



QSO COMPOSE PROGRAM 2026 - GENERAL INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Queensland Symphony Orchestra invites secondary school students from across Queensland to participate in the 2026 Compose Program. The Compose Program is run through QSO's Community and Education department (QSO Connect) and is designed to introduce secondary school students to composing for orchestral instruments, extending learning in the senior phase of their schooling beyond the general requirements of the curriculum.

Through workshops and face-to-face activities under the guidance of QSO Composition Mentors [Craig Allister Young](#) and [Timothy Tate](#), program participants have the opportunity to write compositions for the QSO Connect Ensemble, a selection of QSO musicians. The program culminates in a final presentation at the QSO Studio in South Bank, Brisbane.

In 2026, 16 spots will be available in the program. Students must apply on an individual basis (independent of their school). This is an intensive program where applicants are expected to manage their workload and meet key deadlines. It offers insight into the professional practice of a composer and a chance for participants to develop core skills for working to industry standards. Therefore, this program should be considered if an applicant is progressing at a high level in Composition/Music and is seeking additional experience outside of the classroom.

KEY DATES

Applications open	Wednesday 15 October 2025
Applications close	Friday 14 November 2025, 5pm
Workshop 1 & 2	Sunday 14 December 2025, 10am-4pm
Workshop 3	Monday 16 February 2026, 5pm -7:30pm
Workshop 4	Monday 20 April 2026, 5pm -7:30pm
Draft submission date	Sunday 26 April 2026, 11.59pm
Score read through with QSO musicians (applicants must be available for both dates)	Friday 5 June 2026, 3.30pm-6.30pm Saturday 6 June 2026, 2pm-8.30pm
Workshop 5	Monday 22 June 2026, 5-7:30pm
Workshop 6	Monday 27 July 2026, 5-7:30pm
Final Composition submission date	Sunday 2 August 2026, 11.59pm
In-person rehearsal with QSO musicians	Friday 18 September 2026, 9.30am-4pm
Final Presentation	Saturday 19 September 2026, 6:30pm

**Workshops may conclude earlier than listed. Participants to be informed in advance if this occurs*

PROGRAM FEE

The program fee is \$450.00 + GST upon applicant acceptance. This includes:

- ☐ 6 workshops with QSO Composition Mentors
- ☐ 3 in-person rehearsals with your mentors and QSO Connect Ensemble musicians
- ☐ Live performance of your composition by the QSO Connect Ensemble
- ☐ Access to all Compose Program resources
- ☐ Assistance on score editing and submitting
- ☐ 2 complimentary tickets to the final presentation (participants do not require a ticket)

The program fee is only required if the applicant is accepted into the program. There is no application fee.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Those wishing to apply to the 2026 QSO Compose Program will need to **complete an application form** and submit at least **1 minute of original composed material written for an orchestra**. The application form is now accessible via [this link](#). The form will also be available on the Queensland Symphony Orchestra [website](#). The form will close at 5pm on Friday 14 November 2025. The original composed material can be a piece that the applicant has already written. Past participants are encouraged to apply however; they are unable to submit any previous compositions created in the QSO Compose Program.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to showcase their proficiencies in composing for all orchestral instruments and their confidence in utilising their chosen composition software.

After completing the application form, applicants must provide **all 3** of the following files of their original composed material:

- MuseScore OR Sibelius file;
- PDF file of the full score;
- MP3 file of their composition (an export tutorial is included in the application form)

APPLICATION CRITERIA

Applicants must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- Be enrolled in year 7-12 in a Queensland secondary school (or home school) in 2026.
- Be able to attend **all** workshop sessions, rehearsals (including specified in-person only rehearsals) and the final presentation.
- Confidently use **MuseScore** or **Sibelius** software and have access to a laptop.
- Complete the [application form](#) (also available at www.qso.com.au/education/programs/compose-program)

- Submit 1 minute (minimum) of original composed material for orchestra in 3 formats (see “Compose Program Checklist” below) 5pm on Friday 14 November 2025.
- Regional students are encouraged to apply as online participation for workshops is possible. Please note that attendance is required in person for the specified rehearsals and final presentation.
- Previous participants of the QSO Compose program wishing to reapply are welcome to do so, however are unable to submit any previous compositions created in the QSO Compose program. This is to ensure that the participant remains unidentifiable in the application process.

PROGRAM THEME

In 2026, successful QSO Compose Program participants will be asked to write compositions inspired by visual artist [Arabella Walker](#)’s work. This artwork will depict landscapes/elements. Participants will have the opportunity to meet Arabella and discuss her work and artistic ethos in person during Workshop 1.

PROGRAM APPLICATION DATES

Program applications open	Wednesday 15 October 2025
Program applications close	Friday 14 November 2025, 5pm
Successful applicants notified by	Friday 21 November 2025, 5pm

WORKSHOP LEARNING PROGRESSION

Workshop 1 & 2	Meet QSO Mentors and Arabella Walker, discuss program outline, and inspiration tools. Discussions around orchestration techniques such as; phrasing, range, bowing, articulations, dynamics.
Workshop 3	Further workshopping orchestration techniques.
Workshop 4	Editing techniques for professional orchestras and preparing drafts.
Workshop 5	Developing ideas post QSO musician read through, responding to feedback.
Workshop 6	Final touches before submission.

WORKSHOPS & REHEARSAL DATES:

Applicants should consider all dates and deadlines list below carefully.

Workshop 1 & 2 <i>(online or in-person at QSO Studio, Brisbane)</i>	Sunday 14 December 2024, 10am-4pm
Workshop 3 <i>(online or in-person at QSO Studio, Brisbane)</i>	Monday 16 February 2026, 5-7:30pm
Workshop 4 <i>(online or in-person at QSO Studio, Brisbane)</i>	Monday 20 April 2026, 5-7:30pm

1st draft Composition submission date	Sunday 26 April 2026, 11.59pm
Score read through with QSO musicians <i>(Both dates in-person only at QSO Studio, Brisbane. Applicants must be available for both dates)</i>	Friday 5 June, 3.30pm-6.30pm Saturday 6 June, 2pm-8.30pm
Workshop 5 <i>(online or in-person at QSO Studio, Brisbane)</i>	Monday 22 June, 5-7:30pm
Workshop 6 <i>(online or in-person at QSO Studio, Brisbane)</i>	Monday 27 July, 5-7:30pm
Final Composition submission date	Sunday 2 August, 11.59pm
In-person rehearsal with QSO musicians <i>(in-person only at QSO Studio, Brisbane)</i>	Friday 18 September, 9.30am-4pm
Final Presentation <i>(in-person only at QSO Studio, Brisbane)</i>	Friday 19 September 2026 6:30pm
*Workshops may conclude earlier than listed. Participants to be informed in advance if this occurs	

VENUE & FINAL PRESENTATION

The QSO Studio is located at 114 Grey Street, inside the ABC Building. The building entrance is at the end of Russell Street, near the Wheel of Brisbane. Participants should allow 15 minutes to sign into the building with ABC Security, prior to each workshop.

Final Presentation Ticket FAQ:

- 2026 Compose Program participants will receive 2 complimentary tickets to the final presentation.
- These 2 tickets will be distributed at the last workshop on Mon 27 July.
- Participants are responsible for distributing their 2 complimentary tickets to guests.
- QSO is not responsible if participants misplace their 2 complimentary tickets.
- There is no assigned seating, the QSO Studio is General Admission.
- Compose participants do not require a ticket for themselves.
- Any additional guests who wish to attend the Final Presentation will be required to purchase a ticket to the Final Presentation.
- Participants will be informed when tickets will go on sale for the Final Presentation.

PROGRAM CONDITIONS:

Participation in this program is reliant upon attendance at ALL listed workshops, rehearsal and presentation dates. Sessions are not recorded and notes are not provided. Queensland Symphony Orchestra reserves the right to remove a participant from the Compose Program at any time during the application or program phase if any submitted composed material is proven to be plagiarized, AI Generated or appropriated. Due to the nature of score preparation, submission deadlines must be strictly observed. Failure observe submission deadlines will result in the last known draft of a participant's composition being submitted to QSO Mentors for review.

COMPOSE PROGRAM APPLICATION CHECKLIST:

- ☐ Confirm your availability to attend all workshops, rehearsals and the final performance.
- ☐ Submit application form (Linked [here](#) or on the QSO website at www.qso.com.au/education/programs/compose-program)
- ☐ When submitting all files, please use the file naming convention:
LAST NAME, First name_Compose26_Composition title
- ☐ Submit 1 minute of original composed material* for orchestra in **all 3 file forms listed below** via Google Drive, Dropbox or OneDrive:
 - ☐ MuseScore OR Sibelius file
 - ☐ PDF file of the full score
 - ☐ MP3 file of their composition

Past participants are not to submit previous **Compose Program Compositions in their application.*

- ☐ Ensure you have enabled sharing permissions for both edcom@qso.com.au and communityeducationqso@gmail.com on Google Drive, Dropbox or OneDrive folders.
- ☐ Submit all of the materials listed above by 5pm on Friday 14 November 2025.

If you have any questions, please email the QSO Connect team at edcom@qso.com.au.