

2025 School Test Administrator manual

Validation of Assessment for Learning and Individual Development (VALID)

VALID Science 8

VALID Science 10

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Contact details

The NSW Department of Education has responsibility for the development and delivery of the VALID assessments and the reporting of results.

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Overview of VALID and the test process

The Validation of Assessment for Learning and Individual Development (VALID) program is providing online end-of-stage assessments for the Science KLA. VALID will assist schools to monitor student achievement and inform planning, programming and assessment practices.

Two assessments will be delivered: VALID Science 8 and VALID Science 10. Both VALID tests are, online interactive multimedia diagnostic assessments containing video, audio, animations, graphics, text and a variety of test item types.

The online format of the assessment has been shown to:

- better engage students by being interactive and using multimedia
- improve access to the test for all students by providing audio and making computer adaptations available for students who regularly use these in class
- make assessment more relevant to the learning experiences of students
- provide the test and its results more efficiently.

The VALID program will provide:

- high quality, syllabus-based assessment frameworks that describe levels of achievement against standards
- data that can directly inform planning, programming and assessment across learning stages
- cohort level data on student values and attitudes toward science from survey questions within each assessment
- online professional learning that reinforces staff capability in making consistent judgements against syllabus standards
- systems and processes to monitor student achievement of syllabus outcomes and content across stages
- external student assessment data that can be used in combination with school-based assessments to inform whole school planning processes.

Whilst the extended response tasks in VALID Science 8 are externally marked, VALID Science 10 incorporate in-school marking of student responses for the extended response tasks in the test. Short response items in all tests are auto marked by the test software.

Schools will receive the full data set in Scout. All students completing a VALID test will receive a comprehensive individual student report.

Candidacy

VALID Science 8 is **optional** for schools with Year 8 students.

VALID Science 10 is **optional** for schools with Year 10 students.

Schools who elect to participate in *VALID Science 10* are also agreeing to complete the **in-school marking** operation.

There is significant value in all students in a Year group undertaking these assessments to inform strengths in teaching and learning programs, plan support for student learning as well as students' receiving an individual report showing their performance across different aspects of the syllabus. Teachers exercise their professional judgment to decide whether to participate.

Note that:

- parents and carers have the right to withdraw their children from testing and some students are eligible for exemption
- visiting students do not sit for this test.

Other schools in NSW, schools in other Australian states and international schools may also participate in VALID.

Test content

VALID Science 8 and VALID Science 10 assess science in local and global real-world situations in which students can recall and apply their science knowledge, understanding and skills.

Tasks in the tests are framed on stage appropriate outcomes and essential content in the NSW Syllabuses. Students will be tested on their:

- knowledge and understanding from the syllabus
- understanding of skills from the syllabus
- ability to evaluate evidence, make judgements and think critically
- ability to access information and communicate scientific ideas

Each VALID test incorporates a range of test item types including both extended response tasks and short response and multiple choice items.

Both **Stage 4** and **Stage 5** tests have 3 extended responses tasks and 75 short response or multiple choice items.

Test window dates

The [key dates](#) for VALID can be found on the [VALID website](#). Each test has a two week window. It is at the principal's discretion when the test will be held during the test window.

The indicative times for the tests are 70 minutes. However, we recommend allowing 80 minutes to allow students to log in and troubleshooting any issues that may arise. Each student must complete the test individually at a computer with internet access. Multiple sessions for groups of students can be scheduled throughout the test windows.

Due to the nature of the online environment, students who are unable to complete the test within an allocated timeframe may exit the test without submitting their attempt and log back in later during the test window.

Sample tests

The 2018 VALID tests are available as sample tests. These are available on-demand and are located at <https://sample.valid.nsw.edu.au>

To access the sample test, teachers and students can use the same generic username (testing) and password (science).

Schools decide if they wish students to preview the sample test individually or have each teacher demonstrate the sample test to their class as a group. The generic login negates the need for students to have individual passwords, so, there is no need to print student codes and any reorganisation needed to undertake sample tests should be minimal. Past tests are also available as quick quizzes from the [VALID Science quick quizzes](#) webpage (for Government school teachers) and VALID Google Drive (for participating non-government school teachers) for use at any time.

Test administration

Each school is required to identify two contact people who will act as School Test Administrator (STA). These STAs will receive all future communications from the VALID team. The main communication methods will be email and Microsoft Teams.

The school should also have a technology officer available during the [test window](#) to troubleshoot any school-based technology issues during the test.

Roles and responsibilities

Principal

Principals are responsible for ensuring the integrity and implementation of VALID. Where the specific responsibilities of the principal are described, it is understood that the principal may delegate responsibilities to one or more representatives.

The principal (or delegate(s)) is responsible for:

- adhering to and enforcing the policies and procedures in this administrative manual
- informing the VALID team of any changes to the nominated school test administrator
- applying for support for students requiring Braille materials
- informing parents and carers of the test via letter, email, newsletter or messaging app for **VALID 8 Science** and **VALID 10 Science**. A suggested blurb is available from the MS Team
- ensuring that school software, hardware and computer systems match the VALID [technology profile](#), and that a technology officer is available to provide support for VALID within the school as needed
- distributing, collecting and storing consent forms from parents and carers of students exempted or withdrawn from the test or students receiving special provisions to complete the test. These forms are available from the [VALID webpage](#) and [MS Teams](#)
- the overall security and confidentiality of VALID student codes so that student access to online test materials is appropriately controlled. Note that all access to the test is automatically logged by the test software
- ensuring the [sample test](#) is accessed and demonstrated so that students are familiar with the operation and content of the test
- [diagnostic testing](#) of computers is performed so that hardware and software are checked prior to the test
- the administration of the test within the school
- ensuring that each supervisor of the test understands the protocols related to the administration of the test and has access to the relevant guidelines for test administration
- completing online administrative information for the test
- ensuring that an Activity Summary report for VALID is saved in print and/or electronic form
- ensuring that an appropriate number of teachers are allocated for the in-school marking of VALID Science 10.

The roles of technology officer and school test administrator (STA) are vital for the successful implementation of VALID. The principal needs to appoint these positions so that the officers clearly know their roles and responsibilities and can be supported by other staff. The technology officer and STA will be supported by the VALID team.

Technology officer

The technology officer for VALID will probably be a computing coordinator or a member of the school technical support staff. The test requires the normal operation of the school's computer system so the extent of this role will depend on how prepared and up to date the school's hardware and software is.

It is important that the technology officer is available during the [test window](#) to troubleshoot any problems that may arise within the school's computer system.

The technology officer is responsible for:

- ensuring that computers are working
- ensuring that computers have the required hardware and software
- overcoming school network problems, including school logon problems
- liaising to overcome network problems or local hub problems, including portal logon problems in government schools.

School test administrator (STA)

The STA manages testing and student data for VALID tests.

The VALID program team need to know the names of the **two nominated STAs** for communication purposes.

The STA is responsible for ensuring that:

- all students have viewed the [sample test](#)
- all students have their VALID student codes
- all students complete VALID
- documentation about exempt, withdrawn and absent students, and special provisions, is completed within the administration portal
- an *Activity Summary report* for your school is downloaded and saved

VALID logon and other student issues during the [test window](#) are initially referred to the school test administrator and/or technology officer.

Planning implementation of VALID

The in-school organisation chosen for implementing VALID will be different in each school. Each school can choose a solution that best fits its circumstances.

- Plan how your school will implement VALID and obtain the cooperation of affected staff as soon as possible.
- Check that parents and carers have sufficient information about VALID at least one week prior to [test window](#)
- Check that all issues identified during technical readiness testing have been satisfactorily resolved, prior to test window

VALID may be conducted at any time across the [test window](#). Conducting the test on a single school-designated test day during the test window is the best option. However, VALID recognises this is not always possible.

The school can decide the best way to fit VALID into school life within the following constraints.

VALID implementation guidelines

- VALID may be conducted at any time across the [test window](#). It is at the principal's discretion when the test will be held during this window.
- Each student should complete the test under the same test conditions and procedures.
- Schools may need to run the test in multiple sessions across the [test window](#). Consideration about which students should be scheduled into each session will give all students the best opportunity to concentrate and do their best.

If possible, organisation should reduce the mixing of students who have completed the test with others who are yet to be tested. While trialling has suggested that students rarely discuss items in the test, it would be prudent to minimise opportunities for interactions if possible.

Some modes of implementing VALID

The following are some modes of implementation. They are suggestions only and are not an exhaustive list.

Multi session testing in school computer spaces in one day

Some schools that have several computer areas (such as computer rooms, library computers, and creative arts and technology computing spaces) might choose to run the online test in three or four sessions spread across the school day.

Students are allocated to a session. Outside of this test period, students go to their 'normal' timetabled lessons.

Because of the disruption to 'normal' by this organisation, some test day activities suggested by schools are:

- timetabled lessons with variations to routine
- a redesigned timetable day. For example, students stay in roll class groups for the entire day. Subject-based work in core subjects is provided for students to complete while they are supervised throughout the day
- a redesigned activity day. For example, other activities such as sport, or personal health and safety seminar, and an incursion by a performance group or scientific group such as CSIRO could be arranged for VALID test day. Student groups would move between activities throughout the day.

Progressive session testing in school computer rooms

If there are limited or very diversely spread computer resources, one solution may be to use one or two computer rooms for all students and a rotational approach to testing.

Each computer room is continuously supervised by a teacher. (That is, the teacher is relieved from classes for the day.) Each supervising teacher could be supported by several student 'runners' for the day.

At the start of a test day, the available computers are allocated to the first group of students. All other students go to normal classes. Throughout the day, the runners collect students from normal classes as directed by the supervising teacher(s).

As each student completes the test, the student leaves the test room, and another student is withdrawn from class to begin the test. This staggers the start of testing for students, which increases test security and reduces disruptive behaviour from students who finish early. It enables the supervising teacher to assist a small number of students at a time, which eases the administrative pressure for the supervising teacher. It also allows for several more sessions per computer than could be achieved with fixed session times.

Consideration needs to be given to providing recess or lunch breaks to students who might be completing an online test during a standard school break.

Single session testing in school computer spaces

Some schools have established multiple computer rooms so that all students can be accommodated simultaneously. Ideally, VALID should be early in the school day.

Single session testing with individual student devices

Some school communities have arranged that all students have their own device. Students can complete the test on their own computer or tablet in one session. Ideally, this should be the first activity for the school day.

Note that the school needs a process to ensure that:

- the [diagnostic test](#) has run on all student devices prior to testing
- all students have their computers on test day
- all computers are adequately charged on test day
- the school wireless network can simultaneously support all students.

Multisession testing either in school computer spaces or on individual student devices

The duration of the VALID [test window](#) is two weeks so that schools may run multiple test sessions during class time or in double periods across a two-week timetable. However, schools need to be mindful of the VALID implementation guidelines.

Session testing involving other local schools

Some schools have decided that their computer resources are insufficient to conduct VALID entirely within the school. They have negotiated with neighbouring primary or senior campus schools to use some of their computer rooms for the test day. By supplementing their school resources, these schools can complete VALID testing on one day.

Initial organisation for VALID

- place VALID on school calendar as soon as possible.
- reserve exclusive use of computer rooms and learning spaces for [test window](#) as soon as possible
- check school [technology profile](#) and run [diagnostics test](#) page on each computer to be used for VALID prior to the test
- access and demonstrate appropriate [sample test](#) to each student prior to the test
- Make in-school arrangements about withdrawn students, exemptions and special provisions prior to the test.
- Notify VALID team of students requiring Braille materials as soon as possible.

Reserving computer spaces

Each student must have individual access to a computer to complete VALID. Students cannot complete the tests in pairs. The computer or tablet can be a school or student device.

Undertaking VALID might require school reorganisation so that each student can complete the test at a computer during the [test window](#).

Each computer must be fully functional and have access to the internet. In planning school organisation, please check how many computers are working appropriately so that each student can complete the test in their designated session.

As well as checking school and/or student devices, there might be a need to check the school network and/or access to wireless connections.

Active teacher supervision during the test is very important. Please consider, if possible, the test security issues of your computer spaces. Students are more likely to talk or look at each other's test during VALID if the computers are very close together, for example.

VALID 2025 technology profile

Check that your school computing infrastructure and student devices match the [technology profile](#) to ensure that VALID will operate correctly within your school's network.

Arranging headphones for students

Each student requires headphones/earbuds to complete VALID. These are essential because:

- VALID contains audio files for all instructions and for the stimulus resources. Students can control when and how often they listen to the audio files. This provides a realistic online experience as well as reading support for the test
- headphones/earbuds provide additional test security. Students often sit close together in a computer room but using headphones/earbuds tends to isolate students, so they concentrate on their own tests.

The best option is for students to bring and use their own earbuds. A very basic, inexpensive set is all that is required.

Please begin planning how your school will ensure that each student has access to headphones/earbuds for VALID.

Also note the following Australian recommendations about safe use of headphones/ earbuds.

Safe use of headphones/earbuds

- Headphones/earbuds should not be used tightly in both ears. The user should still be able to hear instructions or emergency alerts while using the headphones/earbuds.
- The volume setting should not be high. Permanent hearing loss can result from exposure to high volume settings.
- Headphones/earbuds should be stored in such a way that the risk of contamination by biological, chemical or other substances or materials is minimised.

For hygiene reasons, earbuds should not be shared. Headphones should be cleaned between uses by following the manufacturer's instructions.

Sharing organisational information with staff, parents, carers and students

Whichever solution your school chooses, staff, parents, carers and students will need information about VALID and your school's organisation to make VALID implementation successful.

This is particularly important if supervising teachers are unfamiliar with VALID. Please ensure these teachers are appropriately briefed and have access to the test directions. Ideally, these teachers should preview the [sample test](#) to be familiar with the software and the expectations of VALID.

Confirming arrangements and solutions

During this planning period, it may be helpful for the school test administrator, the technology officer and other relevant staff to meet to confirm that all arrangements are completed and that all identified problems have been resolved.

Some questions for discussion could include:

- Has the [technology profile](#) been satisfied? Has the software readiness test been run on all computers? Are there any technical issues still to be resolved within the school?
- Are all computers that are intended to be used for VALID working correctly?
- Does the school have spare headphones/earbuds?
- Is the school network working? Is it likely to work on test day?
- Will all key staff be available during the test window?
- Do all students have operational student codes?
- Are there any technical issues to be resolved with the VALID helpdesk?
- Have technical arrangements been made for students requiring special provisions?
- What processes will be followed if there are student or technical issues on the day?

Providing information to parents, carers and students

Information for students

Information about accessing VALID, its structure and how to complete it are provided in the sample test. The sample test is available on-demand and can be accessed individually by students or teachers can demonstrate the sample test to a class group. Access to the [sample test](#) uses a generic username (testing) and password (science).

Here are some other important points to tell students:

- VALID is an assessment of student achievement of stage appropriate outcomes. This includes science knowledge, understanding and skills for stages 4 and 5 students.
- Students must have headphones/earbuds to complete the test. The best option is for each student to bring their own headphones/earbuds.
- Each student must know their student code and, for government school students their student portal username and password.
- Students will be given their VALID student code as they begin the VALID test.
- VALID Science 8 and VALID Science 10 take about 70 minutes to complete.

Take as much time as you need to help students feel at ease. Advise students that they should try to do their best, but they should not worry if they do not know all the answers. They should attempt all the parts of the test.

Information for parents and carers

Parents and carers should be given information about VALID prior to its administration.

- General information could be disseminated through a regular school newsletter, email, school app and webpage.
- A suggested blurb is available in the STA MS Teams

Materials required by students

- an active computer (one per student in any test session), connected through the school network to the internet
- their school network logon and, for government school students, their portal username and password
- their VALID student code card
- headphones/earbuds that plug into their or the school's computers.

If they wish, students are permitted to bring blank working paper and a pencil or pen, but no paper can be removed from the test environment.

Withdrawal or exemption of students

VALID should be completed by all students in the relevant cohort at the school. However, some students are eligible to be withdrawn or exempted.

Withdrawn students

Students may be withdrawn from VALID by their parents or carers. This is a matter for consideration by individual parents and carers in consultation with the principal. Withdrawals are intended to address issues such as religious beliefs and philosophical objections to testing or the use of technology.

Signed consent forms are required for students withdrawn by their parents or carers. The signed form must be kept by the school.

Exempt students

For very few students, participation in VALID might not be appropriate. These students are eligible for exemption. Consideration for exemptions can be given to:

- students newly arrived in Australia (up to 12 months) from non-English speaking backgrounds
- students with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities who are supported by a personalised learning program with restricted access to regular syllabus

outcomes and content. These students are unlikely to be accommodated through special provisions

- students who have a current Disability Confirmation Sheet who cannot be accommodated through special provisions
- students with a medical condition that would affect wellbeing and test performance and who cannot be accommodated through special provisions
- students attending Stewart House.

Consent forms for withdrawal and exemptions

A withdrawal/exemption consent form can be downloaded from the [VALID website](#). The must be signed by a parent or carer and the principal. Signed forms must be kept by the school.

Accessing special provisions

The need for support, such as reading of texts and variable test display, has been considered in the construction of VALID.

A range of other provisions can be offered. These are available to students who usually access this type of support in the classroom so that all students can demonstrate what they know and can do in science. Special provisions should be considered for any student who has accommodations that enable the student to work towards the same syllabus outcomes and content as all other students of the same age/stage and where these accommodations are documented and endorsed by the principal and have the support of the school's Learning Support Team.

Note that specific injuries or illnesses of students close to the date of the test may also necessitate access to special provisions.

The school test administrator is required to use the VALID administration portal to accurately document the type of special provision provided for each student.

The special provisions detailed fully in Appendix A include:

- reader
- computer user (writer)
- oral or sign support
- colour or size modification
- Braille
- separate supervision
- rooming and furniture adjustments
- rest breaks
- assistive technology
- extra time

Consent form for special provisions

A consent form for special provisions must be completed and signed by the parent or carer and principal. Signed forms must be kept by the school.

Braille materials

Alternate materials will be supplied for students who usually use Braille Notetakers or screen reading applications such as Jaws or NVDA (or similar) software in their science lessons and assessments.

Braille materials request

A Braille request form should be completed and returned via email to valid.program@det.nsw.edu.au no later than 25 July 2025 for VALID 8 and 10.

Sample tests

There are sample tests available, for VALID Science 8 and VALID Science 10.

The sample tests are the 2018 tests, which are available on-demand prior to the test windows and are located at <https://sample.valid.nsw.edu.au>.

To access the sample test, teachers and students can use the same generic login username (testing) and password (science).

Schools can decide if they wish students to preview the sample test individually or have each teacher demonstrate the sample test to their class as a group.

The sample tests can be accessed any time up to the test windows. There is no defined window for the sample test. No answers are recorded and there is no feedback to students.

Rationale for sample tests

The sample tests are an important part of the VALID program. These tests will:

- familiarise students with the navigation tools, types of multimedia used and the variety of test items that occur through a set of practice items
- increase students' confidence in being able to undertake an interactive, multimedia online test
- allow schools to check that the hardware and software on school computers matches the [technology profile](#). Any problems can be rectified by the school's technology officer before VALID.

For schools new to VALID in 2025 we recommend that the students preview the sample test individually so that they may, at the same time, check the technical readiness of computers.

Checking technical readiness of computers

Schools should also check their technical readiness for VALID by running the diagnostics test page on each computer that will be used during VALID. The diagnostics test page is <http://valid.nsw.edu.au/pages/diagnostics>.

Running the diagnostics test page takes about 10 seconds per machine.

Becoming familiar with the administration portal

- Year 10 VALID contact people will receive school test administrator (STA) username and password by 27 August 2025.
- Year 8 VALID contact people will receive school test administrator (STA) username and password by 22 October 2025.
- Complete initial administrative tasks, as described below prior to students undertaking test.

The school test administrator needs to become familiar with the VALID administration portal. The portal is used to:

- view and complete data about students
- monitor and manage test attempts by students.

School test administrator login details

The STA login details will be emailed to the school's contact people.

The STA login details should be carefully protected. If you think the STA login details have been compromised, please urgently contact the VALID team.

Log on as school test administrator

The STAs should log on to the administration portal. The website addresses for the VALID test sites are as follows: <https://sta.valid.nsw.edu.au/auth/login>.

The full set of instructions for using the administration portal will be emailed to school contact people with the STA login details. Access to the site will be available just prior to the [test window](#).

Complete initial administrative tasks

The following four tasks should be completed by the school test administrator prior to students undertaking VALID. The list contains only brief descriptions of the tasks. Full instructions will be sent when the administration portal is available to access.

1. Check student lists

Check that all currently enrolled students are listed as participants for VALID.

Have there been any new enrolments? Email the student details to the VALID teams and include:

- first, middle and last name
- date of birth
- gender
- SRN (if available)

Have any students left your school? Identify students who are no longer enrolled at your school as no longer enrolled on the system.

2. Exempt and withdrawn students

Record students who are exempt or withdrawn from VALID.

3. Arrangements for accessing special provisions

Some students may access special provisions to complete VALID.

4. Print student codes

Each student requires a student code. The printed 'card' includes the VALID URL, and the student's VALID code.

Note that these student codes contain confidential information. For test security, they must not be distributed to students until they are about to begin the test. Codes must be collected from students once they have completed the test.

Conducting VALID

Test availability

The [key dates](#) for test windows for VALID Science 10 are Term 3, weeks 7 and 8 and for VALID Science 8 is Term 4, weeks 3 and 4.

The URL for both VALID 8 and VALID 10 tests is: <https://valid.nsw.edu.au>.

VALID will be 'turned on' for your students and teachers to access between 8 am and 4 pm each day during the test window.

Ensuring test security using student password cards

The security of the test is controlled by VALID student codes.

- Student codes must be printed for the test.
- Codes must only be given to students when they are about to start VALID.
- Codes must be collected from students once they have completed the test.

Test organisation and conditions

Please ensure that supervising teachers and students have clear instructions about organisation for the test.

As much as possible, **formal examination conditions** need to be maintained during VALID. The room (and surrounding areas) should be quiet. Students should not communicate with each other during the test.

Desks must be cleared of all materials except permitted materials, that is:

- computer equipment
- headphones/earbuds
- optionally, a pen or pencil and blank paper. However, this paper must not be removed from the test room.

Staff supervision during the test is paramount as students will typically be seated close together at computers. Although students are 'isolated' by wearing headphones/earbuds and there will be several versions of VALID used in each session, the opportunity might exist for students to look at each other's screens or to talk. (Some students have difficulty changing from their usual collaborative work patterns in a computer room to the individual work required in a test.)

Note that any student who needs to be moved to another computer during VALID should **close the test without submitting** by closing the internet browser window. All the student's responses will be saved, so when the student logs on again at another computer, their VALID test will reopen.

VALID is a diagnostic test to determine student understanding of the NSW Science syllabus–VALID tests do not use a locked down browser–Close and vigilant supervision will prevent students attempting to use the internet during the test–The VALID test platform has a distinctive border–Teachers should position themselves so they can see screens and detect any changes to screens–Active supervision is the best deterrent to students accessing AI or internet search engines during the test–

Special provisions should be provided for students who usually access this type of support in the classroom. The test administrator must be informed about any special provisions provided to students so this information can be recorded for these students.

Approximately 5 to 10 minutes might be needed for students to assemble, enter the room, settle at computers and log on for the test. Both **Years 8 and 10** students require **70 minutes** to complete the test. **Note** that VALID is not a timed test; additional time can be given if students need more time. Most students easily complete VALID within the suggested time.

During the test

Students should:

- wear their headphones/earbuds and attend to their own computer only
- complete all items in VALID.

Students may **not** use:

- calculators or dictionaries
- web browsers, email, mobile phones or other resources for research or clarification.

Supervising teachers are responsible for:

- encouraging students to participate to the best of their ability
- maintaining test conditions and monitoring student conduct throughout the test.

Instructions for students

By viewing the sample test, students should be prepared for the format, navigation and procedures of the test.

Step 1

- a. Enter the test room and sit at a working computer.
- b. Receive the **student code** with the student's correct name.
- c. Do not use another student's code.

Step 2

- a. **Log on** to the school network, to the portal (for government students) then open the internet.
- b. Use the VALID URL on the student code card to open the VALID portal. Log on with the VALID student code.

Step 3

- a. Put on **headphones/earbuds** and adjust settings on the computer.
- b. Check **student information details**. (From this point, students should work alone.)
- c. Complete the introductory **survey**.
- d. Review navigation information about VALID.

Step 4

- a. Start test and complete all the items in the test.
- b. Use the **Submit** button on the dashboard then the **Exit the test now** button to permanently close VALID.
- c. Students must close their internet browser after they complete the test.

Completing VALID administration

The following tasks should be completed by the school test administrator **after** students have undertaken VALID. The list contains only brief descriptions of the tasks. Full instructions will be sent when the administration portal is available to access.

The school test administrator logs on and opens the ***Manage attempts*** menu to:

- identify absent students who were unable to attempt VALID
- report students who received special provisions
- identify students who are no longer enrolled at the school
- identify those students who were withdrawn from the test
- identify those students who were exempt from the test
- print a hardcopy and save an electronic copy of the ***Activity summary report*** as a record of students who completed VALID.

Reports and Scout data

School access to results on Scout

All government school teachers have access to their school's Scout results through the Department of Education's portal. For non-government schools, the principal has access to Scout data and can provision other teachers within the school.

Summaries of student results and tables listing school and state results are available within Scout.

Note that access to and publication of results is subject to the provisions of the *Education Act 1990* (updated December 2010). The results cannot be used for any purpose other than those provided for under the Act.

Atypical results

If a student's VALID results appear to differ significantly from what is expected, consider the following actions:

- ask the student about factors that might have affected performance in the test
- discuss with the student the test responses that produced the unexpected results
- compare the VALID results with other school assessments.

Storage of results

Test data from VALID 2015 onwards is stored in and accessible from Scout.

Administrative data, such as the *Activity summary report* for VALID, will need to be stored by the school for ten years or until each student reaches the age of 25, whichever is the greater.

Additionally, Individual student reports that cannot be distributed to students (for example, because they have left without forwarding information) must be held by the school for seven years in case parents or carers decide to collect them.

Individual student reports

VALID moved to paperless in 2021. Schools will receive a PDF file of *Individual student reports* for each student which includes:

- information about the test, including descriptions of some of the knowledge and skills that were tested

- information about achievement against the standards of the VALID framework
- specific information about the student's results, including comments, performance levels overall and in separate strands, and an item map listing the items completed correctly and incorrectly by the student.

Please arrange for the distribution of student reports electronically as soon as possible.

Note also that parents and carers may request additional information about the report, which can be supplied by the school. For example, parents and carers might request information:

- on the content of VALID
- about how the VALID results compare with school grading, which could be answered by comparing the VALID framework with school assessment information.

Legislated access to results

EDUCATION ACT 1990 Number 8

from www.legislation.nsw.gov.au, current version from 7 December 2010 and the responsibility of the New South Wales Minister of Education

Section 18A: Publication of results

(1) In this section:

relevant national agreement means an agreement between the State and the Commonwealth that gives effect to a national protocol or arrangement for the provision and publication of school results.

school results means the following results (whether they are the results of individuals or of schools or any other results):

- (a) results of national basic skills testing (including testing under section 18),
- (b) results of Higher School Certificate examinations and related assessments,
- (c) results of annual or other periodic assessments of the academic performance of students contained in reports to parents on student achievement.

The regulations may determine whether particular results are or are not results referred to in paragraphs (a)–(c).

- (2) School results may, in accordance with a relevant national agreement, be provided by the State to the Commonwealth or to an authority established by the Commonwealth.
- (3) School results must not be publicly revealed in a way that ranks or otherwise compares the results of particular schools, except as authorised by or under a relevant national agreement.
- (4) A person must not, in a newspaper or other document that is publicly available in this State:
 - (a) publish any ranking or other comparison of particular schools according to school results, except with the permission of the principals of the schools involved, or
 - (b) identify a school as being in a percentile of less than 90 per cent in relation to school results, except with the permission of the principal of the school.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units in the case of an individual and 500 penalty units in any other case.

- (5) Nothing in subsection (4) prohibits:
 - (a) anything authorised to be done by or under a relevant national agreement, or
 - (b) the publication of the ranking of the schools in the top 10 per cent in relation to the results of Higher School Certificate examinations and related assessments so long as the information used to determine that ranking is information as to the results of students that may be publicly revealed under subsection (6) (c).
- (6) School results must not be publicly revealed if the results of an identified student are revealed, except as follows:
 - (a) to the student or to the student's parents, or to anyone with the student's or parent's consent,
 - (b) to the principal of a school (including a school in another State or Territory) at which the student is enrolling, is enrolled or was previously enrolled,
 - (c) in the case of results of Higher School Certificate examinations and related assessments—by or with the approval of the Board, by way of the publication of the results of students who the Board considers have achieved outstanding results.
- (7) The functions of the State under this section may be exercised by the Director-General or, if authorised by a relevant national agreement, by a State educational authority that arranges the testing, examinations or assessments concerned.
- (8) This section has effect despite any other Act or law or the decision of any tribunal.

Appendix A: Special provisions

Note that specific injuries or illnesses of students close to the date of the test may also necessitate access to special provisions.

Important note

The school test administrator is required to use the VALID administration portal to accurately document the type of special provision provided for each student. This information is necessary for:

- students, parents, carers and the school to meaningfully interpret the achievements of students in the test
- research about how to better cater for students with special needs.

Special provisions for VALID are described on the following pages. These should be modified as appropriate to meet the needs of students for this online test.

Reader

Note that the instructions and text in resources is read for all students in VALID. Students can control whether text is read and how often text is read.

Students who usually use screen reader software will be able to use it to read other text, such as the individual tasks in the test. Note that some animations are not able to be read by screen reading software.

For some students without screen reading software, a reader can be provided to ensure that all the words in VALID can be read to each student. These students would have:

- high support needs in reading, recognised by an established and documented school support program that is endorsed by the principal and has the support of the school's Learning Support Team

OR

- a processing difficulty due to a head injury.

If a reader is necessary, they may read everything to the student but must not interpret or explain. In almost all cases, a student with a reader will also require separate supervision for VALID. Extra time may also be provided.

Computer user (writer)

A computer user (writer) may be provided for a student who:

- has difficulty typing due to a medical condition or accident (for example, a broken arm)

- experiences excessive fatigue of hands or upper limbs due to a medical condition
- has a processing difficulty due to a head injury.

Directions to a computer user

- The computer user may be either a teacher or school support person who has been briefed in the test procedures and these directions.
- In almost all cases, separate supervision should also be provided so that other students are not disturbed. Extra time may be allocated if needed.
- Test procedures and conditions apply as outlined in this manual.
- The computer user will type as the student dictates and may not suggest ideas nor words nor prompt in any other way.
- The computer user may read back the student's text throughout the process to help the student maintain continuity until the text is complete.
- The computer user may alter the text as directed by the student until the response is complete.

Oral or sign support

Students with moderate/severe to profound hearing loss may access oral or sign support. The support person must be a skilled and familiar communication partner with the student, such as the support class teacher or itinerant support teacher. The support person is permitted to read or sign the instructions.

Note that all audio in VALID is also provided as text.

Colour and size modifications

Computer settings can be adjusted to alter the display colours, and font and image sizes. Assistive technologies can also be used to make text colour and size appropriate for students who regularly use these modifications in science lessons. Please contact your vision support teacher for additional assistance with these technologies.

Students using magnification or text-reading software are allowed additional time of approximately 15 minutes per half hour for VALID.

Increase font size

You can use the browser's View menu to make the font size larger or to Zoom in. Note that for some browsers this needs to be done before opening VALID whereas other browsers allow size modification within VALID. Also be aware that increasing the font size too much can interfere with the screen layout of VALID.

The best approach for increased font size is to use magnification software such as ZoomText. This can increase the display to any size and can also read all screen text, including the test items. Students need experience using ZoomText in their everyday lessons for it to be useful during the test.

Colour modifications

The screen design for VALID has been tested for all forms of colour-blindness. The layout of black text on a white background throughout is suitable for students who usually use black-on-white printed materials.

Screen filters can be used in front of the screen to adjust colours. The system preferences can also be set to alter the screen colour and contrast. Contact the vision support teacher for further advice.

Braille

Alternate test materials will be provided for Braille users. These materials can be used with JAWS or similar software or Braille Notetakers. The VALID team will discuss alternate ways to complete VALID with the vision support teachers and STAs for each school.

Additional time of up to 30 minutes per half-hour is allowed for students using JAWS or similar software with the alternate form of VALID.

Separate supervision

Separate supervision might need to be considered for some students to ensure that others are not distracted by their behaviour or access to special provisions.

Considerations might need to be given to students:

- who require access to a reader, computer user, or oral or sign support
- with a medical condition that requires additional care, medication or other assistance, including access to toilets
- with a behaviour pattern that prevents performance in a large group situation, including students with concentration difficulties and mental health issues
- who require extra time or rest breaks
- with limited access to the test room, such as students using a wheelchair
- who require additional opportunities for movement
- who utilise voice output devices
- who use assistive technology that creates distractive noise factors.

Appropriate rooming and adjustable furniture

Students might require adjustment to the room or furniture, such as:

- a sloping or adjustable desk
- a padded chair or pillow
- a special chair
- seating near a doorway for students who may need to leave the test room due to a medical condition

- seating at the front of the test room for students, for example, with mild/moderate hearing loss when administrative instructions are to be given from the front of the room
- special lighting. Some students might need lighting to be brighter or less intrusive. This might impact on other students and require the students to be given access to separate supervision.

Rest breaks

Rest breaks are to support students who suffer fatigue due to a medical condition. Test time stops during a rest break. The student must not have access to test or reference materials and must not access the computer or a text entry device during rest breaks. Rest breaks should not exceed five minutes per half-hour of the test.

Assistive technology

Students who normally use assistive computer technologies should access the same support for VALID.

Provide the type of computer and assistive technologies that are familiar to the student, preferably ones that are accessed on a regular basis in the classroom.

Specialised software or hardware may be used if required, such as:

- a screen reader
- Perkins Braille
- Mountbatten Braille
- technology with a refreshable Braille display
- speech recognition
- an adaptive mouse or switch
- specialist keyboards
- scan protocols.

Extra time

Teachers might need to allow additional time (five minutes extra per half-hour of the test) to compensate for:

- use of a reader, computer user, or oral or sign support
- use of assistive technology
- a medical condition, including diabetes, chronic fatigue and acquired brain injury
- a disability including chronic physical difficulties, such as paraplegia, muscular dystrophy or cerebral palsy, or a mental health issue
- a moderate/severe to profound hearing loss.

Extra time is also available for students using magnification or text-reading software.

Note that extra time of about five minutes is available for all students if they can use it constructively. As a diagnostic test, the most important issue is that students have sufficient time to complete the test.

Timing is under the control of the supervising teacher; the software does not lock a student out after a pre-set time.

Appendix B

Troubleshooting

Student cannot log on to the school network

- See the school's technology officer about access to the local network.

Government student doesn't have or cannot remember the portal user name and password

- See the school test administrator.

Student cannot log on to the VALID portal

- See the school test administrator to check the VALID passcode.

Student cannot see the correct screen, text and/or images

- See the school's technology officer about hardware and/or software problems.

Student cannot hear the audios

- Check that the sound has not been muted on the computer.
- Test the computer with a different set of headphones/earbuds.
- See the school's technology officer to check that a sound card is fitted and active in the computer and audio is activated throughout the school network.

Student's computer freezes during the test

- Refreshing the screen might fix this problem. Press Ctrl + F5. If not, the student can shut down the computer and restart on the same or another computer. All completed work will be automatically saved.

Student needs to be moved to maintain test conditions

- The student can exit from the test and restart on another computer.
- Note that re-accessing the test is only possible on the test day and if the student has not submitted the test.

Student has accidentally or pre-emptively submitted the test

- A student's test cannot be reopened. Whatever the student has done is preserved. The school test administrator should contact the VALID team to have the test attempt re-opened.

Videos will not Auto-Play (Apple Mac with Safari)

- The videos and audios will not auto-play without adjusting the settings in Safari. With the VALID site open on each computer, click on the Safari menu > Settings for this Website > and select Allow All Auto-Play or alternatively, with the VALID site open Click on the Safari menu > Safari Preferences > Auto-Play > and select Allow All Auto-Play for the website. Unfortunately, Auto-Play is currently not available on iPads.

The VALID team is available to provide support to the school's technology officer and the school test administrator.