

2023 National Assessment Program Science Literacy Field Trial

Information for schools



In 2022, a sample of Year 6 and Year 10 students from across Australia will take part in a national online field trial in science literacy.

What is the NAP – Science Literacy field trial?

The National Assessment Program (NAP) is designed to measure student progress towards important educational outcomes.

The NAP sample assessments are a suite of tests, taking place in a 3-yearly cycle, which monitor student achievement in science literacy, ICT literacy, and civics and citizenship.

In an increasingly technological environment, it is important that students understand natural phenomena and know how to apply scientific method to make sense of what they experience.

When students interpret information on scientific issues, ask questions, conduct investigations, make decisions and communicate their findings, they develop important problem-solving skills. Science literacy is essential to these processes.

The science literacy assessment has been held every 3 years since 2003, with an exception for 2021 where it was postponed to 2023 because of COVID's impact on schools across Australia. There are two stages to this project:

- field trial and
- main study

The 2023 NAP – Science Literacy field trial will evaluate potential questions for use in the main study, to ensure that the assessment is effective.

The 2023 NAP – Science Literacy main study will be used to improve teaching and learning in science literacy. This enables teachers to use information about student science literacy to inform their teaching and assist teachers, education leaders, parents, the community, researchers and policy makers to use evidence of student proficiency in science literacy to assess student achievement against recognised goals and standards and drive improvements in student outcomes.

How is the NAP – Science Literacy field trial program run?

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) develops the sample tests in consultation with curriculum and testing authorities and practicing science teachers in each state and territory.

The 2023 NAP – Science Literacy field trial will be administered by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) on behalf of ACARA. The NAP sample tests are delivered to students over the same online

platform used for the annual NAPLAN tests so many students are already familiar with this platform.

The 2023 NAP – Science Literacy field trial will be held in October and November 2022 (Term Four). Each test session will run for 60 minutes (Year 6) or 75 minutes (Year 10). Schools should also allow time for setting-up, preliminary instructions, and the completion of practice and survey questions.

How are schools and students selected to participate?

Around 3,200 Year 6 and Year 10 students from approximately 128 government, Catholic and independent schools in metropolitan, rural and remote locations will participate in the field trial.

ACARA's contractor, ACER, will ask participating schools to supply student lists for the relevant school year (Year 6 and/or Year 10). From these, ACER will select 20 students from each participating year at each school.

How are the tests constructed?

The 2023 NAP – Science Literacy field trial comprises questions and tasks that enable students to demonstrate achievement and understanding at a range of levels.

Students have an opportunity to complete practice questions before progressing to the online assessment.

Activity	Description
Practice questions	Students complete a small set of questions to familiarise themselves with the types of questions they can expect.
Objective test	Students complete a series of questions that include multiple choice, “drag and drop” and short answer questions.
Inquiry task	Students engage in a task that reflects the key stages of a scientific investigation and answer a series of questions on it.
Student survey	Students complete a short survey regarding their perceptions of, and attitudes towards, science and their experiences of science learning at their school.

How will the assessment be conducted?

During Term Three, ACER will contact participating schools to provide training material and assist in the preparations schools must make to ensure they are ready to administer the test.

Prior to the assessment, schools will be able to determine the suitability of their computers/devices for the test by completing the required technical device checks.

On test day, the test session will be conducted by a nominated staff member from the school.

The training information provided to schools by ACER will ensure that the assessment is administered in a nationally consistent manner.

What are the outcomes?

The purpose of the field trial is to evaluate potential questions (which ACARA calls “items”) for use in the 2023 NAP – Science Literacy main study which is scheduled to take place in May 2023 (Term Two).

The field trial is about testing the questions, not about testing students, or their ability. Students’ results are not published. Schools taking part in the assessment field trial will be excluded from the assessment main study, which is scheduled to take place in May 2023 (Term Two).

Further information

Support for participating schools is available from the NAP – Science Literacy Helpdesk on 1800 599 426 or email: napsience@acer.org

General information about the National Assessment Program and the Science Literacy assessment can be found at www.nap.edu.au