This year, a sample of Year 6 students from across Australia will take part in a national online sample assessment in science literacy.

**What is the NAP – Science Literacy sample assessment?**

The National Assessment Program (NAP) is designed to measure student progress towards the goals outlined in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, 2008*. The NAP monitors students’ achievements in literacy and numeracy (through the annual NAPLAN tests); and in science literacy, civics and citizenship and ICT literacy through sample assessments which are undertaken in three-yearly cycles.

The NAP – Science Literacy assessment was previously held in 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012. In 2015 the assessment will be conducted online for the first time. A new assessment framework has been developed for the 2015 NAP – Science Literacy assessment. This framework provides a bridge between the conceptual framework employed in previous cycles, and the Australian Curriculum: science.

In our rapidly changing world, it is increasingly important that students are able to understand natural phenomena and apply a broad range of conceptual understandings of science to make sense of the world. By interpreting information on scientific issues, asking questions, conducting investigations, collecting and interpreting data, making decisions and communicating their findings, students are able to develop and demonstrate their problem-solving skills and better participate in their world. This assessment recognises that science literacy is essential in helping our students develop a scientific view of the world and become global citizens.

**How is the NAP sample assessment program run?**

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for the National Assessment Program, including the development of the sample tests. ACARA consults with the curriculum and testing authorities and key education stakeholders in each state and territory.

ACARA contracts a service provider – in this case, Educational Assessment Australia (EAA) to develop the assessment. To deliver the tests online, ACARA has worked closely with Educational Services Australia (ESA), ACARA’s technology partner, to build a robust online delivery system.

The assessments will be held in Term 4 during October and November 2015 at the students’ schools and tests are expected to take approximately two hours to complete.
How are schools and students selected to participate?

Around 12,000 students from approximately 630 schools will participate in the sample assessment. The sample of students is ‘stratified’ to ensure that government, Catholic and independent schools from metropolitan, rural and remote locations are appropriately represented. Up to 26 students from the year group in each of the sampled schools will be selected to participate.

How are the tests constructed?

The NAP – Science Literacy assessment comprises three sessions that enable students to demonstrate achievement and understandings at a range of levels and students are provided with an opportunity to complete practice questions before completing the online assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice questions</td>
<td>Students complete a small set of questions to familiarise themselves with the type of questions they can expect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(10 minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective test</td>
<td>All students answer a series of questions which include multiple choice, ‘drag and drop’ and short answer questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(60 minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inquiry task</td>
<td>Students will be shown a number of videos that illustrate key stages in an investigation. They will then be prompted to ask and answer a series of questions based on the content of these videos.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(35 minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student survey</td>
<td>Students will complete a survey regarding their perceptions of, and attitudes towards, science and their experiences of science learning at their school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10 minutes)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

There will be 5 minute breaks between the objective test, inquiry task and student survey. Students will break for either morning tea or lunch depending on the start time of the test.

The assessment is designed to ‘bring out the best’ in students and to encourage their full participation by making the test an engaging experience.
Further information

Schools selected for inclusion in the sample assessment have been contacted by EAA and informed of the process for participating in the 2015 assessment.

Support for participating schools is available from the NAP – Science Literacy Helpdesk on 1800 231 085 or email NAPSLHelpdesk@eaa.unsw.edu.au

General information about the National Assessment Program and the Science Literacy assessment can be found at www.nap.edu.au or by contacting ACARA at info@acara.edu.au

2015 National Assessment Program
Science Literacy

Information for Schools

How will the assessment be conducted?

In each school, the assessment will be conducted by a nominated staff member from the school who will be trained to administer the online assessment in a nationally consistent manner. Prior to the assessment, schools will be able to determine the suitability of their computers or devices for test day by completing a Technical Readiness Test (TRT). In some schools with unsatisfactory internet connectivity, it may be necessary to administer the assessment via USB devices. Students’ responses will be stored electronically for marking and subsequent data analysis and reporting by EAA.

What are the outcomes?

The Science Literacy assessment is specifically designed to provide nationally comparable state and territory data and overall trends. No individual student or school result will be published.

Schools will receive information summarising their students’ performance on the tests before the end of the 2015 school year.

A public report on the results of the Science Literacy assessment, to be released in 2016, will document achievement in relation to the defined national proficiency levels.

This report will include:

- analysis of the performance of different groups of students — for example, differences across genders, states/territories and metropolitan/regional schools. The results of government and non-government schools will not be compared
- comparison of science literacy across Year 6 students
- comparison of achievement levels to previous cycles.

Selected materials (which include sample questions) from previous cycles of the NAP – Science Literacy assessment are available on the National Assessment Program website at www.nap.edu.au

ACARA will improve the learning of all young Australians