Student Background Characteristics Data Collection – Australian Government

Do Schools need to comply?

Yes, under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (Cth).

**Conditions of compliance:**

Schools and school systems must collect student background information as required by State and Territory Education Ministers for the purposes of the National Assessment Program. The nationally comparable data are required to monitor and report on progress towards the achievement of national goals and targets at various points of schooling, and to provide the evidence base to underpin future policy reforms and improvements.

**Background:**

All Australian Education Ministers have agreed that consistent and comparable data are essential to improving the quality and accuracy of national monitoring and reporting of progress towards the achievement of national goals and targets at various points of schooling.

This data can be collected upon enrolment or prior to a student first sitting a National Assessment at their school. Schools are required to collect information for each of the following four student background characteristics:

- sex
- Indigenous status
- socioeconomic background
- language background.

The student background information is linked to students' results in the various components of the National Assessment Program (NAP).

**If you have to comply, what do you have to do?**

1. **Data Collection:**
   The information is collected using a nationally agreed questionnaire, and then stored in the school's administrative system. It is provided in a specific technical format prior to a student undertaking a National Assessment.

   Collect student data using the nationally agreed questionnaire in relation to:

   - Sex
   - Indigenous status
   - Language background
   - LBOTE or non-LBOTE
   - Main language other than English spoken in the home
   - Country of birth
   - Socioeconomic background
   - Parental educational attainment
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- Parental occupation

2. **Data Provision**
   Provide the data prior to a student undertaking a National Assessment. The method of provision of data varies according to the assessment being sat (sample assessment / whole cohort assessment) and advice is provided to schools regarding this from the AISSA office.


**What are the consequences if you don’t comply?**

Independent Schools receive funding from the Australian Government under the Australian Education Act (Cth) subject to conditions which are set out in the Act.

The student background characteristics data collection is a condition under the Act.

**Useful links:**