



# Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA) frequently asked questions (FAQs) – for students

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## Why do I have to sit the OLNA tests?

Tertiary institutions, employers and the community have requested greater assurances about the standard of literacy and numeracy achieved by students at the end of Year 12. To achieve a Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE), you need to demonstrate a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy, either by achieving Band 8 or above in reading, writing and numeracy in your Year 9 NAPLAN or by demonstrating the standard through the Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA).

If you achieved Band 8 or above in the Year 9 NAPLAN reading, writing or numeracy tests you will not be required to sit the corresponding test for each component of the OLNA. You will be considered to have demonstrated the standard for that component. If you did not achieve Band 8 in one or more of the NAPLAN tests, you will be required to demonstrate the relevant standard through the OLNA. You must demonstrate the standard in each component to be eligible to achieve a WACE.

## What is the required literacy and numeracy standard?

The literacy and numeracy standard covers the skills regarded as essential for you to meet the demands of everyday life and work in a knowledge-based economy. These skills are described in Level 3 of the *Australian Core Skills Framework*, which can be found on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment website on the [Australian Core Skills Framework page](https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-information-training-providers/australian-core-skills-framework/download-acsf) (<https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-information-training-providers/australian-core-skills-framework/download-acsf>).

## When and where can I sit the OLNA tests?

Your school will schedule and supervise your OLNA tests. Opportunities will be provided for you to sit the test each March and September from Year 10 until you have demonstrated the required standard.

For home-educated students, see the question: [I am educated at home. Can I sit the OLNA?](#)

For individuals who have exited Year 12, see the question: [Can I sit the OLNA after Year 12 to achieve a WACE?](#) or the separate *Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA) frequently asked questions (FAQs) – post-Year 12*, which can be found on the Authority website on the [Students, Parents and Carers page](https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/assessment/olna/students-parents-carers) (<https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/assessment/olna/students-parents-carers>).

## What do the OLNA tests involve?

There are three online tests – reading, writing and numeracy. The reading and numeracy tests comprise 45 multiple-choice questions which you have 50 minutes to complete. The writing test is an extended response of up to 600 words. You have 60 minutes to complete it. The table below provides a quick guide to each test.

	Numeracy	Reading	Writing
Number of questions	45		1 (600 word limit)
Question type	Multiple-choice		Extended response
Time	50 minutes		60 minutes
Disability adjustments	A variety of adjustments are available		

## Where can I see examples of the questions I can expect?

You can access the practice and example test on the Authority website found on the [Practice and Example Tests page \(https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/assessment/olna/practice-and-example-tests\)](https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/assessment/olna/practice-and-example-tests). These tests contain questions which allow students to demonstrate Level 3 of the *Australian Core Skills Framework*, which can be found on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment website on the [Australian Core Skills Framework page \(https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-information-training-providers/australian-core-skills-framework/download-acsf\)](https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-information-training-providers/australian-core-skills-framework/download-acsf).

The practice test for each component is designed to enable you to become familiar with the test environment. It provides you with practice in using the test-delivery website functionality and experience in the types of questions you can expect in the reading, writing and numeracy tests of the OLNA. It includes a set of 20 multiple-choice questions for reading; a set of 20 multiple-choice questions for numeracy and one writing prompt. You have 20 minutes to complete each component.

The example test provides an indicative sample of the diversity of skills assessed. You can experience a complete test in the reading, writing and numeracy components. It includes a set of 45 multiple-choice questions for reading; a set of 45 multiple-choice questions for numeracy and one writing prompt. You have 50 minutes to complete the reading and numeracy tests and 60 minutes to complete the writing test.

## Can I use a pencil and paper in the test?

You may take a pen, pencil and eraser into the tests. You will be given a sheet with your login details which can also be used as working out/planning paper for each test. You are **not permitted** to take into the test room: mobile phones, Bluetooth®/wireless/web-enabled devices, photographic or audio devices, headphones, calculators, dictionaries, thesauruses or notes.

## Will my teachers be able to show me how to demonstrate the literacy and numeracy standard?

Your teachers will be able to help you gain the knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate the required literacy and numeracy standard. After each test, your teachers will also receive feedback on the areas in which improvement is required to demonstrate the skills required in each component (if you have not already done so). This will help teachers focus on those skills you need to achieve the standard.

## How will I find out whether I have demonstrated the required literacy and numeracy standard?

The Authority reports on student achievement of the literacy and numeracy standard through the Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA) on completion of Year 12.

In the interim, your school will access reports that identify your category of achievement. If you did not demonstrate the standard through your Year 9 NAPLAN performance, you will need to do so through the OLN. The standard is demonstrated through proficiency in the skills described in Level 3 of the *Australian Core Skills Framework*, which can be found on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment website on the [Australian Core Skills Framework page \(https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-information-training-providers/australian-core-skills-framework/download-acsf\)](https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-information-training-providers/australian-core-skills-framework/download-acsf). Do not interpret interim feedback in terms of pass or fail, but as indicators of the following:

- Category 1: students who have not demonstrated the standard, i.e. proficiency in using a range of ACSF Level 3 skills in a component. These students have been identified as at risk of not demonstrating some of these skills before the end of Year 12 and therefore require specific learning interventions to enable the student to demonstrate the required standard. Individual student feedback identifies some of the skills students have not demonstrated in this component.
- Category 2: students who have not yet demonstrated the standard, i.e. proficiency in using a range of ACSF Level 3 skills in a component. These students have been identified as at risk of not demonstrating some of these skills and may require specific learning interventions to enable the student to demonstrate the required standard. Individual student feedback identifies some of the skills students have not demonstrated in this component.
- Category 3: students who have demonstrated the standard, i.e. proficiency in using a range of ACSF Level 3 skills in a component, either through the OLN or through their performance in NAPLAN Year 9.

The following diagram provides a quick guide to each category and possible enrolment paths.



\*While students who achieve Category 3 are required to enrol in either General or ATAR courses, exemptions to enrol in or continue to enrol in Foundation courses may be permitted with approval from the Authority. See the *WACE Manual* found on the Authority website on the [WACE Manual page](https://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/publications/wace-manual) (<https://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/publications/wace-manual>) for details.

## Is there extra help for me if I am struggling to demonstrate the required literacy and numeracy standard?

You can enrol in Foundation courses if they are offered at your school. Foundation courses provide students with the support needed to demonstrate the minimum literacy and numeracy standard. The Authority also provides schools with feedback about the areas in which you need the most help. This will help teachers focus on those skills you need to achieve the standard.

## Do I have to take maths in Year 11 and 12 if I have not demonstrated the numeracy standard?

It's not a requirement, but if you are at risk of not achieving the numeracy standard it may be best to enrol in the Mathematics Foundation course (if it is offered at your school) as this is designed to provide you with the skills required to demonstrate the standard. The Authority recommends you discuss all your enrolment decisions with your parents and your school.

## What happens if I don't demonstrate the required literacy and numeracy standard before the end of Year 12?

If you do not demonstrate the required standard, you will not be eligible for a WACE. However, you will still receive a Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA), which provides a formal record of what you have achieved during your secondary schooling.

## Can I graduate from school without a WACE?

The requirements for graduation are determined by your school. The achievement of a WACE is not necessarily one of these requirements. Contact your school administration and ask them to explain your school's graduation rules.

## Can I sit the OLNA after Year 12 to achieve a WACE?

If you do not demonstrate the required standard in a component by the time you exit secondary school, you can apply to the Authority to resit the test for that component at any age by completing the online application process accessible on the Authority website on the [WACE after Year 12 page \(https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/certification/wace-after-year-12\)](https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/certification/wace-after-year-12).

When you have demonstrated the required standard in each component and you have met all of the other requirements, you will be awarded the WACE. (Note: the requirements may change over time and students studying towards the achievement of the WACE after they leave school will be required to meet the WACE requirements current at the time of the completion of their studies.)

## I have a diagnosed disability. What adjustments are available for me to access the OLNA?

Most students will not need adjustments as the tests have been designed to be accessible to nearly all students in the allotted time. However, schools can access and manage a range of adjustments for students with a diagnosed disability.

## English isn't my first language. What considerations are there for me?

The tests are a measure of your performance in Standard Australian English. We have checked all the questions to ensure those from a language background other than English can engage with them. We encourage you to speak with your teachers if you have concerns.

### Deferring the OLNA

- if you have arrived from overseas, have a language background other than English and have been attending school in Australia for less than one year before an OLNA window, you must be given the opportunity to sit the OLNA tests to be eligible to achieve a WACE. You may choose to defer sitting the OLNA until either you have been in Australia for 12 months or have entered mainstream schooling from an Intensive English Centre. However, you must be given the chance to sit the OLNA before the end of Year 12 to achieve a WACE. Note: deferring the OLNA may limit your access to Foundation courses. (See the question: [Is there extra help for me if I am struggling to demonstrate the required standard?](#))
- if you are studying for the WACE at an overseas school in which English is not the first language, you may defer sitting the OLNA until Round 2 of your first year of WACE study.

## Ten minutes extra working time

- An extra ten minutes working time to complete the OLN reading, writing and numeracy tests will be granted to students registered as eligible to be enrolled in a Year 12 EAL/D course.
- Students must complete and submit an eligibility application for EAL/D by the published deadlines in order to seek approval in time for the relevant OLN round. Students are not required to subsequently enrol in a Year 12 EAL/D course; however, they must have been found eligible in order to be granted the extra time.
- Forms, deadlines and information can be found on the Authority website on the [English as an Additional Language or Dialect page \(https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/syllabus-and-support-materials/english/english-as-an-additional-language-or-dialect\)](https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/syllabus-and-support-materials/english/english-as-an-additional-language-or-dialect).

## I am educated at home. Can I sit the OLN?

As a home-educated student, you can access the OLN at:

- a school
- a site with a supervisor approved by the Authority
- the Authority's offices.

Further information can be found on the Authority website on the [Students, Parents and Carers page \(https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/assessment/olna/student,-parents-and-carers\)](https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/assessment/olna/student,-parents-and-carers).

## Can I sit the OLN at TAFE admissions?

Students may sit the OLN at TAFE admissions and the results will contribute towards achievement of the literacy and numeracy standard. However, any sit at TAFE admissions counts towards the limit of six opportunities to sit each component that students are permitted while of compulsory school age.

## Where can I get further information?

More information can be found on the Authority website on the [Students, Parents and Carers page \(https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/assessment/olna/student,-parents-and-carers\)](https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/assessment/olna/student,-parents-and-carers) or by contacting the OLN helpdesk on 9273 6726 or [olna@scsa.wa.edu.au](mailto:olna@scsa.wa.edu.au).