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# Information Brochure

## PISA 2003 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment

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MONITORING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

### WHAT IS PISA?

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- The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international assessment of the skills and knowledge of 15-year olds. PISA is a project of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- Participating countries work together to produce a student assessment that is valid, relevant and authentic.
- The PISA assessment is carried out in three cycles and assesses skills in three areas: Reading, Mathematics and Science.
- The first cycle, in which the main focus was on Reading literacy, took place in 2000. In 2003, the main focus is on Mathematical literacy. In 2006, it is on Scientific literacy.
- The assessment domains are defined in a framework document. The framework describes content, processes and contexts of each domain.
- In each cycle, samples of between 4,000 and 10,000 students are assessed in each country.

### WHICH COUNTRIES ARE PARTICIPATING IN PISA?

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The following 48 countries are participating in PISA 2003:

<i>Albania*</i>	Iceland	Rep. of Korea
<i>Argentina*</i>	<i>Indonesia*</i>	Russian Federation*
Australia	Ireland	<i>Serbian Rep. of</i>
Austria	<i>Israel*</i>	<i>Yugoslavia*</i>
Belgium	Italy	<i>Slovak Rep.</i>
Brazil*	Japan	Spain
<i>Bulgaria*</i>	Latvia*	Sweden
Canada	<i>Liechtenstein*</i>	Switzerland
China*	<i>Lithuania*</i>	<i>Thailand*</i>
Czech Republic	Luxembourg	The Netherlands
Denmark	<i>Macedonia*</i>	<i>Turkey</i>
Finland	Mexico	United Kingdom
France	New Zealand	United States
Germany	Norway	
Greece	<i>Peru*</i>	*Non-OECD members.
<i>Hong Kong*</i>	Poland	Countries joining PISA
Hungary	Portugal	after 2000 are
	<i>Romania</i>	italicised.

### WHO IS IMPLEMENTING PISA?

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- PISA is implemented through an international consortium of institutions. The lead institution is the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).
- Key decisions are made by the Board of Participating Countries (BPC). Each country has a representative on this Board.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF PISA IN IRELAND

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- In Ireland, the Educational Research Centre (ERC) and the Department of Education and Science are jointly implementing the project.
- Policy decisions are made by the National Advisory Committee, consisting of:

Carl Ó Dálaigh	(Dept of Education and Science, Committee Chair)
Judith Cosgrove	(ERC, PISA National Project Manager)
Amy Kelly	(ERC)
Declan Kennedy	(University College, Cork)
Bill Lynch	(National Council for Curriculum and Assessment)
Tom Mullins	(University College, Cork)
Elizabeth Oldham	(Trinity College, Dublin)
Gerry Shiel	(ERC, PISA BPC)
Nick Sofroniou	(ERC)

- Other partners are kept informed of PISA activities through regular correspondence.
- In March 2003, it is planned to assess 5,000 15-year olds in a representative sample of about 150 schools in Ireland. Both schools and students will be randomly selected.
- Feedback on the performance of individual schools participating in PISA will be available.

## WHY IS PISA IMPORTANT?

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- PISA's primary focus is on important public policy issues such as:
  - *The extent to which the education system is preparing young adults for full participation in society*
  - *The influence of student home background and the quality of school resources on achievement*
  - *Effects of instructional processes on student outcomes in mathematics*
- Because there are three planned PISA assessments, the first of which took place in 2000, PISA is also capable of monitoring trends in a country over time.
- Previous international assessments have concentrated on "curricular" knowledge. PISA aims to assess students' performance on "real-life" tasks.

## PISA 2003 ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

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- Students will be assessed in their schools on a specified day and will be asked to complete the following written tasks:
  - The PISA Assessment* assesses student achievement in Mathematics, Reading, Science and/or cross-curricular Problem-Solving. Each student receives one of a number of booklets at random.  
*Duration: approximately 2 hours.*
  - The PISA Student Questionnaire*, which asks students about their backgrounds, attitudes to mathematics, learning strategies, educational and occupational aspirations, and familiarity with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).  
*Duration: approximately 45 minutes.*
- Principals of participating schools will be asked to complete a short *School Questionnaire* about school resources and school organisation.
- Teachers of mathematics in participating schools will be invited to complete a *Teacher Questionnaire* concerning instructional practices, availability of mathematics resources and implementation of the revised Junior Certificate mathematics syllabus.

## HOW WILL PISA RESULTS BE REPORTED?

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- A first international report, which presents the overall initial results for PISA 2000, was published by the OECD in December, 2001.
- A national report, which describes results for PISA 2000 for Ireland in more detail, was published by the Educational Research Centre in December, 2001.
- The OECD plans to publish a series of thematic reports, offering detailed treatment of specific topics.

- Results of PISA 2000 are also summarised on the PISA website which is located at [www.pisa.oecd.org](http://www.pisa.oecd.org) and on the ERC website at [www.erc.ie/pisa](http://www.erc.ie/pisa).
- First results for PISA 2003 will be published in December 2004.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION ON PISA**

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### *PISA activities in Ireland:*

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### *PISA's international activities:*

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## **PISA PUBLICATIONS**

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### *Irish Publications:*

*Ready for Life? The Literacy Achievements of Irish 15-Year Olds with Comparative International Data* [ISBN 0-900440-09-0] provides a detailed interpretation of the performance of Irish students in the PISA assessment and considers how the outcomes might contribute to the development of educational policy in Ireland.

Order forms are available online at [www.erc.ie/pisa](http://www.erc.ie/pisa)  
Cost €15 (Ireland) €21.50 (outside Ireland) inc. postage.

*Ready for Life? The Literacy Achievements of Irish 15-Year Olds with Comparative International Data – Summary Report* [ISBN 0-900440-11-2] consists of a 32-page summary of the national report for PISA 2000 presenting the key findings, conclusions and implications.  
Available online at [www.erc.ie/pisa](http://www.erc.ie/pisa)

### *International Publications:*

*Knowledge and Skills for Life: First Results of PISA 2000* [ISBN 92-64-19671-4] is the international report produced by the OECD which presents a more broadly focused discussion of the international findings of PISA 2000. There is also a summary report available.  
Summary and underlying data available online at [www.pisa.oecd.org](http://www.pisa.oecd.org)

*Measuring Student Knowledge and Skills: A new framework for assessment* [ISBN 92-64-17053-7] details the conceptual framework underlying the PISA assessment and describes each domain in detail.

*Sample Tasks from the PISA 2000 Assessment* [ISBN 92-64-19765-6] describes the instruments used in PISA 2000, presents a range sample of tasks and explains how students' answers were scored.

All OECD publications can be ordered online at [www.SourceOECD.org](http://www.SourceOECD.org)