



# Information for Students

PISA Main Study – March 2015

OECD Programme for International Student Assessment

## What is PISA?

PISA is an international study of the knowledge and skills of students aged 15 and 16 in three areas – science, reading and maths. It takes place every three years. About 70 countries take part, including Ireland. This is the first time that PISA will be administered entirely on computer in most participating countries, including Ireland. The Educational Research Centre (ERC) is carrying PISA out in Ireland on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills.

## How was I chosen?

You were chosen at random!

First, we picked 169 schools at random. For each school, we made a list of all students born in 1999. Then, up to 42 students were chosen at random from this list.

## What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to take a test and complete a questionnaire in your school on a day in March, and you should be finished by lunchtime. Inspectors of the Department of Education and Skills and other staff from the ERC will administer PISA. Computers will be supplied for the assessment.

The assessment will involve:

- A PISA computer-based test of science, reading and mathematics (2 hours)
- A computer-based questionnaire (50 minutes).

You are encouraged to bring a pen/pencil and calculator, and, in case you finish early, reading material (but not anything to do with maths or science).

**You don't need to prepare in advance for PISA, and you don't need to be studying science in school, either. There is a practice session before the test begins.**

**However, if you would like to look at sample test items, please visit [www.erc.ie/pisainfo](http://www.erc.ie/pisainfo).**

## Where do the PISA tests and questionnaires come from?

The tests were put together by experts in many of the PISA countries. The PISA tests are not based on school subjects – they look at 'real-life' situations that you might come across as a young adult. You should be able to complete the assessment, even if you do not currently study science in school.

The questionnaires ask about your family and home background, how and when you learn, what you think about science, your health and well-being, what you plan to do in the future, and your views on computers, smartphones, and the Internet.

### **Will anyone see my results?**

No. The tests and questionnaires are totally confidential. When you finish the assessment, the data from the test and the questionnaires collected on laptops are sent to the ERC. We then build a database of results, where you are only identified by a number. We *never* give information on individuals to others – not schools, teachers or parents. Your results will be combined with the results of other students to compare students in Ireland as a group with students in the other 70 or so countries.

### **How are the results reported?**

The OECD will publish *international results in December 2016*. The ERC will publish *national results in December 2016* also. The results will be available online.

At around the same time, your school will receive a report of how it compares with the other schools in Ireland, but this report will not include the results of individual students.

### **Why take part?**

PISA is important. It helps us to find ways to improve our education system. We use the information to find out how students in Ireland compare with students in other countries. We also use the results to find out how well our education system is preparing students for life after school.

### **Where can I find out more about PISA?**

Visit the **PISA website** for Ireland at [www.erc.ie/pisa](http://www.erc.ie/pisa)

International results and reports are at the international PISA website at [www.pisa.oecd.org](http://www.pisa.oecd.org).

If you have questions about PISA in your school you should contact your school principal.

If you have more general questions, please contact the Educational Research Centre:

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**Thanks for your support for PISA!**