

3. NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS (as of 2012)

This section outlines the national assessment requirements for 2012. Information and dates post-2012 can be found at www.nap.edu.au.

3.1 2012 schedule of national assessments

In 2012 (as in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011), Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students participated in the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

The 2012 Sample Assessment program has both national and international elements:

- a sample of Year 6 students from government and non-government schools in all states and territories will be selected to participate in the National Assessment Program — Science Literacy (NAP–SL). Science literacy at secondary school level is measured through participation in PISA.
- a sample of 15-year-old students from government and non-government schools in all states and territories will be selected to participate in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

3.2 2012 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

The improvement of students' literacy and numeracy achievement is a key component of the national reform agenda with all Australian governments (Commonwealth, state and territory) seeking to increase the proportion of young people meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and improving overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement.

Full cohort national literacy and numeracy testing of Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students took place in May 2012. Schools are required to have obtained student background information from parents or guardians through the enrolment process for all students in those year levels. Schools and school systems implementing the required data collection arrangements for the first time and which have not yet integrated the requirements in their enrolment process will need to undertake special collections of student background information from students' parents using the question modules specified in this manual.

ACARA is responsible for national management of the NAPLAN tests. Test Administration Authorities are responsible for delivery and logistical services to schools at the state or territory level. In 2012, the test administration authority for all schools (government and non-government) will be the relevant state or territory education department or assessment agency. Handbooks setting out the detailed arrangements for Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN testing in 2012 was sent to each school by the relevant Test Administration Authority.

Further information on the national literacy and numeracy tests, including details of contacts for each state and territory Test Administration Authority and the sector organisations for Catholic and independent schools can be found on the NAP website at www.nap.edu.au.

3.3 National Assessment Program — Science Literacy (NAP–SL)

A sample of Year 6 students from government, Catholic and independent schools in every state and territory will be selected to participate in the National Assessment Program — Science Literacy in October 2012. This will be the fourth triennial assessment of science literacy.

The assessment will focus on students' ability to apply broad conceptual understandings of science to make sense of the world, understand natural phenomena and interpret media reports about scientific issues. It also includes asking investigable questions, conducting investigations, collecting and interpreting data and making decisions. Reports on the 2003, 2006 and 2009 assessments are available on the NAP website at www.nap.edu.au.

Schools are required to have collected student background data, in accordance with the specifications set out in this manual, from enrolment records. Some jurisdictions may provide this information at the system or central level for their sector. Other jurisdictions will require it to be provided at the school level.

ACARA is responsible for the NAP–SL tests. Contractors are engaged by ACARA to conduct the Year 6 Science Literacy Sample Assessment. The report of the assessment results will document students' attainment in relation to proficiency levels and standards, including the performance of specified groups of students. It will also report on student results by sex, Indigenous status, language background, socio-economic status categories and geographic location.

Those contractors contacted all schools selected to take part in the assessment in June 2012. A class of Year 6 students in each of the sample schools will be selected to participate in the assessment. Each school selected in the sample will nominate a school contact person who will receive detailed information on procedures for the administration of the tests. The government, Catholic and independent sectors in each state and territory will appoint liaison officers to communicate with schools or school systems on the conduct of the assessments.

3.4 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Representative samples of 15-year-old students (in Years 9, 10 or 11) from government and non-government schools in all states and territories will participate in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

PISA assesses skills in three domains: reading literacy, mathematical literacy and science literacy. Each cycle has a major focus on one of the domains, while the two minor domains for that cycle are covered in less detail. In 2012, PISA will focus the majority of the assessment on Mathematical Literacy.

While student performance in PISA is also reported for the various subgroups of students (students with language backgrounds other than English, Indigenous students, geographically remote students and students from different socio-economic backgrounds), the background data are collected from the students themselves, via a questionnaire developed using agreed international protocols to ensure quality and consistency across countries.

The OECD Secretariat has overall managerial responsibility for PISA. The administration and implementation of PISA at the national level in each participating country is overseen by a national project manager. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has been contracted as the national project manager for PISA 2012. Further information on PISA in Australia can be found on the ACER website at www.acer.edu.au.