

NAP small-scale tests

The National Assessment Program

ACARA is responsible for the overall management of Australia's National Assessment Program (NAP). This includes **NAPLAN** (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) and **NAP sample assessments**.

NAPLAN is the national assessments of **reading, writing, conventions of language** (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and **numeracy**. The tests are completed every year by all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia.

The **NAP sample assessments** test students' skills and understanding in science literacy, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology literacy on a rolling three-yearly basis. Selected groups of students from across Australia in Years 6 and 10 participate in these sample assessments.

As part of the development of these two components of the National Assessment Program, some schools will be required to participate in small scale tests. These include:

- NAPLAN → trial and equating tests
- NAP Sample Assessments → trial and main sample tests

Small-scale tests – what is their purpose and why are they important?

ACARA is committed to ensuring the tests developed for the National Assessment Program are of a world-class standard. The tests are designed to be engaging, and to assess knowledge, skills and understanding appropriate to students in particular year levels.

The development and review process for the tests required for the National Assessment Program takes about 18 months to complete. This rigorous process includes the administration of **small-scale tests** for the 'trailing' and 'equating' phases of NAPLAN, and for the 'trailing' phases of the NAP sample assessments.

Trialling tests

Trialling involves samples of students from each state and territory completing sets of test questions ('items'). The results are evaluated to determine the suitability of the questions for use in future tests. **The main purpose of trialling for NAPLAN and the NAP sample assessments is to determine the quality of potential test items, not to report individual student or school performance.**

Equating tests

Equating is a process carried out to enable year-to-year test results to be reported on the same assessment scales. In this way, a particular test result will reflect a comparable level of ability in each of the years during which the assessment is conducted. For NAPLAN, a representative sample of students is selected annually to participate in an 'equating study' so that NAPLAN test results can be compared over time.

NAP sample assessments do not use a separate equating study. Instead, a proportion of main sample test items from previous years (link items) is incorporated into each current main sample test. These link items act as reference points for the NAP sample equating process.

QUICK FACTS

Who participates in small-scale tests?

For NAPLAN trial and equating tests, students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 from a national sample of schools participate. At each selected school, generally two classes from two relevant year groups participate.

For NAP sample assessment trials, students from a sample of schools participate. For NAP sample assessment main studies, students from a sample of schools drawn from all states and territories participate. Typically, twenty students from Year 6 and/or Year 10 are selected to sit the test at each school.

ACARA's sampling process endeavours to ensure that the same school is not selected to participate in both a NAPLAN and a NAP sample assessment small-scale test in the same year. However, this may not be possible in smaller states and territories with fewer schools.

Why is it important to participate?

Participating in National Assessment Program small-scale tests contributes to the development of assessments that are valid, reliable and engaging.

When do the small-scale tests take place?

The small-scale tests are administered throughout the year. ACARA and its contractors liaise with selected schools to ensure dates selected are suitable and students are available.

Are the results of the small-scale tests reported or published?

For NAPLAN trialling and equating, individual student results are not reported or published, and after each testing and reporting cycle is completed, student names are deleted from relevant data sets. NAPLAN trial and equating results do not affect a school or student's final NAPLAN results in any way. Information about individual student or school performance will not be disclosed to education authorities. For NAP sample trials, individual student results are **not** reported or published. Student names are not collected.

For the NAP sample assessment main studies, all participating schools receive a school summary report comparing individual student results with national per cent correct data and links to the Australian Curriculum for each assessment item. The results of the NAP sample main studies are reported at the national/state/territory level via a public report. After each NAP sample main study testing and reporting cycle is completed, student names are deleted from relevant data sets.

Who conducts the small-scale tests in schools?

Under ACARA's management, professional test administrators (sometimes referred to as invigilators) attend participating schools and administer the NAPLAN equating and trial tests, and the NAP sample ICT literacy main study and trial tests. All professional test administrators will have current Working with Children approval, in accordance with local requirements. For NAP sample science and civics main study and trial tests, a teacher from each participating school will act as the administrator.

How will the tests impact on school time and resources?

Every effort is made to minimise disruption to school routines, and care is taken to ensure that the small-scale tests are carried out on a day convenient to your school within the trial period. Small-scale tests generally involve only one, or a small number, of a school's classes and take one to two and a half hours to administer to students. Where external test administrators are used, the load on a school is proportionally less. In both cases, ACARA will ensure that your school is adequately informed.

Is parent permission required?

No, parental permission is not required for students to participate in small-scale tests. These tests are a component of the National Assessment Program, an agreed part of national education requirements.

For more information about privacy and NAPLAN small-scale tests, please visit:

www.nap.edu.au/naplan/privacy