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1.

INTRODUCTION

The Manual contains three sections

1. Background information on the purpose and underlying rationale for the collection of student background data
2. Guidance about implementing the data elements in schools' and school systems' data collections
3. Technical specifications for each of the data elements, including data definitions, question modules, classifications and code structures.

1.1 Purpose of the 2009 Manual

The purpose of the Manual is to provide guidance to schools and school systems with the collection of information on student background characteristics using nationally agreed, standard measures of the characteristics.

1.1.1 *Reporting framework from 2009*

All Australian Education Ministers have previously agreed that consistent and comparable data are essential to improving the quality and accuracy of national monitoring and reporting of progress towards the achievement of national goals and targets at various points of schooling. The nationally comparable data will better meet the needs of parents, schools and school systems, and the wider community for information on the performance of students and schools; and assist governments in identifying where resources are most needed to lift attainment.

Council of Australian Government (COAG) reform agenda

In 2008 the Council of Australian Government (COAG), which comprises the Prime Minister, State Premiers and Territory Chief Ministers, agreed to a new reform agenda to ensure that all Australian school students acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society and employment in a globalised economy.

In order to advance its reform agenda, COAG has produced a framework of agreed outcomes, indicative progress measures, targets and policy directions. These include a commitment to ensuring that schooling promotes the social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children (see [Attachment 2](#)).

The availability of information which allows the disaggregation of data by student background characteristics, particularly by Indigenous status and socioeconomic background, is essential to the measurement and reporting of progress towards achieving COAG agreed outcomes. The Manual is a key document for improving the quality and national comparability of data available for this purpose.

New national goals for schooling

On 5 December 2008, State, Territory and Commonwealth Education Ministers released the *Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians*. The Goals were developed by Education Ministers in collaboration with the Catholic and independent school sectors, following consultation with interested individuals and organisations in the broader community. The developmental work was informed by the COAG measures and targets that relate to school education. The 2008 *Melbourne Declaration* supersedes the 1999 *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* which has provided the framework for nationally comparable reporting of students' outcomes over the past decade.

1.2 Background

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, titled *Data Implementation Manual for Enrolments for the 2005 and 2006 School Years*, was prepared to assist schools and systems in implementing the changes to enrolment forms and associated data collection and storage processes required for reporting student performance by the agreed background variables. Further editions of the Manual were produced for enrolments for the 2007 and 2008 school years respectively.

The 2009 edition of the Manual is to be used by schools and school systems when enrolling students for the first time in the 2009 school year or when collecting information, via special data collection forms, on those students participating in national assessments in 2009.

To date, national agreement has been reached on standard definitions for the following student background characteristics:

- sex
- Indigenous status
- socioeconomic background
- language background
- geographic location.

The technical specifications for collecting data for the first four of these variables are contained in the Manual. (Geographical information is collected through a separate process.)

Further information on the background to the collection of student background data using standard definitions is provided in [Attachment 2](#).

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
- school-level management or coordination of students' participation in full cohort literacy and numeracy testing, and national or international sample assessments.

The Manual also provides information for test administration authorities, software providers and Boards of Studies.

Not all schools need to use this manual. In some systems, the implementation of the required student data collection arrangements 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 2009. These are most likely to be either:

- new systemic or non-systemic non-government schools coming into operation in 2009; or
- schools changing their status or operation and schools providing new level(s) of schooling in 2009.

Such schools may need to review and adjust their data collection tools and data processing procedures to implement in their collections the standards agreed for each data item. 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 data collected from parents for the 'Country of birth of student' data item should be coded to the *Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC)* Second Edition which was released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in May 2008. (See **2.1: Action required – existing users** and Attachments 7 and 8. Attachment 8 contains an electronic link to the coding index for the classification - in both alphabetical and numerical code order.)

Existing users should also ensure that data collected from parents for the 'Main language other than English spoken at home' data item are coded to the *Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL)* Second Edition which was released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2005 and replaced the 1997 ASCL First Edition. (See **2.1: Action required – existing users** and Attachments 5 and 6. Attachment 6 contains an electronic link to the coding index for the classification - in both alphabetical and numerical code order.)

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 2009, may need to take the steps set out in Section 2 to amend enrolment forms and modify data collection processes. (See **2.2: Action required – new users**.)

It is the responsibility of all users (schools or school systems) to review and adjust their data collection tools and data processing procedures as appropriate to implement in their collections the agreed standards for each data item.

1.4 What is the National Assessment Program (NAP)?

The National Assessment Program (NAP), as endorsed by all Education Ministers, includes annual full cohort literacy and numeracy assessments in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 and triennial national sample assessments in science (Year 6), information and communication technology (Years 6 and 10), and civics and citizenship (Years 6 and 10).

Australia also participates in sample assessments conducted by international organisations:

- the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted every three years by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which assesses students' reading, mathematical and scientific literacy
- the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) conducted every four years by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) which assesses the achievement of a sample of Year 4 and Year 8 students.

Information on the national key performance measures agreed by Education Ministers for measuring and reporting on student performance and achievement is provided in Attachment 2.

1.5 What assessments will be conducted in 2009?

In 2009 (as in 2008), all Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students will participate in the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

The 2009 sample assessment program will have both national and international elements:

- a sample of Year 6 students from government, Catholic and independent schools in all States and Territories will be selected to participate in the National Assessment Program – Science Literacy (NAP-SL, 2009)
- representative samples of 15 year-old students (in Years 9, 10 or 11) from government and non-government schools in all States and Territories will participate in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA 2009).

Further information on both the national and international sample assessments can be found on the MCEETYA website at <http://www.mceetya.edu.au>.

1.5.1 National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

The improvement of students' literacy and numeracy achievement levels is a key component of the national reform agenda with COAG seeking to increase both the proportion of young people meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement.

Full cohort national literacy and numeracy testing of all Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students will take place in May 2009. Schools are required to have obtained student background information from parents (or guardians) through the enrolment process for all students in those year levels. Schools and school systems implementing the required data collection arrangements for the first time in 2009 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 using the question modules specified in this Manual.

Curriculum Corporation is responsible for coordinating the national development of the NAPLAN tests in 2009. Test administration authorities are responsible for delivery and logistical services to schools at the State or Territory level. For government schools, the test administration authority is the relevant State or Territory assessment agency or authority. Catholic and independent schools may have their test logistical services provided through a State or Territory test administration authority or through the Curriculum Corporation.

Administrative handbooks or manuals setting out the detailed arrangements for Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 testing in 2009 will be sent to each school by the test administration authority.

Further information on the national literacy and numeracy tests can be found on the NAPLAN website at <http://www.naplan.edu.au>.

1.5.2 National Assessment Program – Science Literacy (NAP-SL, 2009)

A sample of Year 6 students from government, Catholic and independent schools in every State and Territory will be selected to participate in the National Assessment Program – Science Literacy (NAP-SL, 2009). Year 6 student background data collected in accordance with the specifications set out in this Manual will be drawn from enrolment records. The assessment contractor will supply participating schools with information on the administration of the assessment, including the electronic provision of student background data.

Some jurisdictions may provide this information at the system or central level for their sector. Other jurisdictions will require it to be provided at the school level.

An assessment contractor is engaged to carry out tasks associated with the development, conduct and reporting of the national sample assessment. Liaison officers are appointed for the government, Catholic and independent sectors in each State and Territory to communicate with schools or school systems on the conduct of the assessments.

1.5.3 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA 2009)

Representative samples of 15 year-old students (in Years 9, 10 or 11) from government and non-government schools in all States and Territories will participate in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA 2009).

While student performance in PISA is also reported for the various sub-groups of students (students with language backgrounds other than English, Indigenous students, geographically remote students and students from different socioeconomic backgrounds), the background data are collected from the students themselves, via a questionnaire developed using agreed international protocols to ensure quality and consistency across countries.

The OECD Secretariat has overall managerial responsibility for PISA. The administration and implementation of PISA at the national level in each participating country is overseen by a national project manager. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has been contracted as the national project manager for PISA 2009.

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: 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

1.7.1 Management of data collection requirements by school sectors

Government sector

- The implementation has been managed centrally by State and Territory education departments.

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 Commission for further information.

Independent sector

- Implementation in this sector has occurred either at the individual school level or, where groups of independent schools are organised on a systemic basis (eg the Lutheran, Anglican and Seventh Day Adventist school systems), at the systemic level.

1.7.2 Contacts for schools

Within the **government sector**, the primary contact for schools is as follows:

New South Wales	Lucy Lu NSW Department of Education and Training Phone: (02) 95618691 Email: lucy.lu@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
Northern Territory	Susan Barnes Department of Education and Training Phone: (08) 8999 5793 Email: susan.barnes@nt.gov.au
Australian Capital Territory	Matthew Hardy ACT Department of Education and Training Phone: (02) 6205 5512 Email: matthew.hardy@act.gov.au

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

Within the **independent sector**, schools can contact their State or Territory Association of Independent Schools (AIS) representative:

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 (Strategic & Government Relations) 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
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