

CURRICULUM UPDATE – March 2018



Federal Council has represented members as a major stakeholder at Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) meetings for many years. Our Curriculum Leader, Judy Sinclair-Newton attends quarterly teleconferences which allow Federal Council to have input into discussions as well as hear firsthand the plans for the future and the latest developments.

As we move towards NAPLAN online many parents are asking questions around data allowances, devices and generally how and why go online. In this update we hope we can address many of the commonly asked questions.

Try the Online demonstration for yourself



<http://www.nap.edu.au/online-assessment/public-demonstration-site>

Some of the main benefits of students taking part in NAPLAN Online include:

- **Better assessment – and more precise results.** NAPLAN Online uses a tailored test or adaptive design, where the test automatically adapts to a student's performance and asks questions that match the student achievement level, allowing the student to demonstrate their knowledge. This provides teachers and schools with more targeted and detailed information on students' performance on the tests. Tailored testing also provides an opportunity to broaden the scope of the assessments.
- **Faster turnaround of results.** Delivery of assessments online significantly reduces the time it takes to provide feedback to schools, students and parents, so teachers can respond more quickly to learning needs.
- **More engaging.** ACARA research into online assessment has shown that students have engaged well with electronic tests.

As technology develops, ACARA aims to further refine the delivery of the tests to best use the available technology to provide increasingly sophisticated assessments and valuable feedback to teachers, parents and education authorities.

TIMEFRAME FOR NAPLAN ONLINE

Schools across Australia will start to go online from 2018 on an opt-in basis. State/territory education authorities are responsible for determining when their state/territory moves to NAPLAN Online. Schools are being supported through readiness and preparedness activities. Further information can be found [here](#).

What organisations are responsible for delivering NAPLAN Online?

- Federal, state and territory education ministers have agreed that NAPLAN will move online from 2018 with all schools to be online by 2020. State/territory education authorities will make decisions about the logistics and timing to move NAPLAN online for their state/territory and are leading implementation of NAPLAN Online in their jurisdictions, working closely with schools and students.
- Education Services Australia is responsible for developing the online assessment capability and platform, using ACARA's detailed requirement specifications.

- ACARA is responsible for the NAPLAN Online assessment and for reporting the results of these assessments.
- State and territory school authorities are responsible for ensuring their schools are ready to move online.

Can students use their own tablet or laptop to take NAPLAN Online?

- NAPLAN Online supports BYOD (bring your own device) for students. BYOD devices must be secured so students do not have access to unauthorised websites, applications and spell-checking features. NAP (National Assessment Program) locked-down browser applications are available to support schools in ensuring online assessments run smoothly.
- Visit the BYOD section on the '[Technical requirements](#)' page of the NAP website.

How will tailored testing work?

During the test, students are presented with sets of questions based on their performance. Many of these questions are of mid-range complexity for each year level, but some are of higher or lower complexity. For example, students who struggle with questions early in the test are directed to questions that are less complex. Students performing to a higher level in the test will have an opportunity to answer questions that are more complex.

Read the tailored testing fact sheet [here](#).

Watch the informative video, which explains how the test works.

<https://youtu.be/oGFseJAM3Ew>



How will several classes of students complete the test at the same time if there are not enough devices?

Schools will not require a computer for every student. The test window for NAPLAN Online has been increased to two weeks to allow increased flexibility for tests to be staggered over a longer period of time. This means all students will not need to complete the tests at the same time.

If a student is sick, can they complete the tests online at home?

As with the paper NAPLAN, students who are sick cannot complete NAPLAN at home. Students who are absent on the day of testing may be able to complete catch-up tests if they return to school within the NAPLAN test window.

Will students who are home-schooled or attend distance education schools be able to participate in NAPLAN Online?

Each state/territory test administration authority will determine the appropriate arrangements for testing students who are registered as undertaking non-school based education.

For example, home-schooled students completing NAPLAN Online may attend another school (or central location) on the test days as a visiting student.

Will the expanded test window lead to students being able to tell other students the answers to NAPLAN questions?

NAPLAN Online will use tailored testing, which means the test automatically adapts to student performance and presents questions that match student achievement level, allowing the student to demonstrate their knowledge.

This means students are likely to be working on different questions at different times and many will be sitting tests with different items.

The tailored test design will also offer many more items than are currently used for the paper NAPLAN version, providing additional security protection.

Will there be staff training for readiness testing as well as NAPLAN Online?

Education Services Australia will train key staff from states and territories on the functionality of the platform. Students and teachers can familiarise themselves with the testing experience, as well as the types of items to be included in the online tests by using the public demonstration site. Schools determine the device that students should practise on. Encourage students to practise on a device similar to the one they plan to use for the NAPLAN Online tests.

How will schools with poor internet and limited computers run NAPLAN Online?

NAPLAN Online works best when schools have suitable hardware and reliable access to the internet. To assist schools in ensuring they have a sufficient number of devices, the **test window for NAPLAN Online is extended from three to nine days to allow flexibility for tests to be staggered**. As such, students will not all need to complete the tests at the same time. Click [here](#) to view the test window.

Students will also be allowed to complete NAPLAN Online using a variety of devices such as laptops and tablets. Visit the [technical requirements](#) page on the NAP website.

To assist schools that have no internet connectivity or intermittent or limited bandwidth, low and no bandwidth solutions will be available as part of NAPLAN Online and are being developed by Education Services Australia. The goal is to have these 'low and no bandwidth' options available for some schools in 2019 with full implementation by 2020.

What will happen if the device stops working during the test?

No student is disadvantaged if their device stops working during the test. In the event the device stops working, all responses will have been saved and the student can complete their test in a rescheduled test session. The platform has also been designed to manage situations where internet connectivity is lost, such that as students sit the test their responses will be backed up automatically every 30 seconds allowing students to resume testing with minimal impact on work completed should any disruption occur.

ESSAY WRITING

Will students with limited keyboard skills be disadvantaged in the writing test?

The writing test is not about handwriting skills and NAPLAN Online is not about keyboarding skills. There are variations in how fast and well a student can type, just as there are variations in how fast and well a student can write by hand.

ACARA research shows that online writing is similar to handwriting in terms of the quality of writing produced by students at each year level. It also shows that students generally appreciate the use of online features such as editing tools (noting that online features such as grammar and spell-check are disabled during NAPLAN testing).

Students do not have to be able to touch type to successfully complete the test.

Future information can be found [here](#).

AUTOMATED ESSAY SCORING

Automated essay scoring (AES) can mark thousands of essays consistently, reliably and quickly. The system uses computer algorithms that are designed to mirror human scoring.

On the 25th January this year, the Education Council (made-up of the State and Commonwealth Education Ministers) determined that automated essay scoring will not be used for the marking of NAPLAN writing scripts.

While research by ACARA shows that automated essay scoring has the potential to be a viable option for marking writing scripts, concerns still exist for some stakeholders.

To allay those concerns and facilitate a smooth transition to NAPLAN online, Education Council determined that automated essay scoring will not be used. Any change to this position in the future will be informed by further research and be made as a decision of the Education Council.

As with the current paper NAPLAN, all other domains will still be computer marked.