

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the 2008 manual

This manual provides information to assist schools and school systems to collect student background information as required by Education Ministers. The purpose is to enable nationally comparable reporting of students' outcomes against the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*.

It involves the collection of information on students':

- sex;
- Indigenous status;
- socioeconomic background; and
- language background.

The manual describes what is involved and what it means in practical terms for schools, school systems and testing agents.

In brief, schools and school systems need to collect background information on relevant students using agreed questions through the school enrolment process. The resulting information is stored in the administrative system and then supplied to testing agents so that it can be linked with data gained from students' test results.

The process of collecting student background information from parents using nationally agreed definitions of student background characteristics began in 2005. The original edition of this manual, *Data Implementation Manual for Enrolments for the 2005 and 2006 School Years*, was prepared to assist schools and systems in implementing collection of student background data. 2005 was regarded as a transition year with States, Territories and non-government schools being able to collect data via student test forms if it was not possible to implement collections from parents. However, Ministers agreed that from 2006 the data items were to be collected from parents. A second edition of the manual was produced for enrolments for the 2007 school year.

The 2008 edition of the manual is to be used by schools and school systems when enrolling students for the first time in the 2008 school year or when collecting information, via special data collection forms, on those students who are involved in national testing in 2008.

1.2 How is the information used?

The relevant background data is linked to students' national literacy and numeracy test results and to the test forms of students selected to participate in national sample assessments at Year 6. The information is then used to report on students' performance by the agreed background characteristics in the annual *National Report on Schooling in Australia (ANR)*.

National Assessment Program - Literacy and numeracy testing

2008 is the first year in which full cohort national literacy and numeracy testing of all Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students will occur. All schools are required to have requested background information from parents and carers through the enrolment process using the nationally agreed definitions for all students in those year levels. Schools and school systems implementing the required data collection arrangements for the first time in 2008 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.

The requirement to collect student background information from the parents of Year 9 students using the nationally agreed definitions of the identified student background characteristics is particularly pertinent to those States and Territories where secondary schooling commences at Year 8, and where secondary schools may not have previously collected student background data according to the technical specifications set out in the manual.

Information on detailed arrangements for Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 testing will be provided by the testing agent at a later date.

National Assessment Program – Triennial sample assessments

In 2008, a sample of Year 6 students will be selected to participate in the National Assessment Program (NAP) – Information and Communication Technology Literacy (ICTL). Year 6 student background data will be drawn from enrolment records.

A sample of Year 10 students will also participate in the NAP – ICTL, 2008 assessment, but background information for these students is to be collected from the students themselves, via the test forms. Information on detailed arrangements for Year 10 testing will be provided by the testing agent at a later date.

Detailed information on the National Assessment Program can be found on the MCEETYA website at <http://www.mceetya.edu.au>.

1.3 Who should use the manual?

Within schools and school systems the manual is for the use of those involved in the:

- design of enrolment forms and enrolment processes;
- collection of information from parents;
- design, maintenance or modification of student information storage and retrieval systems;
- updating of student records; and
- school-level management or coordination of students' participation in full cohort literacy and numeracy testing and national sample assessments.

The manual also provides information for testing agents (that is, the organisations undertaking the testing), software providers and Boards of Studies.

Not all schools need to use this manual. In some systems, for example, implementation is a central responsibility.

Because implementation of the nationally agreed definitions of student background characteristics began in 2005, most school systems and schools will have already implemented the required data collection protocols. There are, however, a number of potential new users - that is, schools or school systems implementing the required data collection arrangements for the first time in 2008. These are most likely to be either:

- new independent schools coming into operation in 2008; or
- secondary schools which have not as yet implemented the data collection changes and will need to collect background information for literacy and numeracy testing of Year 9 students in 2008.

These users should refer to section 1.3.2 below.

1.3.1 Existing users

For existing users, the principal update that needs to be noted is that the lists of main languages other than English spoken at home (Attachment 5) and most common countries of birth (Attachment 7), for Australia and for each State and Territory, have been revised by the ABS to reflect data on languages and birthplace from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing.

Existing data collected using the previous lists of languages and countries (derived from 2001 Census data) does not need to be updated.

1.3.2 New users

Those schools or school systems collecting student background information using the agreed questions and response categories as contained in Section 3 of this manual for the first time in 2008, will need to take the steps set out in Section 2 to amend enrolment forms and modify data collection processes.

1.4 How is the implementation managed in your sector?

Government sector:

- The implementation has been managed at central level. In most cases, implementation has already occurred. However, in some jurisdictions there may be a need to implement collections in secondary schools in order to obtain the necessary information on Year 9 students.

Catholic sector:

- In diocesan/systemic schools, implementation has been managed at diocesan level.
- In non-diocesan/non-systemic schools, implementation has varied across States and Territories. Please consult your Catholic Education Office if required.
- In both cases, there may be a need to implement collections in secondary schools in order to obtain the necessary information on Year 9 students.

Independent sector:

- Implementation in this sector has occurred at either the individual school level or at the systemic level where groups of independent schools are organised on a systemic basis (eg the Lutheran, Anglican and Seventh Day Adventist school systems). In both cases, there may be a need to implement collections in secondary schools in order to obtain the necessary information on Year 9 students.

1.5 Updates of the manual

This manual is updated on a regular basis with the latest version available on the MCEETYA website (<http://www.mceetya.edu.au>). The title of the manual sets out the school year(s) for which the manual is relevant. This version is valid for the 2008 school year.

1.6 Privacy requirements

Schools and school systems should review and, if necessary, revise their privacy policies and related documentation providing advice to parents on the collection, storage, use and disclosure of personal information. Such information should be distributed to parents with enrolment or special data collection forms, reproduced in the school's or school system's

privacy policy as well as any other relevant documents and, if appropriate, provided on associated websites.

For the non-government sector: Please note that a comprehensive *Privacy Compliance Manual* is available. This document was developed jointly by the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) and the Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) with the assistance of Minter Ellison Lawyers. It provides advice for non-government schools and school systems on compliance with Commonwealth privacy legislation by private sector organisations. It also includes advice on obtaining parents' consent to the collection and use of personal information and examples of standard collection notices. The *Privacy Compliance Manual* is available on the NCEC and ISCA websites.

For the purposes of nationally comparable reporting, schools and school systems are not required to seek updated information from parents once the information has been collected according to the agreed questions and response formats. School systems and schools may, however, decide to do so in light of particular policies on student information management. Updating of data also depends on any requirements for agencies or organisations to comply with the privacy legislation applicable to the State/Territory or sector to ensure that information they collect, use or disclose is accurate, complete and up-to-date.

1.7 Help for schools

Government sector

Within the government sector, your primary contact is as follows:

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| New South Wales | Dr Juho Looveer NSW Department of Education and Training Phone: (02) 95618192 Email: Juho.Looveer@det.nsw.edu.au |
| Victoria | Susan Dennett Department of Education and Training Phone: (03) 96372175 Email: susan.dennett@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| Queensland | Trevor Kowitz Education Queensland Phone: (07) 3237 0760 Email: CorporateData.PERFMEAS@deta.qld.gov.au |
| South Australia | Miriam Doull Department of Education and Children's Services Phone: (08) 8226 1477 Email: Doull.Miriam@saugov.sa.gov.au |
| Western Australia | John Harris Department of Education and Training Phone: (08) 9264 4668 Email: John.Harris@det.wa.edu.au |
| Tasmania | Andrew Oakley Department of Education Phone: (03) 6233 2012 Email: andrew.oakley@education.tas.gov.au |

Government sector (continued)

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| Northern Territory | Susan Watterson Department of Employment, Education and Training Phone: (08) 8999 5682 Email: statspak.deet@nt.gov.au |
| Australian Capital Territory | Chris Bayer Department of Education and Training Phone: (02) 6205 9034 Email: chris.bayer@act.gov.au |

Catholic sector

Within the Catholic sector systemic schools can contact the local Catholic Schools Office or Catholic Education Office for further information. Non-systemic Catholic schools can contact the State/Territory Catholic Education Commission.

Independent sector

Within the Independent sector you can contact your State or Territory Association of Independent Schools (AIS) representative:

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| New South Wales | Ray Whitfield The Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales Ltd (AISNSW) Phone: (02) 9299 2845 Email: aisnsw@aisnsw.edu.au |
| Victoria | Peter Roberts Assistant Director, Management Services Association of Independent Schools of Victoria Inc (AISV) Phone: (03) 9825 7211 Email: peter.roberts@ais.vic.edu.au |
| Queensland | David Robertson Director (Operations) Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) Phone: (07) 3228 1515 Email: drobertson@aisq.qld.edu.au |
| South Australia | Brian Simons Assistant Director, Administration Services Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA) Phone: (08) 8179 1406 Email: simonsb@ais.sa.edu.au |
| Western Australia | Keva Crouch Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia Inc (AISWA) Phone: (08) 9441 1614 Email: kcrouch@ais.wa.edu.au Ron Gorman Phone: (08) 9441 1620 Email: rgorman@ais.wa.edu.au |

Independent sector (continued)

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|------------------------------|---|
| Tasmania | Tony Crehan The Association of Independent Schools of Tasmania (AIST) Phone: (03) 6224 0125 Email: aist@tassie.net.au |
| Northern Territory | Gail Barker Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory Inc (AISNT) Phone: (08) 8981 8668 Email: admin@aisnt.asn.au |
| Australian Capital Territory | Jeremy Irvine Executive Director Association of Independent Schools of the ACT Inc (AISACT) Phone: (02) 6162 0834 Email: jeremy@ais.act.edu.au |