

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM – DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PROCESS

The development and review process for assessments in the National Assessment Program takes about 18 months to complete. ACARA staff with expertise in curriculum, content, assessment development and psychometrics oversee every step of the process to ensure that the assessments are of the highest standard:

1. Guidelines for test development

Guidelines for test development, including question (item) formats and suitable topics for reading materials, are reviewed early as part of an ongoing quality assurance process. This ensures that there are clear guidelines for writers to follow when they develop test questions.

2. Question ('item') development

Test developers are engaged to develop questions that meet the endorsed test specifications. ACARA contracts out this part of the process to organisations that successfully demonstrate exceptional experience and competence in the area of test development.

3. Review of test items

Test managers from each state and territory, as well as representatives from the non-government sector, review proposed test items to ensure they meet curriculum and jurisdiction or sector-based circumstances.

4. Trialling

Representative samples of students (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) from each state and territory, sector and geolocation participate in the trialling of potential test questions. The data from these trials are analysed by psychometric experts that are independent from any NAPLAN writing agency, and then questions that meet the test specifications are selected to construct each assessment.

5. Expert advice

ACARA's Expert Advisory Panel, made up of measurement and assessment experts, meets regularly to provide advice throughout the test development and reporting process, to ensure that NAPLAN tests meet the necessary technical specifications.

6. Testing

NAPLAN is held in May – with a three day testing window for paper assessments and a longer testing window for NAPLAN Online. Unlike NAPLAN, NAP sample assessments are not held on the same fixed dates in all schools, and generally occur in October/November of each year.

7. Equating program

A process of [equating](#) is carried out to enable the results from NAPLAN assessments in different years to be reported on the same assessment scale ([see also Test results](#)). A second national sample of students participates in this additional 'equating' testing program, which is usually carried out before the main assessments so the results can be linked.

8. Analysis

Once the assessments are marked, the results are analysed and scaled onto the NAPLAN assessment scales. These analyses use well-known statistical methods and processes that are widely used in other national and international large-scale educational testing programs.

9. Reporting

Results from the National Assessment Program assessments are reported in a number of ways:

- individual students receive a report on how they performed (NAPLAN only)
- schools receive information on how students at their school performed
- summary and national reports showing performance across the nation are published
- average school results including measures of growth are shown on the *My School* website (NAPLAN only).