



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

2021 Non-government Schools Census Post Enumeration (Census PE) Exercise

School Briefing, March 2022

Financial Assurance and Compliance Team

School Assurance Branch



Presentation



About us



Our assurance framework



What is the Census PE?

- Context
- Timeline



What happens on the day of the Census PE visit?

- What evidence is being sighted by the Department's contractors?

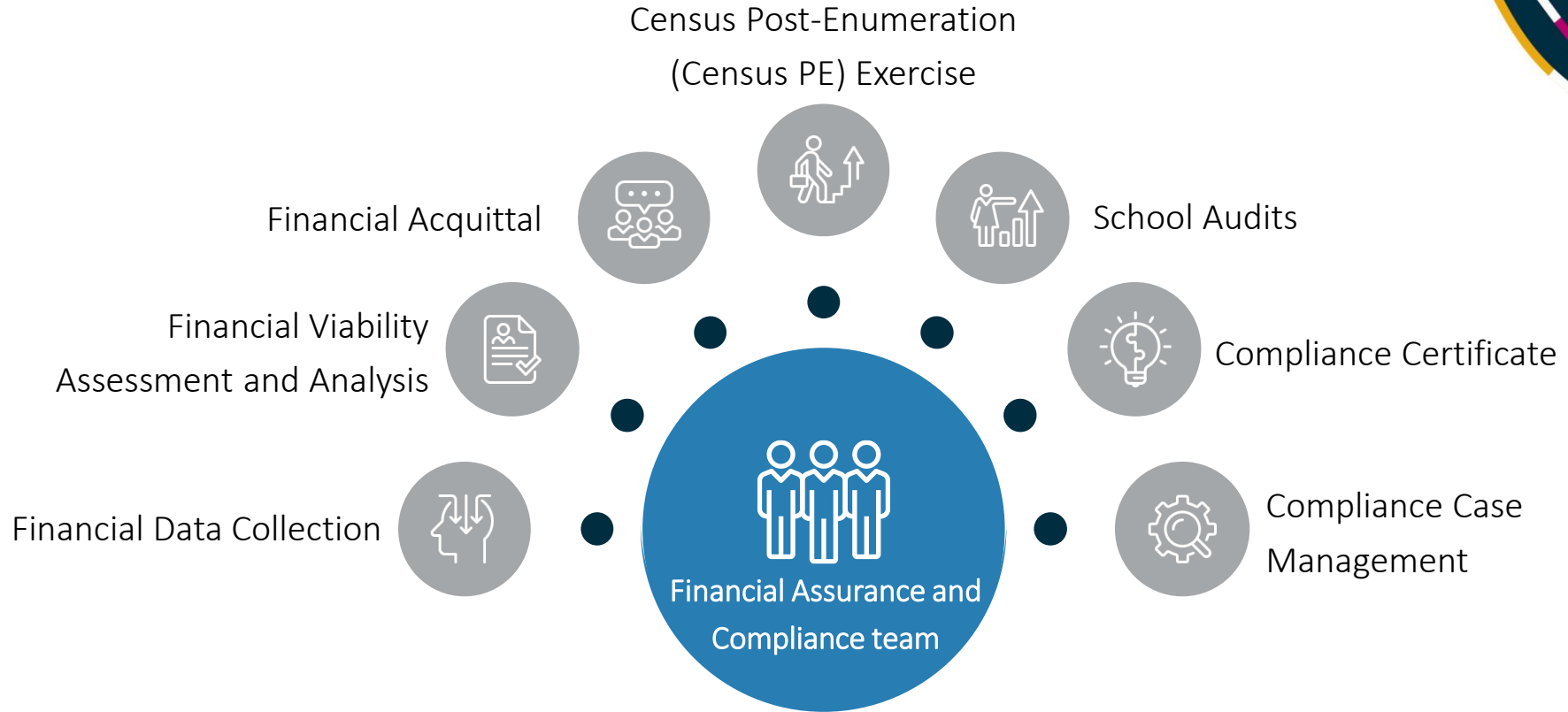


Key changes to the 2021 Census PE



We are here to help you

About us



These activities relate to Australian Government school funding appropriated under the *Australian Education Act 2013* and conditions outlined in the *Australian Education Regulation 2013*.



Schools Funding Assurance Framework

- Published in September 2019
- Provides overview of the Department's approach to managing risk of error, non-compliance and fraud in respect to Australian Government funding for school education and includes:
 - working with school sector to support Approved Authorities to become and remain compliant; and
 - Undertaking assurance activities to identify non-compliance
- Outlines how the Department will respond when Approved Authorities are not meeting their requirements
- The Department undertakes a range of assurance and compliance activities, communicates to Approved Authorities that their reporting of financial and student data may be subject to verification process

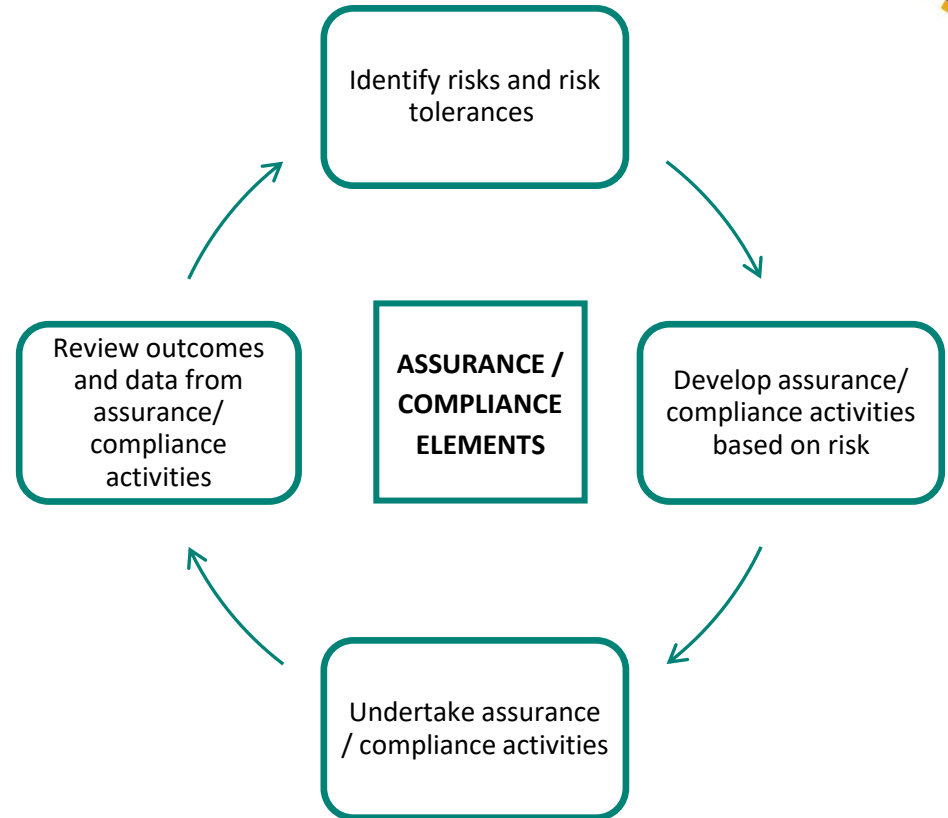


What is the Census PE?

- The Department conducts a Census of non-government schools in August each year (count of students and their characteristics)
- One of the key assurance activities undertaken by the Financial Assurance and Compliance Team is the Census PE Exercise
- The purpose of the Census PE is to validate whether the Census information provided by schools is accurate, complete and reliable, and to ensure that the Census count process has integrity
- The Census PE is also the way the Department measures the accuracy of recurrent funding payments, with the outcomes reported to the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)

The Census PE and the Assurance Framework

- The Census PE exercise is conducted according to the Schools Funding Assurance Framework
- Outlines how the Department's assurance activities are to be underpinned by a risk-based approach to monitoring compliance





Census PE scrutiny

The Census PE process is examined as part of the ANAO's annual audit of the Department's financial statements

Table to right shows net overpayment (over and under payments) of about \$20m to \$30m (from about \$13b in funding)

Table 2.2: Payment errors identified in the post-enumeration exercise 2017–2019

Errors identified in random sample				National error estimate (extrapolated from sample)	
School year	Selected schools	Schools with error	Net overpayment (\$m)	Error rate	Net overpayment (\$m)
2019	168	53	1.1	0.17	20.2
2018	181	78	2.1	0.27	30.7
2017	194	67	1.3	0.19	20.4

Source: ANAO audited financial statements data.

Timeline of the Census PE process



Why is your school in the Census PE?

- The Department conducts the Census PE exercise to gain assurance on non-government schools census data
 - A sample of schools is selected comprising: a randomly selected group of schools; and a group of targeted schools
 - The Department engages contractors to visit the selected schools and verify the Census information by examining supporting documentation
 - All contractors will be required to undertake Disability Awareness training, Fraud and Conflict of Interest training, Indigenous Cultural Appreciation training, and Cultural Competence training prior to commencing school visits
- When discrepancies are identified, funding allocations are re-calculated and payments are adjusted appropriately for the relevant schools.



The role of Census PE contractors

- For the 2021 Census PE, about 250 school site visits will take place across Australia
- Contractors will review and assess a variety of school documentation to verify students' eligibility for inclusion in the Census against the schools' Census data and recommend adjustments, which are then assessed by the Department
 - **Contractors do not judge the quality of the information provided, only whether or not it supports student inclusion in the Census**
- Contractors are expected to give schools at least 2 weeks notice of school visits, and in-person visits are expected to take a full day for most schools

What happens on the day of the Census PE visit?

Contractor organises day to visit school

They will arrive in the morning; most visits will take a whole day

Step 1



Step 2

Contractor will seek access to school data

They will compare this to the data in the original Census submission

Contractor will sight evidence for students at the school

They will ask questions regarding any discrepancies in the data

Step 3



Step 4

Contractor will note any changes to Census data

Contractor will submit recommendations to the Department in a report. School representative will note the recommendations and sign the Declaration*

**Note that the contractor's report is a recommendation to the Department, who make the final decision. The school has the right to provide an alternative view to that of the contractor. What the school signs at the end of the Census PE is an acknowledgment that they understand what recommendations the contractor is making to the Department – not that they agree with the contractor's recommendations.*

Example School Declaration



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment
2021 Census Post Enumeration Exercise - School Declaration

I acknowledge that any amendments to the 2021 Census data for
AGEID:

have been presented to me on:

(insert date above)

Full-time Student Adjustments for 2021

	Total Students	NCCD - Students with Disability	Indigenous Students	Students on Visas	Overseas Students	NCCD - Overseas Only	Boarding Students	Indigenous Boarders	Distance Education	Indigenous Distance Education
	HC	HC	HC	HC	HC	HC	HC	HC	HC	HC
Original	265	124	242	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adjustments										
Revised										

Part-time Student Adjustments for 2021

	Total Students		NCCD - Students with		Indigenous Students		Students on Visas		Overseas Students		NCCD - Overseas		Boarding Students		Indigenous Boarders		Distance Education		Indigenous Distance Education	
	HC	FTE	HC	FTE	HC	FTE	HC	FTE	HC	FTE	HC	FTE	HC	FTE	HC	FTE	HC	FTE	HC	FTE
Original	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adjustments																				
Revised																				

Signed on behalf of AGEID:
School

Signed on behalf of the Department of Education by:

(Printed name & position of authorised officer)

(Printed name & company of contractor)

(Signature of authorised officer)

(Signature of contractor)



COVID-19 impact on Census PE site visits

- The Department is responsible for providing quality assurance of the Census and a duty of care regarding individual safety
- The 2021 Census PE school visits will be conducted under the same COVID-19 expectations as the 2020 Census PE, including:
 - If a school is operating normally, the Department expects that school visits will be conducted on-site as normal
 - If a school is closed and staff and students have been asked to stay home, then contractors will also be expected to stay away. These schools will be referred to the Department
 - Remote desktop visits are an option if a school is closed due COVID-19 or that external staff are not permitted on the school premises due to COVID-19

Contractors will sight evidence for the following during School Visit

- School details
- Student Count
- Student Ages and Year levels
- Students with Disability (SWD)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students
- Students on a Visa
- Overseas Students
- Boarding Students
- Distance Education Students
- Other student categories
- School feedback to the Department

Sighting Evidence

- All evidence should be collated and prepared by the school prior to school visit, where possible
- Evidence can be kept in a variety of forms (online, paper-based, etc.)
- Contractors require access to the necessary evidence only, and evidence can be redacted/de-identified to show only the relevant information
 - e.g. sighting evidence about NCCD adjustment levels to confirm information reported in the Census
- The Department is administering the Census PE process in line with Australian Privacy Principles
 - Schools are encouraged to de-identify data where possible and contractors are required to provide only de-identified data to the Department



School details

- Departmental contractors will check for any corrections to school name and address
- The Department may follow up on any changes identified

Required from school:

- Current details of the school (or campus) name and location

Student Count



What the contractor will do

Verify total student count, number of full/part-time students enrolled at the school at Census Day.



What evidence we need

Full census data, showing enrolment on Census Day in a year level the school is approved to provide at that location

Data should also show patterns of attendance during the year, particularly during the Census Reference Period



Potential impact on school

Changes to this data may affect funding

Student Ages and Year Levels



What the contractor will do

Validate the accuracy of reported student ages (as at 1 July 2021) and year levels

Verify 20% of all students' ages and year levels reported by that location in the

Census



What evidence we need

Full list of student identifiers, dates of birth, ages at 1 July 2021, and year levels at Census Day



Potential impact on school

Changes to these totals may affect funding

Students with Disability (SwD)

- Contractors will validate that students identified as Students with Disability meet all the requirements of the NCCD Guidelines:
 - The student has a disability (defined in Appendix 4 of the 2021 NCCD Guidelines)
 - The student meets the Census eligibility criteria and has been reported in the school's census for 2021
 - The student has been provided with an adjustment(s) for a minimum period of 10 weeks of school education in the 12 months to Census Day to address the functional impact of a disability
 - Appropriate evidence is held that supports the adjustment level provided
- Contractors will assess the first 100 students with disability in adjustment levels that attract additional loading, only checking any remaining students if errors are identified for any of the first 100 students assessed
- 5% of QDTP* Students with Disability will be assessed

*Quality Differentiated Teaching Practice

Students with Disability cont.

- There must be evidence that:
 - Adjustments were provided for a minimum of 10 weeks* of school education (excluding holiday periods**) in the 12 months to Census Day to address the student's individual needs based on their disability
 - Adjustments provided to the student are being monitored and reviewed, and
 - Consultation and collaboration with the student and/or parents and carers or associates have occurred

Changes in this category may affect funding

*The adjustments provided may comprise weeks that are not consecutive and may be split across school terms – for more information refer to section C.3.1 of the NCCD Guidelines

**Adjustment periods 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 – for more information refer to Section C.2.1 of the NCCD Guidelines

Students with Disability cont.

- Evidence for including a student in the NCCD may reflect a wide range of practices for meeting the educational needs of students with disability
- Evidence should be kept in 4 general areas:
 - assessed individual needs of the student
 - consultation and collaboration with the student and/or parents/guardians/carers/associates
 - that at least 10 weeks of adjustment(s) have been provided to the student to address their assessed individual needs associated with disability and evidence to justify the level reported
 - ongoing monitoring and review of the adjustments
- Evidence to support the NCCD should be drawn from classroom practice already in place to meet the existing obligations set out in the *Disability Discrimination Act* (1992) and *Disability Standards for Education* (2005)
- For further information please refer to the [NCCD Evidence Factsheet](#)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

These students are referred to as Indigenous students for the purpose of the 2021 Census and 2021 Census PE



What the contractor will do

Confirm that reported Indigenous students are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who self-identify as and are accepted by the community in which they live as being of that descent



What evidence we need

Evidence of self-identification as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent; or
Evidence of ABSTUDY eligibility; or
A statement from an Indigenous community organisation



Potential impact on school

Changes in this category may affect funding

Students on a Visa

This category includes both permanent residents and New Zealand citizens



What the contractor will do

Confirm that students on Visas are not Australian citizens.



What evidence we need

Student and/or parental visa information (including subclass number)



Potential impact on school

Changes in this category do not affect funding



**Failure to produce sufficient evidence of Visa subclass may result in the student being counted as an Overseas Student and may result in loss of funding for that student*

Overseas Students

This category is a sub-category of Students on a Visa and all Overseas students are, therefore, considered Students on a Visa for the purpose of the Census



What the contractor will do

Verify the visa subclass held by these students, confirming they hold a visa subclass that classifies them as Overseas students (visa subclasses 500, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575 or a bridging visa attached to one of these provisions)



What evidence we need

Student and/or parental visa information
(including subclass number)



Potential impact on school

Overseas students are unfunded.
Changes in this category may affect funding

Boarding Students



What the contractor will do

Confirm that all Boarding students are accommodated in the school's residential facilities rather than staying with a parent or guardian



What evidence we need

School boarding records to substantiate number of students reported as Boarding Students



Potential impact on school

Changes in this category do not affect funding

Distance Education Students



What the contractor will do

Confirm that these students:
Reside in the State in which the school is located;
Are funded by the State or Territory;
Are receiving distance education from the school;
Are not approved as home education students; and
Are not Overseas Students



What evidence we need

Evidence that the school receives State or Territory funding for students enrolled in, and receiving, Distance Education



Potential impact on school

Changes in this category do not affect funding



Other Student Categories

- Contractors will verify students reported in the below categories in accordance with the requirements outlined on preceding slides
- Remaining categories:
 - Students with Disability Overseas Students;
 - Indigenous Boarding Students; and
 - Indigenous Distance Education Students

Changes in the above categories may affect funding

School feedback to the Department

- Contractors will ask school staff if they have any feedback to the Department related to the Census PE exercise
- There is no requirement to provide feedback, but all comments are welcome and encouraged so that the Department can improve the exercise moving forward
- A short survey (only a few minutes) will be provided to schools later in 2022
- Schools may provide anonymous feedback as part of the survey

Changes to 2021 Census PE

- The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) requirements
- Student Ages and Year Levels

Changes to 2021 Census PE: NCCD Requirements

- Students with Disability recorded in the NCCD must have been provided with an adjustment for a minimum period of 10 weeks of school education in the 12 months to Census Day
- Note that this was reduced to 6 weeks due to COVID-19 for the 2020 Census and has since been returned to the previous 10 week requirement

Changes to 2021 Census PE: Student Ages and Year Levels

- Contractors will no longer be required to report student age and year level changes to the Department unless those changes affect the school's funding entitlement
 - i.e. changes that would move a student between Primary and Secondary education
- Contractors will notify schools of any changes or errors identified for their records

School Support

- Contact Nick Hansen or Asha Chandrashekar with any questions or for assistance with specific issues/enquiries
- Education-SchoolsPostEnumeration@dese.gov.au