

Report on a page

This report summarises the results of our audits of the entities in Queensland's education sector. These include the Department of Education; the Department of Trade, Employment and Training; TAFE Queensland; 7 universities; 8 grammar schools; and other statutory bodies.

The sector's financial statements are reliable

The financial statements of the education entities are reliable and comply with relevant reporting requirements. All education entities met the legislative deadlines for signing their financial statements.

Security issues with information systems are increasing

This year, we identified more weaknesses in the entities' information systems than last year, mainly because we tested more systems and identified similar issues across multiple systems. The majority related to how the entities manage, secure, and restrict access to their systems. We also found that entities had not addressed the root causes of deficiencies from prior years. While they are taking steps to address the weaknesses, the ongoing security issues continue to expose them to cyber attacks.

Universities' financial performance has improved

All universities, except one, made a surplus this year. The universities' operating results increased by \$477.4 million because of higher Australian Government funding relating to domestic students, a continued recovery in revenue from international students, and higher revenue from their investments. Their costs continue to escalate, primarily due to increased wages, but at a slower rate than last year.

Universities continue to manage their financial performance. The growth in international enrolments may be affected by the changes to visa requirements the Australian Government introduced in December 2024. Domestic enrolments increased slightly in 2024 but universities face increased competition for these students. Investment returns can fluctuate from year to year depending on market conditions.

Wage underpayments for universities remain a risk

All universities are continuing to assess the extent of any historical underpayments of staff wages and taking steps to address the issues they identify. It remains a risk that has significantly affected the Australian university sector and is one of the areas being assessed through an ongoing Senate inquiry.

TAFE Queensland's operating results have improved

TAFE Queensland made a surplus of \$17.5 million in 2023–24, its first since the 2020–21 financial year. This was due to additional funding for the Fee-Free TAFE program and other subsidised programs.

Departments continue to underspend their capital budget

Both departments continued to face challenges in achieving their capital expenditure targets in 2023–24. Their actual expenditure, averaged over both departments' figures, was 27.5 per cent less than planned. Shortages in materials and labour, along with adverse weather conditions, affected the timing of work and caused delays in some projects. This can mean assets may not be replaced when required and could end up costing more when the work is eventually completed.

