



Guide to the 2021 Census Post Enumeration Exercise

The annual Census

The annual Non-Government Schools Census (the Census) collects a range of data on students and staff which is used by the Australian Government for both statistical and funding purposes under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act).

Student data submitted via the Census are a major input into the calculations for Commonwealth recurrent school funding. As a result, the Australian Government relies on the accuracy of the Census data to calculate Australian Government funding for non-government schools.

Census PE

The Census Post Enumeration (Census PE) is an annual assurance activity that occurs after every Census collection, using a sample of non-government schools. This exercise focuses on data collected in the previous Census but may review data up to 7 years from its collection as required by the Act. The purpose of the Census PE is to assure the accuracy of Census data for determining recurrent funding and to promote appropriate governance and record-keeping by non-government schools. If you are selected for the Census PE process, you will be formally notified by the Department.

Census PE process overview

Schools that are selected for participation in the Census PE will have their records reviewed by the contractors engaged by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (the Department) to assess the accuracy and validity of the data.

The review may be completed via a physical visit to a school or in some cases, via a “virtual visit”. It is expected that most school visits will take a full day. The Department’s contractor will contact the school to make suitable access arrangements. School visits in 2022 are generally expected to be completed in the coming months, noting that changes to the planned scheduling may be required. The 2021 Census PE process and school visits will be guided by current health guidelines in relation to COVID-19.

Contractors will compare the school’s 2021 Census returns (student data only) against school-based records, including enrolment and attendance records. If the school has more than one campus, this includes a review of the campus documentation. Similarly, if any documentation upon which Census data is based is held at a separate location (such as centralised administration office), the contractors will require this documentation on the day of the visit. Please ensure that all school-based records are located at the single location where the visit will take place.

At the completion of the visit, a school contact officer will be asked to sign a document to acknowledge they have been presented with initial Census PE findings. The contractor will then provide a report to the

Department on its findings and, where discrepancies are found, make recommendations to the Department regarding data adjustments.

Based on the results of the findings detailed in the report, changes to the school's 2021 Census data may be made. Some of these changes may impact on the school's funding entitlement for 2021 and have a flow-on effect to the school's estimated 2022 funding entitlement. The Department may also make contact with the approved authority of the school if there are any clarifications needed.

Validation of documentation

The contractors will require assistance from school staff to gain access to school registers, attendance records, class rolls, documentation relating to students with disability, students on visas, and overseas students (if applicable) and other documentation that will help verify the Census data.

Please ensure all supporting documentation is collated and available for the contractors during the visits.

Nationally consistent collection of data on school students with disability

As of 2018, schools are required to report students with disability in accordance with the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) as part of the Census. The 2021 Census PE process will include a review of the evidence required to report students in NCCD categories.

The contractors will initially validate a random sample of 100 students reported in supplementary, substantial, and extensive adjustment levels. If there are any errors identified in this sample, the contractors will validate the remaining students in these categories. Schools with no errors in that sample will have no further NCCD student data for these categories validated, while schools with fewer than 100 students reported in adjustment levels will have all their students reported in supplementary, substantial, and extensive adjustment levels validated. For those students reported in Quality Differentiated Teaching Practice (QDTP), contractors will validate a 5% random sample. The contractor will advise the QDTP sample to be validated. Schools are required to be able to provide evidence for all students with disability.

As outlined in the 2021 Census Requirements, to report a student in the NCCD categories, there must be evidence the student has been provided with an adjustment/s for a minimum period of 10 weeks of school education (excluding school holiday periods) in the 12 months preceding Census Day, to address the functional impact of a disability. This can include evidence of adjustments provided at previous schools, as long as it is from within the 12 months prior to Census Day. The 2021 Census Requirements can be accessed on SchoolsHUB, within the Non-government schools Census section.

The adjustment(s) provided:

- may vary from infrequent or occasional (e.g. for a specific class or activity) through to all day, or every day of the week;
- do not need to take place each and every day over the 10 weeks;
- may comprise weeks that are not consecutive and may be split across school terms; and
- may include time when a student is participating in a school-based activity during holidays (e.g. a camp, excursion) where the school is providing adjustments.

The contractors will verify that the school has appropriate evidence to confirm if the student meets the following criteria:

- the student meets the 2021 Census eligibility criteria and has been reported in the 2021 Census;
- the student has a disability as defined in appendix 4 of the [2021 NCCD Guidelines](#);
- the student has been provided with an adjustment(s) for a minimum of ten weeks of school education (in the 12 months leading up to and including Census Day) to address the functional impact of a disability; and

- the student's inclusion in the NCCD is supported by appropriate documentary evidence that is held by the school.

Appropriate documentary evidence includes evidence in four general areas:

- assessed individual needs of the student;
- adjustments being provided to the student to address their assessed needs associated with disability (including QDTP);
- ongoing monitoring and review of the adjustments; and
- consultation and collaboration with the student and/or parents, guardians or carers, or associates.

Authority to access premises and records

The Department's contractors will have authority to access to school premises, information and records under sections 33, 39 and 39A of the *Australian Education Regulation* (2013) for the purpose of reviewing a school's Census reporting information.

COVID-19 school visit considerations

It is expected that all contractor staff who conduct school site visits fully meet the requirements set out for travelling to and entering school grounds and facilities, as set out by the relevant state or territory jurisdiction in which the school is located.

The Department expects that school visits will be conducted on-site as normal. "Virtual" visits will be considered in the event a school visit is impacted by COVID-19, or the school area or state or territory authorities have quarantine measures or regulations (e.g. a no visitor policy) in place. Virtual visits will be considered in these situations, in consultation with the school. Contractors need to be assured that it is feasible to conduct the Census PE process in this manner, for example, internet access and review of electronic records of documents.

In the event of a virtual visit, the Department's contractors are likely to adopt the following approach:

- conduct the 2021 Post Enumeration Exercise remotely via teleconferencing or videoconference facilities and email;
- have all supporting documentation scanned and submitted by the school through a secure file sharing facility;
- hold a commencement meeting of the scheduled school visit via teleconference or videoconference with the contractor;
- hold a subsequent teleconference/videoconference to discuss any identified issues; and
- hold an exit teleconference/videoconference with the school to communicate any errors or adjustments.

Reporting students learning remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions

The Department will inform its contractors which states and territories had public health restrictions in place that resulted in school closures during the Census Reference Period in 2020.

If you have any questions on the 2021 Census PE exercise, please contact the Department via email to education-schoolspostenumeration@dese.gov.au.