

OECD PISA 2025 Main Study in Scotland Information for Schools



www.oecd.org/pisa/
www.nfer.ac.uk/pisa

 **Scottish Government**
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

 **NFER**
National Foundation for
Educational Research

 **OECD**
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

Why is this research important?

The Programme for International Student Assessment, or 'PISA', is the world's biggest international education study, involving students in over 80 education systems including Scotland. It provides an independent international measure of the strengths and weaknesses of education systems and promotes knowledge sharing and learning between countries. Scotland has participated in PISA since 2000. It is our key international benchmark of student performance and, as such, plays a vital part in Scottish education.

PISA represents an opportunity for students to participate in a global study and to contribute directly to government decision making about Scottish education. The results from the PISA 2022 assessments are being used to underpin the Curriculum Improvement Cycle, particularly in mathematics. PISA 2025 has a focus on students' science skills and understanding as well as their attitudes towards science in school and at home, which will be invaluable in the development of STEM policies in Scotland.

What are the benefits of taking part?

- It is an opportunity for your school to contribute to crucial data about the educational context in Scotland.
- It is an opportunity for your students to represent Scotland in an important global study, demonstrating the skills they have developed during their schooling and expressing their viewpoints on a range of educational issues to policy makers in Scotland and across the world.
- It provides students with valuable assessment experience without the need to prepare in advance.
- Following the study, we will provide you with information collected from the student questionnaire to help you build a profile for your school. This may contribute to your ongoing school evaluation on, for instance, student wellbeing and attitudes towards science.
- In recognition of your commitment, we will send you £200 as a thank you for carrying out the preparatory tasks.

How are schools and students chosen to participate in the PISA Main Study?

Following procedures approved by the organisers of the study, we have selected schools to be representative of Scotland in terms of geographical area, school type and prior attainment. Your school is among 121 schools and colleges chosen to represent Scotland. Up to 40 of your students will be randomly selected from students in the eligible age range of 15 years 3 months to 16 years 2 months (S4 and S5 students).

What does the PISA Main Study involve?

The assessments are online and include multiple-choice and open-ended questions on science, reading, mathematics and learning in a digital world. There is no need for any special preparation (although students may find it helpful to familiarise themselves with PISA practice questions beforehand).

Students will also complete an online questionnaire where they have the chance to present their attitudes and experiences. The headteacher (or head of year) will be invited to complete an online school questionnaire outlining the educational context of the school.

How will NFER support your school?

A qualified NFER study administrator will support the school in the organisation of the assessments. The study administrator will bring the necessary materials to the school and run the session. Schools will not need to administer the students' assessments and questionnaires but will need to have a member of staff present in the room.

The Scottish Government and Education Scotland are currently developing further support for schools and students to participate in PISA. This will include resources such as video clips on PISA for participating students and webinars for local authorities and schools. Further information about these resources will be provided early in 2025.

What does your school need to do?

- Nominate a PISA School Coordinator and a PISA IT Coordinator to liaise with NFER.
- Run a diagnostic check (provided to you) of school computers, which need an internet connection to access the assessments.
- Arrange a convenient time, during the assessment window, for the study to take place in your school. Ensure access to computers for the whole session, which will take approximately three hours to complete.
- Pass on relevant information from NFER to teachers, students and parents.
- Provide information which we can use to draw a representative sample of 40 students in the relevant age group.

Are the results confidential?

The responses to the study from students and schools are treated in confidence. No school or individual will be identified in any of the PISA reports. The final data will be available on the OECD website and all schools and students will be anonymised.

Full details of NFER's privacy notice are available on our website.

Where can I find out more?

We have set up a dedicated website to update schools, students and parents on the study at www.nfer.ac.uk/pisa

The OECD website also has some further information about PISA at <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/>

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us by email at pisascotland@nfer.ac.uk

Timeline for the PISA 2025 Main Study in Scotland

Month	We will ask you to:
January 2025	<p>Nominate a PISA School Coordinator and a PISA IT Coordinator</p> <p>Complete the online form (link in your invitation pack) to identify two school contacts we can liaise with to prepare for the assessment. Share the letters provided in your pack with your Head of Science, Head of Parent Council and other teachers to create awareness.</p>
March 2025	<p>Complete School IT Readiness Testing</p> <p>Your nominated IT Coordinator will run some specific checks to ensure your school computers, network and internet connection meet the requirements for the PISA online platform. This may require support from your IT Support service provider.</p>
April 2025	<p>Agree a date for your assessment in September</p> <p>Your nominated School Coordinator will agree an assessment date and book IT suite capacity at your school for 40 students. They will also engage with their NFER-assigned Study Administrator, who can provide more detail on the process and respond to any queries.</p>
May 2025	<p>Provide details of S4/S5 students eligible to participate</p> <p>This information will be used to draw a random sample of 40 students aged 15 or 16 (S4 and S5) born within the required date range.</p>
June 2025	<p>Check the data returned to you for the 40 students chosen in the sample</p> <p>Your assigned Study Administrator will remain available to liaise with your School Coordinator if they have any queries.</p>

Month	We will ask you to:
August 2025	<p>Inform students and parents and encourage participation in PISA</p> <p>PISA does not require any student preparation for the assessment.</p> <p>Your assigned Study Administrator will re-connect with your School Coordinator after the summer break to check on final arrangements before the agreed assessment day.</p>
September 2025	<p>Support arrangements for the PISA assessment</p> <p>The Study Administrator will manage the assessment process on the day. Your nominated School Coordinator and IT Coordinator will need to be available. One member of school staff will be required in each IT suite being used to support the Study Administrator. The administration will take about half a day to complete, usually taking place during the morning.</p>
October 2025	<p>Arrange any re-visits and complete a school questionnaire</p> <p>If the number of students participating on the day of the assessment does not meet the required PISA threshold, a re-visit will be arranged by the Study Administrator in consultation with the School Coordinator so that those who were absent can also take part.</p>

