



# Guide to the 2023 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 funding and statistical purposes under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) and the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (the Regulations).

## Census Post Enumeration Exercise

The Census Post Enumeration (Census PE) Exercise is an annual assurance activity which occurs after every Census to check the validity of the data reported by schools. The Census PE Exercise assures the accuracy of Census data for determining recurrent funding and promotes appropriate governance and record-keeping by non-government schools.

Only a select number of schools each year are chosen to participate. If your school is selected, your Approved Authority will be formally notified by the Australian Government Department of Education (the department).

## Census PE Exercise overview

Schools participating in the Census PE Exercise will have their enrolment, attendance and other student records reviewed by contractors engaged by the department. Census PE reviews will be completed via an in person visit to a school or via desktop review.

In 2024, a select number of Census PE reviews will take place using the Australian Government's online collaboration service GovTEAMS.

The contractor allocated to your school will make suitable access arrangements to conduct the Census PE review in person or via GovTEAMS. School visits and desktop reviews are expected to be completed between early March and mid-June 2024.

The contractor will request assistance from school staff to gain access to the documents required to verify your school's Census data.

Please ensure all documentation is collated prior to your school visits.

### **\*\*IMPORTANT\*\***

All documentation not sighted in person must be shared with contractors and the department using the secure File Transfer Protocol server provided by the department. Where possible, this data should be de-identified to remove the personal and/or sensitive information.

## In person school visits

The completion of the Census PE Exercise by an in person visit to a school is anticipated to be completed in one day for most schools. However, there may be exceptions to this timeframe and larger or multiple-campus schools are likely to require additional completion time. Multiple-campus schools are required to make all requested documentation available in a single location to complete the Census PE Exercise. Schools can supply these records in paper or electronic format or use a combination.

## GovTEAMS pilot

In 2024, the department is piloting the use of the online collaboration service GovTEAMS to conduct some Census PE Exercises.

GovTEAMS hosts private and secure communities consisting of your school, the contractor completing the exercise and the department. You can use the GovTEAMS chat, video and phone functions to communicate directly with contractors and the department.

The department anticipates this functionality will make the Census PE Exercise more efficient for schools.

The schools participating in the pilot are those who expressed interest or were invited by the department because they meet the ideal pilot criteria.

Schools can opt-out of completing their Census PE Exercise via GovTEAMS and complete the review via another online platform. Please advise the contractor completing your Census PE Exercise if you do not wish to participate in the GovTEAMS pilot.

## GovTEAMS desktop reviews

If you choose to opt-in to the pilot, the department will send you an invitation to join a GovTEAMS community. The contractor allocated to your school will also contact you via email to schedule a series of videoconference meetings in GovTEAMS.

The process includes:

- attending a commencement meeting via teleconference or videoconference
- assisting the department's contractor to complete the Census PE Exercise
- submitting the requested documentation via the department's secure File Transfer Protocol
- attending any requested follow up meetings to resolve issues, if requested
- attending an exit meeting to discuss the contractor's findings during the exercise.

### **\*\*IMPORTANT\*\***

For the privacy and safety of schools and students, personal and sensitive information should not be shared via the chat and file sharing functions in GovTEAMS. Video and phone calls can also not be recorded. Please supply the documents required to complete the exercise via the secure File Transfer Protocol server link provided by the department.

## Training and support for GovTEAMS

The department will provide additional GovTEAMS training and ongoing support throughout the pilot. If you have questions when using GovTEAMS, you can contact the department from GovTEAMS via the contact form or via the department staff member available in your community. More information is available in the GovTEAMS training academy.



## GovTEAMS suite of guidance

As part of the GovTEAMS pilot, all schools will have access to GovTEAMS and its suite of guidance to understand, prepare for and participate in the Census PE Exercise. You do not need to be participating in a desktop review, or part of the current Census PE Exercise to join. This suite of guidance is an open resource to support all schools.

To access the resources, visit [Registration - Guidance for Census PE \(office.com\)](#) and you will be sent an invitation to the Census PE school community.

## School declaration and school report

At the completion of your school's in person or GovTEAMS Census PE review, you will be asked to sign a School Declaration to acknowledge the contractor's findings. Signing this declaration does not endorse or dispute these findings. The contractor will provide a School Report to the department detailing the findings and, where discrepancies are found, will make data-adjustment recommendations to the department.

The department's quality assurance processes will assess the findings and may make changes to your school's 2023 Census data. Some of these changes may affect your school's funding entitlements for 2023 and your school's estimated 2024 funding entitlement. During the quality assurance process, the department may contact your school's Approved Authority to clarify your school's Census data.

## Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

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 Census PE Exercise will include a review of the supporting evidence to report students in NCCD categories.

The department's contractors will initially validate a random sample of 100 students reported in the NCCD supplementary, substantial, and extensive levels of adjustment.

- If there are any errors identified in this sample, the contractors will validate all remaining students reported in these categories.
- Schools with no errors in the sample will not be required to have NCCD student data for these categories validated.
- Schools with fewer than 100 students will be required to have records of all students reported in the NCCD supplementary, substantial, and extensive level of adjustment validated.
- For those students reported in the Quality Differentiated Teaching Practice (QDTP) level of adjustment, the contractors will validate a 5% random sample. The contractor will advise on the student records within the QDTP sample to be validated.
- Schools are also required to provide evidence of a student's imputed or diagnosed disability.

As outlined in the 2023 Census Requirements, to report a student in the NCCD, there must be evidence the student has been provided with an educational adjustment(s) for a minimum period of 10 weeks of school education (excluding school holiday periods) in the 12 months preceding the Census Day, to address the functional impact of disability. This can include evidence of adjustments provided at previous schools, as long as it is within the 12 months prior to Census Day for 2023. The 2023 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 every day of the week
- does 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
- may include time when a student is participating in a school-based activity during holidays (e.g. a camp or excursion where the school is providing adjustments).

The contractors will verify schools have appropriate evidence to confirm if:

- the student meets the 2023 Census eligibility criteria and has been reported in the 2023 Census
- the student has disability as defined in Appendix 3 of the [2023 NCCD Guidelines](#)
- the student has been provided with an adjustment(s) for a minimum of 10 weeks of school education (in the 12 months leading up to and including Census Day) to address the functional impact of disability
- the student's inclusion in the NCCD is supported by appropriate documentary evidence held by the school.

Appropriate documentary evidence includes evidence in 4 general areas:

- assessed individual needs of the student
- at least 10 weeks of adjustment(s) have been provided to the student (in the 12 months preceding Census Day for the year) to address their assessed individual needs associated with disability and evidence to justify the level reported
- ongoing monitoring and review of the adjustments
- consultation and collaboration with the student and/or parents, guardians, carers, or associates.

## Mid-year intake for foundation year

If your school offers a mid-year intake for foundation year students, contractors will review the school records for these students.

### What is a 'foundation year'?

The Regulations define 'foundation' as 'the year of schooling immediately before year one'. For Australian Government recurrent funding purposes, foundation is a 'year' or 12 months of schooling. This means that students who participate in a foundation program that goes beyond 12 months can only attract recurrent funding for a single year (which is the year immediately before year one).

Students who repeat a foundation year of schooling due to lack of educational attainment or development can attract recurrent funding for the repeated year of schooling.

### Reporting foundation year students

It is important schools report foundation year students correctly in the Census. Schools with multi-year learning stages must ensure students are only reported as foundation students in the Census for a single year, being the year before year one. See below for examples of student eligibility to attract funding for foundation year:

- A student is enrolled in a mid-year intake foundation program at the start of term 3 and the 18-month program finishes in December the following year. **The student should not be reported in the Census for the first 6 months of the foundation program. The student is only eligible to be reported in the Census for the year of attendance immediately before year one (the second year).**
- A student is enrolled in foundation at the beginning of the school year in a 12-month 'year' of schooling that finishes in December of the same year. Due to a lack of educational



attainment or development, the student will repeat the same year of schooling. **This student is eligible to attract a second year of foundation recurrent funding and can be reported in the Census as a foundation student for both years.**

- A 4-year-old student is considered ready to start school and is enrolled in a program at a school which offers multi-year learning stages, commencing with pre-primary (such as Montessori Stage 1 ages 3 to 6, or Steiner programs). **This student is only eligible to be reported in the Census as a foundation student if they progress to year one the following year.**

## Authority to access premises and records

The department's contractors will have authority to access the school premises, information, and records under sections 33, 39, and 39A of the Regulations for the purpose of reviewing a school's Census reporting information.

## COVID-19 school visit considerations

It is expected 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.

## Questions

If you have any questions about the 2023 Census PE Exercise, please email the department at [education-schoolspostenumeration@education.gov.au](mailto:education-schoolspostenumeration@education.gov.au).

