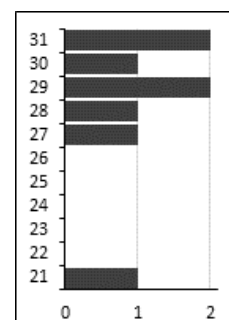
Report results to rounded only one decimal place

The combined score will be rounded to one decimal place. The decimal place allows discrimination between similar proposals where the underlying scores may have differed by only one unit.

Allocation of funds

Concurrent to the Assessment Committee scoring and ranking projects, financial contribution assessments are undertaken following this process:

QCEC 2022 Capital Financial Contributions Guidelines

After the ranking of the projects is completed, the financial contributions of each school are included to determine the grant funding required for each project. The ranked list of projects that will be funded is then determined by the total amount of grant funding available.

Appeals

The Commission has a documented appeals process that can be found here:

QCEC Appeal Process – Government Funded Programs