

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

PISA is a project of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which assesses the skills and knowledge of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science. The Educational Research Centre implements the project in Ireland on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills.

Sixty-seven countries will participate in PISA 2012, including all 34 OECD members and 33 'partner' countries. Participating countries work together to produce a student assessment that is valid, relevant and authentic.

<i>Albania</i>	Estonia	<i>Latvia</i>	<i>Serbia</i>
<i>Argentina</i>	Finland	<i>Liechtenstein</i>	<i>Singapore</i>
Australia	France	<i>Lithuania</i>	Slovak Republic
Austria	<i>Georgia</i>	Luxembourg	Slovenia
Belgium	Germany	<i>Macao-China</i>	Spain
<i>Brazil</i>	Greece	<i>Malaysia</i>	Sweden
<i>Bulgaria</i>	<i>Hong Kong-China</i>	Mexico	Switzerland
Canada	Hungary	<i>Montenegro</i>	<i>Thailand</i>
Chile	Iceland	Netherlands	<i>Trinidad and Tobago</i>
<i>China (Shanghai)</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>	New Zealand	<i>Tunisia</i>
<i>Chinese Taipei</i>	Ireland	Norway	Turkey
<i>Colombia</i>	Israel	<i>Peru</i>	<i>United Arab Emirates</i>
<i>Costa Rica</i>	Italy	Poland	United Kingdom
<i>Croatia</i>	Japan	Portugal	United States
<i>Cyprus</i>	<i>Jordan</i>	<i>Qatar</i>	<i>Uruguay</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Kazakhstan</i>	<i>Romania</i>	<i>Vietnam</i>
Denmark	Republic of Korea	<i>Russian Federation</i>	

Partner countries are in italics

PISA takes place every three years. In each cycle, one subject becomes the main focus, or 'major domain', of the assessment and the other subject areas are assessed as 'minor domains'.

Year	Major domain	Minor domains
2000	Reading	Mathematics, Science
2003	Mathematics	Reading, Science, Problem-solving
2006	Science	Reading, Mathematics
2009	Reading	Mathematics, Science
2012	Mathematics	Reading, Science, Problem-solving

WHAT IS NEW ABOUT PISA 2012?

Mathematics will be the major focus of the assessment for the first time since 2003, allowing an in-depth examination of students' performance across a wide range of content areas and competencies, as well as changes in performance since 2003.

Also, a Computer Based Assessment of mathematics, problem solving and reading will be implemented for the first time in some participating countries in 2012. The computer-based assessment will add value to the paper-based assessment by including novel items that cannot be assessed using a paper-based test. The computer-based assessment will also allow us a greater opportunity to explore the manner in which students respond to test questions.

The paper-based assessment will last a total of 3 ½ hours, including breaks.

The computer-based assessment will take place after the paper-based assessment and will last approximately 1 ½ hours, including setup.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATING IN PISA INVOLVE?

In March 2012, it is planned to assess 6,500 15-year-olds in a representative sample of about 190 schools in Ireland. Both schools and students will be randomly selected.

Students will be assessed in their schools on a specified day by trained test administrators. Students will be asked to complete the following tasks:

The PISA 2012 test: This is a written test which assesses student performance in reading, mathematics and science. *Duration: approximately 2 hours.*

The PISA 2012 student questionnaire: This asks students about their backgrounds, learning environment, beliefs and attitudes towards mathematics, strategies used when studying mathematics and solving mathematical problems, educational and occupational aspirations, and familiarity and engagement with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). *Duration: approximately 45 minutes.*

The PISA 2012 Computer Based Assessment of Literacies (CBAL): A subsample of up to 18 students in each school who have participated in the paper-based assessment will also be invited to respond to an assessment of reading, mathematics and problem-solving on a computer. *Duration: approximately 1 hour.*

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 national **teacher questionnaire** concerning instructional practices, the implementation of Project Maths, and teaching mathematics in Transition Year.

All information collected in the survey is treated as confidential and it is not possible to identify individual students, teachers or schools in the database constructed following the study.

WHY SHOULD SCHOOLS PARTICIPATE IN PISA?

PISA is considered to be an important and worthwhile study and is frequently referred to by policy makers to identify areas of the education system that can be improved. It provides information on the extent to which the Irish education system is preparing young adults for full participation in work and society and on the nature and extent of associations between school and student characteristics and performance outcomes. PISA allows a comparison of the performance of Irish students with that of students in other countries and is used to monitor trends in achievement over time.

As students who are selected to participate in PISA are representing their country it is important that they try their very best in the assessment. PISA outcomes are also used by agencies such as the IDA to attract jobs to Ireland.

For further information on PISA contact:

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<http://www.erc.ie/pisa>
<http://www.pisa.oecd.org>

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

The OECD plans to release an international report on PISA 2012 in December 2013. A summary national report for Ireland will also be published at this time, while a full report will be published in 2014.

Reports for the first four PISA cycles are available at <http://www.erc.ie/pisa> (national reports) and at <http://www.pisa.oecd.org/> (OECD reports).