

Note on data sources and terms:

A main source of data reported in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2019* and in the National Report on Schooling data portal is the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (non-finance). The NSSC includes statistics on students, schools, and staff involved in the provision or administration of primary and secondary education, in government and non-government schools, for all Australian states and territories. The School Census date for the collection, for all states and territories and all school sectors (affiliations), is the first Friday in August each year.

The NSSC is a joint undertaking of the Australian state and territory government departments of education, the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) on behalf of education ministers.

Data for government schools is submitted to the ABS by state and territory departments of education.

Data for non-government schools in all states and territories is collected by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment and a subset is provided to the ABS for the NSSC.

Data from the collection is published by the ABS in [Schools, Australia](#) (cat. no. 4221.0). Definitions of terms in this glossary are, for the most part, quoted or adapted from the *Schools, Australia* glossary and explanatory notes.

Other major data sources for the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2019* and the National Report on Schooling data portal include the National Student Attendance Data collection (ACARA); the Survey of Education and Work (ABS); the Census of Population and Housing (ABS); Australian Demographic Statistics (ABS); the NSSC (finance) collection (states and territories); National Assessment Program (NAP) national reports (ACARA) and National VET Provider and National VET in Schools collections (National Centre for Vocational Education Research – NCVER).

Accrual accounting

A recording method in which revenues, expenses, lending and borrowing are recorded as they are earned, accrued or incurred regardless of when payment is made or received.

Apparent retention rate

An indicative measure of student progression through secondary school. An apparent retention rate is a measure of the proportion of full-time school students who have stayed at school for a designated calendar year and year level. It is calculated by dividing the number of students in a cohort in a specific calendar year by the number of students in the same cohort in a previous year and is expressed as a percentage. For example, an apparent retention rate from Year 10 to 12 in 2019 measures the proportion of Year 10 students in 2017 that continued to Year 12 in 2019.

From 2015 onwards, the ABS has released rates tables in two formats, one with rates exceeding 100 per cent capped to a maximum value of 100.0 (capped), and one where rates exceeding 100 per cent continue to be reported as the raw calculated value (uncapped). This report continues to report uncapped rates for apparent retention.

See [Schools, Australia](#) explanatory notes for further information.

Attendance

The National Student Attendance Data Collection is conducted by ACARA for Semester 1 of each school year. Data is collected for full-time students in Years 1–10 (including ungraded secondary). Data is

provided to ACARA by state and territory education departments for government schools and by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment for non-government schools.

The attendance rate is defined as the number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1–10 in Semester 1 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended in Semester 1.

The attendance level is defined as the proportion of full-time students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to or greater than 90 per cent.

Specifications for the collection are provided in the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#).

Capital expenditure

Expenditure by a school or school system to purchase or improve land, buildings and other capital assets/equipment.

Census of Population and Housing

Australia's largest statistical collection undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The Census of Population and Housing is conducted every five years. The aim of the census is to accurately collect data on the key characteristics of people in Australia on census night and the dwellings in which they live. In 2016, the census counted 9.9 million dwellings and approximately 23.5 million people. The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019* specifies the use of census data to report on a number of key performance measures for census years.

Estimated resident population (ERP)

The estimated resident population (ERP) series is used as a denominator to calculate students as a proportion of the population. The ERP is an estimate of the population of Australia, based on data from the ABS Census of Population and Housing, and is updated quarterly using information on births, deaths, and overseas and interstate migration provided by state, territory and Australian government departments. For further details see ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, [Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2019](#).

Full-time equivalent (FTE) students

The full-time equivalent (FTE) value of students is a measure used for resourcing/funding purposes. It is calculated by adding the number of full-time students and the FTE value of part-time students.

A full-time student is one who undertakes the prescribed minimum workload required to complete a given year level in a calendar year. This may vary between states and territories and from year to year. A part-time student is one who undertakes a workload less than that prescribed as full-time. Methods for estimating the FTE value of part-time students vary between states and territories due to different policy and administrative arrangements. The recorded FTE value for each student is capped at 1.

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios are calculated by dividing the FTE student number by the FTE teaching staff number. Student–teacher ratios are an indicator of the level of staffing resources used; they should not be used as a measure of class size. They do not include teacher aides and other non-teaching staff who may also assist in the delivery of school education.

Full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff

The full-time equivalent (FTE) value of teaching staff is a measure of the level of staffing resources. Staff who are employed full-time and engaged solely on activities that fall within the scope of the NSSC have an FTE value of 1.0. All FTE values are rounded to one decimal place.

For staff not employed on a full-time basis, and/or engaged in a combination of in-scope and out-of-scope activities, the FTE value is calculated on the basis of the proportion of time spent on in-scope activities compared with staff who would be considered full-time.

The FTE value of teaching staff is calculated by adding the number of full-time teaching staff and the FTE value of part-time teaching staff.

Indigenous status

For the purposes of the NSSC, a student is classified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, based on information provided by the student, or their parent/guardian, on the school enrolment form. The Melbourne Declaration uses the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This report uses both the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander', and 'Indigenous' to describe students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, with 'Indigenous' or 'Indigenous status' used in tables and graphs.

Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019](#), as agreed by education ministers, provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling in 2019, and is the main focus of the statistical data included in this report.

The measurement framework defines national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, specifies the data sources for these KPMs and outlines the reporting cycle for the period 2019–2023.

The framework is maintained by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of Education Council and is published on the ACARA website. It is periodically revised by ACARA in consultation with jurisdictions and sectors.

National Assessment Program (NAP)

The National Assessment Program (NAP), as specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019*, encompasses all assessments endorsed by education ministers for participation by students nationally:

- National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) – annual, full student cohort literacy and numeracy assessments in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9
- NAP sample assessments – triennial domestic sample student population assessments in science literacy (Years 6 and 10), information and communication technology literacy (Years 6 and 10) and civics and citizenship (Years 6 and 10)
- Australia's participation in international sample student population assessments: the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

ACARA is delegated to manage the development and oversee the delivery of assessments and reporting for NAPLAN, and for domestic NAP sample assessments, as directed by Education Council. PISA is

conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). TIMSS and PIRLS are conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

National Schools Statistics Collection

The scope of the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) consists of all establishments that have as their major activity the administration or provision of full-time day primary, secondary and/or special education, or primary or secondary education by distance education. The statistics in the NSSC do not include students engaged in school-level education conducted by other institutions; in particular, technical and further education (TAFE) establishments, except where this is part of a school program, such as VET delivered to secondary students.

The NSSC consists of government and non-government statistics. Government statistics comprise all establishments (as defined), administered by departments of education under directors-general of education (or equivalent) in each state or territory. Non-government statistics comprise all such establishments not administered by departments of education.

The two sections of the NSSC are:

- non-finance statistics (numbers of schools, students and staff) collected for both government and non-government schools and published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in its annual *Schools, Australia* (Cat. No. 4221.0) publication
- finance statistics (expenditure on salaries and non-salary costs) collected for government school systems only and published by ACARA in this report and in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Primary education

See *School level and school year*.

Recurrent funding

Annual funding provided to schools/school systems for expenditure relating to ongoing operating costs of the school (for example, teaching and non-teaching staff salaries, school operating costs).

School

A school is an education establishment that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- Its major activity is the provision of full-time day primary or secondary education or the provision of primary or secondary distance education.
- It is headed by a principal (or equivalent) responsible for its internal operation
- It is possible for students to enrol and be active in a course of study for a minimum of four continuous weeks, excluding breaks for school vacations.

The term 'school' in this publication includes schools in institutions and hospitals, mission schools and similar establishments.

The term 'school' in this publication excludes preschools, early learning or long-day care centres, senior technical and agricultural colleges, evening schools, continuation classes and institutions such as business or coaching colleges.

Multi-campus arrangements are counted as one school. Changes to school counts in this publication can occur when multiple schools amalgamate into a single multi-campus school, or multi-campus schools divide into separate schools.

School level and school year

All states and territories provide for 13 years of formal school education. Typically, schooling commences at age five, is compulsory from age six until at least the completion of Year 10, and is completed at age 17 or 18. Primary education, including a pre-Year 1/Foundation Year lasts for either seven or eight years and is followed by secondary education of six or five years respectively.

For national reporting purposes, primary education comprises a Foundation year followed by Years 1–6 in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. Primary education generally comprises a Foundation year followed by Years 1–7 in South Australia.

Junior secondary education includes the years from commencement of secondary schooling to Year 10, including ungraded secondary.

Senior secondary education comprises Years 11 and 12 in all states and territories.

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'school level' are 'primary' and 'secondary'. In some tables, the categories 'primary', 'junior secondary', 'senior secondary' and 'total secondary' are used.

Students attending special schools are allocated to either primary or secondary education on the basis of school year or school level, where identified. Where a school year or school level is not identified, students are allocated to primary or secondary level of education according to the typical age level in each state or territory.

The Foundation Year (first year of full-time schooling) is known as Preparatory in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania, Kindergarten in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, Reception in South Australia, Pre-primary in Western Australia and Transition in the Northern Territory. In some jurisdictions, part-time programs that precede the Foundation Year are conducted in primary schools (for example, Kindergarten in Western Australia). However, these programs are outside the scope of the NSSC and of data sets included in this report.

Year 7 became part of secondary education in Queensland and Western Australia from 2015. This change affects some comparisons with previous years of student and staff data by school level.

The structure of schooling for some non-government schools in South Australia changed in 2019, with year 7 becoming the first year of secondary school.

See also *Special school*.

Schools, Australia uses the term 'grade' to denote school year. Ungraded students (ungraded primary and ungraded secondary) are those who have not been placed in a specific year level.

See also *School type*.

School sector

This report and the National Report on Schooling data portal use the term 'school sector' to distinguish between government schools, which are established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments, and non-government schools, usually with some religious affiliation, which are established and operated under conditions determined by state and territory governments through their registration authorities.

'School sector' is also used to further distinguish between non-government schools as Catholic or independent. Catholic schools make up the largest group of non-government schools. Independent schools may be associated with other religions, other denominations, particular educational philosophies, or operate as single entities.

Schools, Australia uses the term 'affiliation' rather than the term 'school sector' to make these distinctions.

A further distinction is sometimes made between systemic and non-systemic non-government schools. Systemic schools are formally affiliated with a group or system of schools. Non-systemic non-government schools do not belong to a system.

In *Schools, Australia* and in this report, Catholic systemic and non-systemic schools are counted as 'Catholic'.

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'school sector' are 'government', 'Catholic' and 'independent'. In some tables, the category 'total non-government' (total of Catholic and independent data) is also used.

Exception: For the purposes of financial reporting in part 1.5.6, based on data drawn from the *My School* data collection, a number of Catholic non-systemic schools in NSW, SA and WA are counted as 'independent'. Government funding for these schools is distributed directly to the schools rather than through Catholic school system authorities. This affects comparisons between school sectors for those states and nationally. Financial data reported in part 1.5.6 should not be compared with financial data included elsewhere in this report.

School type

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'school type' are:

- 'primary' – school delivers primary education
- 'secondary' – school delivers secondary education
- 'combined' – school delivers both primary and secondary education
- 'special' – students may include primary students, secondary students, ungraded students or a combination of primary, secondary and ungraded students.

See also *Special school*.

Secondary education

See *School level and school year*.

Senior secondary certificate of education

Senior secondary certificates of education (SSCEs) are Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications issued by the curriculum, assessment and certification authority in each state and territory to students meeting the requirements for successful completion of secondary schooling. These have different titles in each jurisdiction:

New South Wales

Higher School Certificate (HSC)

Victoria

Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

Queensland	Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)
South Australia	South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)
Western Australia	Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)
Tasmania	Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE)
Northern Territory	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET)
Australian Capital Territory	Australian Capital Territory Senior Secondary Certificate (ACTSSC)

Special school

A special school satisfies the definition of a school (see *School*, above), and requires one or more of the following characteristics to be exhibited by a student before enrolment is allowed:

- mental or physical disability or impairment
- slow learning ability
- social or emotional problems
- in custody, on remand or in hospital.

Special schools include special assistance schools, as defined under the *Australian Education Act 2013*. These are non-government schools that are:

- likely to be recognised by the state minister as a special assistance school, and
- primarily established to cater for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Staff

Staff are people engaged in the administration and/or provision of day primary, secondary or special school education, or primary or secondary education by distance education at in-scope education establishments.

The functional categories for school staff are as follows:

- Teaching staff are employees who spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students either by direct class contact or on an individual basis, and are engaged to impart school curriculum. For the purposes of this report, teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, campus principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration.
- Specialist support staff are employees who perform functions to support students or teaching staff. While these staff may spend the majority of their time in contact with students, they are not employed or engaged to impart the school curriculum.
- Administrative and clerical staff are employees whose main duties are generally of a clerical/administrative nature. Teacher aides and assistants are included in this category, as they are seen to provide services to teaching staff rather than directly to students.
- Building operations, general maintenance and other staff are employees involved in the maintenance of buildings and grounds. Also included are staff providing associated technical

services, other janitorial staff and staff who service equipment. School cleaners, whether salaried or employed on contract, are excluded.

For further details on the definition of staff, see [Schools, Australia 2019, Glossary](#).

States and territories

Australia has a federal system of government comprising the national government, and the governments of the six states and two territories. In this report, the national government is generally referred to as 'the Australian Government'. In tables and graphs in this report and the National Report on Schooling data portal, states and territories are listed in the order of New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic.), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas.), the Northern Territory (NT) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). This is the order used in ABS publications, including *Schools, Australia*.

Student

A student is a person who, on the School Census date, is formally enrolled at a school and is active in a primary, secondary and/or special education program at that school. Students may be enrolled at more than one school; however, jurisdictions employ strategies that ensure that, as far as possible, students are reported only once in this collection.

Students not present at a school on the NSSC census date are included as students if they were expected to be absent for less than four continuous weeks (excluding school vacations).

School students undertaking vocational education and training (VET) (including through TAFE), school-based apprenticeships or traineeships, work placements or tertiary extension studies as a part of the student's school enrolment are in scope for the NSSC. The workload of these subjects/programs (which may take place outside the school premises) is included in a student's aggregate workload to determine whether a student is classified as full-time or part-time, and in calculating the full-time equivalent for part-time students.

Student attendance

see *Attendance*

Survey of Education and Work

The Survey of Education and Work (SEW), conducted annually by the ABS, provides selected information on participation in education, highest educational attainment, transition from education to work, and current labour force and demographic characteristics for the population aged 15–74 years. Data from Education and Work are used to report participation and attainment data, including key performance measures for schooling, in this report.

See [ABS, Category 6227.0, Education and Work, May 2019](#), explanatory notes for further information.

Teaching staff

Teaching staff are staff who spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students either by direct class contact or on an individual basis, and are engaged to impart school curriculum.

For the purposes of this report, teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, campus principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration. Teacher aides and assistants, and specialist support staff are excluded, except assistant teachers working in homeland learning centres and community schools in the Northern Territory.

User cost of capital

In the government budget context, the user cost of capital is usually defined as the opportunity cost of funds tied up in capital assets used to deliver government services.

Capital charging is the actual procedure used for applying this cost of capital to the asset management process. As such, it is a means of representing the cost of capital used in the provision of government budgetary outputs.

VET for secondary students / VET in Schools

Data on vocational education and training delivered to secondary students / VET in Schools was derived from the National VET in Schools Collection and the National VET Provider Collection, compiled by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) under the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS), release 7.0.