

Information for parents and carers

PAT testing is one of many sources of information schools may use to understand students' learning progress. Unlike 'high stakes' assessments, such as university entrance exams or scholarship tests, PAT is low stakes and designed to help teachers build a picture of where students are in their learning, their strengths and areas for improvement.

*ACER's PAT tests are administered in over 6000 Australian schools each year.
In 2023, over 6.3 million PAT tests were completed.*

While PAT Reading and PAT Maths are the most widely used PAT assessments, there are PAT assessments for other areas such as spelling, grammar, and science. A full list of assessments in the PAT suite can be found on ACER's website.

FAQs

Is PAT related to NAPLAN?

No. There is no direct connection or alignment between PAT results and NAPLAN results. Unlike NAPLAN, PAT is not intended as an assessment of the entire curriculum at a given year level. The two assessments also use different scales and bands to report student achievement. Using their professional judgement, teachers may consider PAT and NAPLAN results, along with all other sources of information, to build a more complete picture of their students' learning achievements and needs.

What scores or results does PAT provide?

PAT reports student achievement in a learning area as a scale score, which is an estimate of where a student is in their learning progress. Teachers can measure a student's growth over time by looking at how their scale score increases from one testing period to the next. Students at different ages or year levels may achieve the same scale score, indicating they are at similar points in their learning.

PAT 'achievement bands' describe the skills and understandings students typically demonstrate at different points along the scale for the learning area, such as Maths or Reading. At the lower bands, students typically demonstrate simple skills and understandings, and these become more complex as students move up the scale throughout their schooling.

Some PAT tests also provide a ranking score (a percentile and/or a stanine). These scores represent a comparison of a student's scale score against the achievement of a broader group of Australian students at the same year level.

My child has special needs. Can they receive accommodations for PAT?

PAT assessments can be administered flexibly. ACER advises schools to support students with identified needs by providing the sorts of accommodations the students normally receive with their class work, and when sitting other assessments. The aim is for all students to have the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do.

My child has an upcoming PAT assessment. How can I help them prepare?

No special preparation for PAT is required or advised. PAT tests are intended to help your student's teachers understand what they can do and understand now and how to support the next steps in their learning.

How does ACER keep my child's data safe?

ACER is committed to ensuring data privacy and security. ACER's privacy policy can be found here:

<https://www.acer.org/privacy>

Schools using PAT online assessments are bound by ACER's online assessment and reporting system terms and conditions: <https://oars.acer.edu.au/terms-conditions>

ACER's Information Security Management System (ISMS) consists of a suite of policies, standards, specifications, and procedures in accordance with, and certified against, the ISO/IEC 27001:2022 standard and defines the security activities required for this service.

All system data are stored on the Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud in Sydney.

The following personal student information may be collected for the purpose of administering and reporting on PAT testing:

- Given name
- Family name
- Middle names
- Username
- Password
- Gender (M, F, X)
- Date of birth
- Year Level

My child recently completed a PAT test at their school. Can I see their results?

Please contact your child's school if you would like to discuss their PAT results. Remember that PAT reports are designed for teachers, so they may be difficult to fully interpret without guidance from your child's teacher.

