

Quality Standards Framework

MATURITY MODEL





A Safe and welcoming environment



A flexible education program has a safe and welcoming environment when:

- the physical learning environment is safe, culturally responsive and accessible
- the program empowers students to participate in decision making
- the program is grounded in trauma-informed practice and positive behaviour support.

The elements and what they look like in practice are described below.

	Infancy	Developing	Embedded	Leading
A.1	The physical learning environment is safe, culturally responsive and accessible.			
Maturity levels	The physical environment is unsafe or inaccessible for the target cohort(s). The intended activities cannot be conducted safely or effectively.	<p>The physical environment is safe and accessible for some of the target cohort(s) and intended activities.</p> <p>Significant investment is required to bring the physical environment to an acceptable standard.</p> <p>There is limited or no ongoing maintenance.</p>	<p>The physical environment is safe and accessible for most of the target cohort(s) and intended activities.</p> <p>The program is working to address a number of targeted issues in the physical environment.</p> <p>There is adequate maintenance to prevent major problems or accidents.</p>	<p>The physical environment is safe and accessible for the target cohort(s) and intended activities.</p> <p>There is comprehensive maintenance to prevent foreseeable problems or accidents and maximise longevity.</p> <p>Facilities may have been purposefully built or renovated for the program.</p>

A.2	The program empowers students to participate in decision making.			
Maturity levels	Students rarely provide feedback, even informally.	Students sometimes get to decide how to spend their time.	Students regularly get to decide how to spend their time.	Students are given choice and control for much of each day.
	Students have little meaningful input into program design or activities.	Students occasionally raise issues with school leaders or staff. There has been at least one student survey or listening exercise.	Students put forward ideas or concerns and have periodic opportunities to provide feedback through formal channels. Student input has led to changes in the program design.	Students provide regular feedback through formal and informal channels and see evidence of its influence. The program design was created and is continually refined with input from students. Students participate in governance (e.g. having a student council, having representatives on the school council or board).
A.3	The program is grounded in trauma-informed practice and positive behaviour support.			
Maturity levels	The program design is not trauma-informed.	The program design is trauma-informed.	The program design and activities are trauma-informed.	The program design and activities reflect the latest evidence on trauma.
	Staff lack knowledge of trauma-informed practices and do not follow them. Behaviour management practices are exclusionary and cause more disruption and behaviour issues.	Staff have some knowledge of trauma-informed practices, however, require more training to apply them. Behaviour management practices are evidence-based, although inconsistent in their application.	Staff understand trauma-informed practices and receive some training to apply them. Behaviour management practices are evidence-based and generally consistent in their application.	Staff understand trauma-informed practices and receive regular, ongoing training to apply them. Behaviour management practices are evidence-based, tailored to individual students and applied across all aspects of students' experiences (e.g. at the classroom and whole-of-school levels).

B Strong foundations



A flexible education program has strong foundations when:

- the program's purpose and target cohort are well defined and communicated
- activities are informed by evidence of what works in engaging students in learning
- the program has sound policies, procedures, and governance processes that involve student, families and community.

The elements and what they look like in practice are described below.

	Infancy	Developing	Embedded	Leading
B.1	The program's purpose and target cohort are well defined and communicated.			
Maturity levels	<p>There is no defined purpose or target cohort and no recognition of the need for one.</p> <p>The eligibility criteria for the program are undefined or unclear.</p>	<p>The program's purpose and target cohort are loosely defined or implicit; however, not formally documented or communicated.</p> <p>The eligibility criteria for the program are defined, potentially implicitly, however, inconsistently applied.</p>	<p>The purpose and target cohort are clearly defined and well-documented and communicated; however, it is not consistently enacted and does not translate to all activities.</p> <p>The eligibility criteria for the program are documented and generally applied consistently.</p>	<p>There is a clear and compelling purpose and target cohort which is communicated, understood and embraced at all levels. It is fully embedded in all activities.</p> <p>The eligibility criteria for the program are well documented, consistently applied and widely communicated.</p>

B.2	Activities are informed by evidence of what works.			
Maturity levels	<p>The program design is not evidence-based.</p> <p>The program is not consistently monitored or evaluated.</p> <p>Some data is collected for reporting purposes; however, its quality is dubious and it is not consistently used.</p> <p>Few people are involved in data collection or analysis.</p> <p>Data and insights are not shared.</p>	<p>The program design is based on limited or anecdotal evidence.</p> <p>The program is monitored to an extent; however, has not been evaluated.</p> <p>There is reasonable data on the program's target cohorts, inputs and activities and outputs, although no data on its outcomes.</p> <p>A small number of interested staff with the required skills are involved in data collection and analysis.</p> <p>Data and insights are occasionally shared within the program to highlight problems.</p>	<p>The program is based on sound evidence; however, it needs to be updated.</p> <p>The program is monitored and has been evaluated at least once.</p> <p>There is high-quality data on the program's target cohort, inputs, activities and/or outputs and some data on its outcomes.</p> <p>Relevant staff are encouraged and trained to be involved in data collection and analysis.</p> <p>Data and insights are consistently shared within the program to enable learning, improvement and accountability.</p>	<p>The program design is informed by the latest evidence (e.g. research, practice, client feedback).</p> <p>The program is monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>There is high-quality data on the program's target cohort, inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes.</p> <p>Leaders and staff are involved in continuous quality improvement (e.g. identifying issues, developing solutions, monitoring their effectiveness) and receiving support for this.</p> <p>Data and insights are consistently shared with a range of actors within and outside of the program to enable system-wide learning, improvement and accountability.</p>

B.3	The program has sound policies, procedures and governance processes that involve families and community.			
Maturity levels	The program's governance arrangements are limited to its leadership and management structures (e.g. a CEO or program manager).	The program's governance arrangements are not documented.	The program's governance arrangements are partially documented (e.g. the constitution is out-of-date).	The program's governance arrangements are well documented (e.g. through a constitution, policies and/or procedures).
	Family and community members do not participate in the governance of the program. They rarely provide feedback, even informally.	Family and community members rarely participate in the governance of the program.	Family and community members sporadically participate in the governance of the program.	Family and community members actively participate in the governance of the program (e.g. through representation on boards or councils).
	There are no links with local and/or community councils.	Family and community members occasionally raise issues with school leaders or staff.	Family and community members put forward ideas or concerns and have periodic opportunities to provide feedback through formal channels.	Families and communities provide regular feedback through formal and informal channels and see evidence of its influence.
		There has been at least one student survey or listening exercise.	There are occasional meetings or consultation with local and/or community councils.	There are well established links with the local and/or community councils (e.g. regular meetings).

High quality learning content



A flexible education program has high quality learning content when:

- teaching and learning content is aligned with the Australian Curriculum and/or NTCET, and resources embed evidence-based pedagogies, are culturally responsive, and include instructional supports for teachers
- each student has an individual learning plan aligned to the Australian Curriculum and/or NTCET that guides access to learning content.

The elements and what they look like in practice are described below.

	Infancy	Developing	Embedded	Leading
C.1	Teaching and learning content is aligned with the Australian Curriculum and/or NTCET, and resources embed evidence-based pedagogies, are culturally responsive, and include instructional supports for teachers.			
Maturity levels	<p>Students are engaged in the Australian curriculum to the end of Year 10, and in Years 11 and 12 are engaged in study towards the NTCET (or other eligible option for post-Year 10 education).</p> <p>The program contains no literacy and numeracy content, and students do not have access to this through other education providers.</p>	<p>Students are engaged in the Australian curriculum to the end of Year 10, and in Years 11 and 12 are engaged in study towards the NTCET (or other eligible option for post-Year 10 education).</p> <p>Students receive some basic literacy and numeracy education through their education providers, although not in a coordinated way.</p>	<p>Students are engaged in the Australian curriculum to the end of Year 10, and in Years 11 and 12 are engaged in study towards the NTCET (or other eligible option for post-Year 10 education).</p> <p>Students have access to high quality literacy and numeracy content through their education providers, although not in a coordinated way.</p>	<p>Students are engaged in the Australian curriculum to the end of Year 10, and in Years 11 and 12 are engaged in study towards the NTCET (or other eligible option for post-Year 10 education).</p> <p>Education providers coordinate to ensure all students have access to sufficient and appropriate literacy and numeracy education.</p>

Maturity levels (cont.)	<p>Staff are unclear on which literacy and numeracy programs and interventions to use to address gaps in student's capability.</p> <p>Students lack functional literacy and numeracy capabilities with limited progress seen.</p> <p>The program delivers the Australian Curriculum without tailoring it to the student's context, culture or interests.</p> <p>Students find no meaning in learning material and are entirely disengaged from it.</p> <p>Teaching and learning material perpetuates racism and is culturally unsafe.</p>	<p>Students have access to some generic literacy and numeracy interventions that are not tailored to their needs.</p> <p>Students have basic literacy and numeracy capabilities with limited progress being observed.</p> <p>The program makes some adjustments to the Australian Curriculum to make it more relevant to the student's context, culture and interests.</p> <p>Students find some meaning in learning material, however, are still disengaged.</p> <p>The program makes some effort to include Aboriginal perspectives in learning material.</p>	<p>Students have access to a range of high-quality literacy and numeracy programs and interventions, though not tailored to individual students.</p> <p>Students are progressing towards having functional literacy and numeracy capabilities.</p> <p>The program tailors many elements of the Australian Curriculum to be relevant to the student's context, culture and interests.</p> <p>Students are engaged and find meaning in teaching material.</p> <p>The program works with local communities to include some Aboriginal perspectives in learning materials.</p> <p>Students have the option to learn traditional languages.</p>	<p>Students are well supported by an integrated suite of literacy and numeracy programs and interventions that are tailored to their needs.</p> <p>Students develop functional literacy and numeracy skills which enable them to fulfil their academic and/or employment aspirations in the future.</p> <p>The program substantially tailors delivery of the Australian Curriculum to be meaningful and relevant to the student's context, culture and interests.</p> <p>Students identify strongly with learning material and value it highly.</p> <p>The program works closely with local communities to ensure all teaching and learning material recognises and incorporates Aboriginal cultures, histories, languages and identity.</p> <p>Learning material is delivered in the local language.</p>
--------------------------------	---	---	--	---

C.2	Each student has an individual learning plan aligned to the Australian Curriculum and/or NTCET that guides access to learning content.			
Maturity levels	Students do not have individual learning plans.	<p>Some students have an individual learning plan, developed by the teacher without involving them or their families.</p> <p>Plans only include academic goals.</p> <p>Students have different plans with different service providers or teachers, and there is no coherence between them.</p>	<p>Most students have an individual learning plan.</p> <p>Plans are developed collaboratively between the teacher(s) and the student.</p> <p>Plans include mostly academic goals, with some focus on behavioural goals.</p> <p>Plans draw on student data to identify learning needs.</p> <p>There is some alignment between a student's learning plan and plans made by other service providers.</p>	<p>All students have an individual learning plan.</p> <p>Plans are developed (and regularly reviewed) collaboratively between the teacher, the student and their family/carer.</p> <p>Plans draw extensively on student data to identify learning needs and monitor progress towards goals.</p> <p>Programs and schools work with each student's other service providers and relevant health professionals to ensure goals and priorities are consistent with other plans.</p> <p>Plans are strengths-based and contain a holistic view of the student, incorporating behavioural, cultural and academic needs, goals and strategies.</p>

D Future focus



A flexible education program has a future focus when:

- teachers and other program staff have and communicate high expectations of all students
- the program has clearly defined pathways to and/or coordination with mainstream schools, higher education, the workforce or further training opportunities
- the program equips students with practical skills and tools for life.

The elements and what they look like in practice are described below.

	Infancy	Developing	Embedded	Leading
D.1	Teachers and other program staff have and communicate high expectations of all students.			
Maturity levels	<p>Teachers have and continue to hold a deficit-mindset and low expectations of their students (e.g. they focus on their students' challenges, vulnerabilities and disadvantages).</p> <p>Students have limited awareness of what they could achieve.</p>	<p>Teachers are aware of the need for a strengths-based approach and high expectations, however, do not always achieve them in practice.</p> <p>Students have some awareness of what they could achieve, although with significant gaps.</p>	<p>Teachers are aware of the need for a strengths-based approach and high expectations and generally achieve them in practice.</p> <p>Students are supported to pursue achievable, though aspirational, "stretch" goals.</p>	<p>A strengths-based approach and culture of high expectations inform all aspects of the program's design and activities (e.g. staff have high regard for students and recognise their strengths, capabilities and resilience).</p> <p>Students are ambitious and optimistic about what they can achieve in the future.</p>

D.2	The program has clearly defined pathways to and/or coordination with schools, higher education, the workforce or further training opportunities.			
Maturity levels	<p>The program is perceived as a “dumping ground” for “difficult” students.</p> <p>Students almost never transition back into mainstream education.</p> <p>Students have limited awareness of education and employment pathways.</p> <p>The program has few relationships to support pathways to and coordination with education providers and local employers.</p>	<p>Students occasionally transition back into mainstream education.</p> <p>Students have some awareness of education and employment pathways.</p> <p>The program has some relationships to support pathways and coordination, however, there are substantial gaps (e.g. key education providers or employers with which relationships are poor).</p>	<p>Students regularly transition back into mainstream education.</p> <p>Students are aware of education and employment pathways and how to pursue them.</p> <p>The program has enduring relationships to support pathways and coordination (e.g. collaborations that continue despite staff turnover).</p>	<p>There are no barriers to students transitioning back into mainstream education.</p> <p>Students are aware of education and employment pathways and have plans in place to pursue them.</p> <p>The program has wide and enduring institutional relationships to support pathways and coordination (e.g. it has memorandum of understandings (MOUs) with partner organisations).</p>
D.3	The program equips students with practical skills and tools for life.			
Maturity levels	<p>Students complete the program without any of the documentation they are likely to require for their chosen pathways.</p> <p>Students complete the program without any qualifications relevant to their chosen pathways.</p> <p>Students complete the program unprepared for future life, study or work.</p>	<p>Students complete the program with some of the documentation they require.</p> <p>Students complete the program with qualifications that are not necessarily relevant to their chosen pathways.</p> <p>Students have some awareness of their future life, study and work environments.</p>	<p>Students complete the program with a folio of all the documentation they require.</p> <p>Students complete the program with qualifications relevant to their chosen pathways.</p> <p>Students have some experience and familiarity with their future life, study and work options.</p>	<p>Students complete the program with a folio of all the documentation they require and know how to obtain and update it themselves.</p>

E Holistic approach to learning



A flexible education program has a holistic approach to learning when:

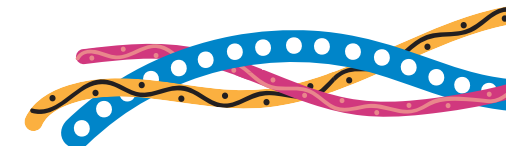
- the program establishes a foundation of social and emotional wellbeing
- the program supports students to form positive and respectful relationships with their peers, mentors and role models.

The elements and what they look like in practice are described below.

	Infancy	Developing	Embedded	Leading
E.1	The program establishes a foundation of social and emotional wellbeing.			
Maturity levels	The program has little or no focus on supporting a student's social and emotional wellbeing and no recognition of the importance of social and emotional wellbeing to enable learning.	The program design reflects that young people's social and emotional wellbeing is important (e.g. wellbeing activities, extra-curricular programs).	<p>The program understands that young people's social and emotional wellbeing is an important enabler to learning.</p> <p>Social and emotional wellbeing is embedded into many facets of the program (e.g. curriculum, access to support services, connection to culture).</p>	<p>The program understands that the social and emotional wellbeing of young people and staff is an essential enabler of learning.</p> <p>Social and emotional wellbeing is a core focus of and is embedded in most facets of the program.</p> <p>The program measures and monitors staff and student wellbeing.</p>

E.2	The program supports students to form positive and respectful relationships with their peers, mentors and role models.			
Maturity levels	<p>The program does not support students to form positive and respectful relationships.</p> <p>Students are required to form their own peer relationships and seek out their own mentors and role models.</p>	<p>The program encourages students to form positive and respectful relationships with their peers.</p> <p>The program has begun to identify ways for students to access mentors and role models inside and outside the program.</p>	<p>The program supports students to form positive and respectful relationships with their peers.</p> <p>Most students have access to a mentor or buddy.</p> <p>All staff recognise they are role models and arrange for external role models to speak to students in the program several times a year.</p>	<p>The program deliberately and actively helps students to form positive and respectful relationships with their peers (e.g. through relationship activities), using principles to guide positive relationships.</p> <p>All students are assigned a mentor or buddy.</p> <p>Students regularly engage with positive role models from inside and outside the program.</p>

F Leadership and staff



A flexible education program has a holistic approach to leadership, and staff recruitment and retention when:

- leaders and the staff cohort reflect the student cohort including local, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and culturally diverse staff
- leaders and staff are qualified, motivated and supported to work with the program's target cohort and are able to build trusted relationships with students.

The elements and what they look like in practice are described below.

	Infancy	Developing	Embedded	Leading
F.1	Leaders and the staff cohort reflect the student cohort including local, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and culturally diverse staff.			
Maturity levels	<p>The program has no strategy to hire locally, and few of their staff have a strong understanding of the local context.</p> <p>There is little diversity in the staff mix (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff/culturally diverse staff) and the staff cohort does not reflect the student cohort.</p>	<p>The program is implementing strategies to hire local residents as staff.</p> <p>Schools/programs actively seek to recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and those from culturally diverse backgrounds to reflect the student cohort.</p> <p>The staff cohort does not yet reflect the student cohort.</p>	<p>The program develops and implements strategies to hire locals who understand the community and have strong, established relationships.</p> <p>The program seeks to recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally diverse staff in a range that reflects the student cohort.</p> <p>The staff cohort mostly reflects the student cohort.</p>	<p>The program consistently has high levels of local, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and culturally diverse staff.</p> <p>The program continually monitors and refines its recruitment and retention strategies.</p> <p>The staff cohort reflects the student cohort at all levels, especially in leadership roles.</p>

F.2	Leaders and staff are qualified, motivated and supported to work with the program's target cohort and are able to build trusted relationships with students.			
Maturity levels	<p>Skill mismatches are common and not all staff have the capability requirements to perform their roles (although all staff have the appropriate accreditations).</p> <p>The program has limited or no training or professional development for staff.</p> <p>There are some performance expectations documented; however, staff may be unaware of them.</p>	<p>Skill mismatches exist; however, staff capability generally matches the skills required for the role, and staff have the appropriate accreditations.</p> <p>Training occurs at induction; however, there is limited access to ongoing training opportunities (e.g. trauma-informed, behaviour management).</p> <p>Not all staff have the right personal attributes for flexible education and there is high staff turnover.</p>	<p>Skill mismatches are rare and all staff have the appropriate accreditations.</p> <p>Staff are provided with opportunities to access the training needed to successfully perform their role and bridge any capability gaps.</p> <p>Program leaders support staff to develop and achieve their career aspirations.</p> <p>Programs look for certain personal attributes (e.g. cultural competency, empathy) in the hiring processes.</p>	<p>Skill mismatches are rare and staff feel empowered to succeed in their roles.</p> <p>Program leaders proactively seek ways to support staff and there are optimal structures in place for training and development.</p> <p>Performance goals are set and monitored, and achievement is acknowledged.</p> <p>Programs look for certain personal attributes (e.g., cultural competency, empathy) in the hiring processes.</p> <p>Staff feel a sense of belonging to the program which is reflected in their tenure.</p>

Collaboration and support



Flexible education programs have access to system-level support and opportunities for collaboration when:

- programs share insights, information, expertise and resources, and can learn from experience
- programs have access to a range of support services that meet the needs of students
- flexible education options and pathways are well documented, communicated to the local community and easy to navigate
- programs consistently report on student progress and outcomes through endorsed department systems.

The elements and what they look like in practice are described below.

	Infancy	Developing	Embedded	Leading
G.1	Programs share insights, information, expertise and resources, and can learn from experience across programs.			
Maturity levels	<p>Programs do not share insights, resources or best practice techniques.</p> <p>The program is not in touch with flexible education programs in proximity.</p> <p>The program hears about what other programs do; however, do not formally share any information, expertise or resources between programs in proximity.</p>	<p>Programs are opportunistic, finding time to share insights, resources and best practice techniques during other education networking events.</p> <p>The program is in touch with a number of different flexible education programs in proximity (e.g. programs meet once a year, heads of programs are in touch).</p>	<p>Programs have occasional opportunities to come together to share insights, resources and best practice techniques, potentially facilitated by the Department.</p> <p>The program connects frequently with a few flexible education programs in proximity (e.g. through local focused networks).</p>	<p>Programs have regular, dedicated opportunities to come together to share insights, resources and best practice techniques, facilitated by the Department or other organisations.</p> <p>The program connects frequently with many flexible education programs in proximity (e.g. through local focused networks).</p>

Maturity levels (cont.)		<p>The program shares some information and expertise infrequently or through ad hoc inquiries and requests.</p> <p>Programs do not share any resources (e.g. shared facilities, staff).</p>	<p>The program is connected through a flexible, education-specific “community of practice” supported by the Department where programs can share best practice and engage in collective learning.</p> <p>Programs share information (e.g. student data where appropriate), expertise (e.g. successful case studies) and resources where appropriate (e.g. shared facilities, staff).</p>	<p>A flexible, education-specific “community of practice” supported by the Department exists, programs are attended regularly and are committed to sharing best practice.</p> <p>All flexible education programs in the local area are collectively driving continual improvement.</p>
G.2	Programs have access to a range of support services that meet the needs of students.			
Maturity levels	<p>Support services are not easy to access or do not exist in the local area.</p> <p>The program has no established connections with local support services.</p> <p>Students’ basic needs are not addressed to clear the path for learning.</p>	<p>Support services exist in the local area; however, options are limited.</p> <p>The program has established connections with local support services, though there is limited availability for appointments.</p> <p>Support services visit the program infrequently.</p> <p>Students’ basic needs are somewhat addressed to clear the path for learning (e.g. food is provided at the program).</p>	<p>Support services exist around the local area and there are clear options for referral.</p> <p>Support services are being accessed by some, however, not all the time and some students struggle to make appointments.</p> <p>Support services visit the program frequently and there are some support services on site.</p> <p>Students’ basic needs are to clear the path for learning (e.g. food is provided at the program, transport is offered to get to and from the program).</p>	<p>Support services are co-located at flexible education programs and/or shared between different flexible education programs.</p> <p>All students have access to the services that they need (e.g. allied health services, hearing etc.), and support is in place to help them make the appointment (e.g. transport, easy access).</p> <p>Support services are coordinated (e.g. sharing of student information between services).</p>

G.3	Flexible education options and pathways are well documented, communicated to the local community and easy to navigate.			
Maturity levels	<p>The program has little or no publicly available information about the program or eligibility criteria (e.g. no website, no information on government or other websites).</p> <p>Young people and parents find out about the program through word of mouth or referrals from government services.</p>	<p>There is some publicly available information about the program (e.g. online or on publicly available flyers).</p> <p>Young people and parents rely on calling the program or meeting face-to-face to understand more about eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria and pathways in and out are defined, however, are not always publicly available.</p>	<p>There is much publicly available information about the program (e.g. a dedicated program website, information on other websites, publicly available flyers).</p> <p>Eligibility criteria and pathways in and out of the program are defined and are publicly available.</p> <p>Referral pathways are understood between local referral options (e.g. schools, programs, government, training institutions all understand local pathway options and eligibility criteria).</p>	<p>All programs have publicly available information about the program (e.g. have a dedicated program website, publicly available flyers).</p> <p>Information about all local flexible education programs is collated on a website (e.g. community website, government website).</p> <p>Young people, parents and the community have a high level of understanding of the flexible education options in their local area, eligibility criteria and the referral pathways (e.g. schools, programs, government, training institutions).</p>

G.4	Programs consistently report on student progress and outcomes through endorsed department systems.			
Maturity levels	<p>Programs collect data only to satisfy reporting requirements.</p> <p>Program data is of poor quality and there is limited faith in it.</p>	<p>Programs vary in the data systems they use, with limited consistency in the data points collected.</p> <p>Data is difficult to aggregate; however, is occasionally analysed at a system level.</p> <p>Data is shared on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<p>Programs vary in the data systems they use, with some consistency in the data points collected.</p> <p>Some data is aggregated and analysed at a system level.</p> <p>Some data is shared between programs and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Programs have access to a standard data collection platform that is easy to use, with a suite of consistent data points that can be tailored to the local context.</p> <p>Data is aggregated and analysed at a system level. It is used to make comparisons across programs and to inform program design and decisions.</p> <p>Student data is shared seamlessly across the system.</p>







