



The ACER Advance Awards for Schools

2026 Competition Guide



This Guide Includes:

Competition information	3
Content.....	3
Selecting participants	3
Test time.....	3
Before the competition	4
Schedule your competition day	4
Technical requirements.....	4
Prepare login information	4
On the competition day	6
Materials.....	6
Security.....	6
Administration Instructions	6
During the competition	7
Troubleshooting	10
Why can't my student log in?	10
Why is the competition not appearing for my student?	10
Can I re-open a student's test if they submit it before they are finished?.....	10
Can I close a student's test if they forget to submit it?	10
Reports and results	11
Competition results release	11
Awards and certificates.....	11
Generating reports.....	11

Competition information

Designed by the Australian Council for Educational Research, the ACER Advance Awards for Schools competition is a free competition for users of ACER's PAT assessments, with the purpose of challenging your high ability students.

For your convenience, the assessments can be scheduled for a date and time of your choice during the competition period which will run throughout Term 3 2026. They will be administered through your schools OARS online account.

Content

The ACER Advance Awards for Schools Competition is available for Years 7,8 and 9 for two different learning areas: **Numeracy** and **Literacy**. Both multiple-choice assessments are designed to measure students' problem solving and reasoning abilities and encourage them to use their higher order thinking skills to apply known concepts to new situations. Students must sit both learning areas to participate in the competition.

Note: The ACER Advance Awards for Schools competition is designed to challenge your top performing students and provide insights into their performance at a high level. It is not intended to be a curriculum-driven assessment.

Selecting participants

The Advance Awards for Schools competition is intended for high-achieving students and aims to stretch their skills and knowledge. As such, we advise teacher discretion in deciding which students to enrol for the competition. You may select up to 20 students from each of Years 7, 8 and 9 to participate.

You can securely confirm the names of the students who will take part via our *requests* page. Please click [here](#), or type <https://schoolsupport.acer.org/hc/en-au/requests/new> into your browser, select 'administering tests' and upload a spreadsheet containing each student's first name, last name and year level.

Test time

Students are allowed 45 minutes to complete each learning area. Additional time is not to be granted without prior approval from ACER. If you have a student in need of additional time, please contact the ACER Support Team at school.support@acer.org.

Before the competition

Schedule your competition day

Ensure you have confirmed which of your students are participating (see 'Selecting Participants' on Page 3 for further instructions on how to do this).

Schedule your competition for a date and time that is convenient for your school, before the end of Term 3 2026. Students must complete both learning areas, however these may be scheduled on separate days to suit your timetable. It is preferable that all students from all year levels sit the same test on the same day at a similar time to avoid discussion about the competition content during recess and lunchtime that may give some students an advantage. ACER recommends that the assessments are administered in the morning and not immediately before or after an exciting school event.

Technical requirements

Load the browser exam by clicking [here](#) or enter <https://oars.acer.edu.au/browserexam/> into your web browser from a student computer or device to check whether your school's set up meets the minimum technical requirements. We ask that you avoid using Microsoft Edge due to the image search function within this browser.

Alternatively, send the following technical requirements to your school's IT technician:

- Minimum screen resolution 1024w x 768h
- Minimum DSL or cable internet connection: 56 Kbps
- Compatible computers and devices: PC or laptop, Apple Mac, iPad (not iPad Mini), other tablet devices.
- Compatible web browsers (latest versions): Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Safari.
- The following domains must be whitelisted/ permitted by the network firewall or security settings:
 - acer.org/
 - acer.edu.au/
 - delivery.acer.edu.au/
 - delivery2.acer.edu.au/

Prepare login information

Make note of your school's online assessment login page, or make sure that the page URL is saved on student devices, or available as a link from your school's intranet. The web address will be similar to <https://oars.acer.edu.au/your-school-name>.

Download or print a list of your students' login details. This is completed from the **Students** page within your school's online assessment account.

If any students require changed test provisions due to specific learning needs, please **advise us of any adjustments required prior to sitting the competition at school.support@acer.org**.

These must be approved by ACER prior to completing the competition.

Please note that students' screens should be monitored as part of test invigilation. The online assessment system does not 'lock' the students' browsers or restrict access to other websites. If you have concerns about students using screen reading programs, browser extensions or other applications while completing the competition, please contact your school's IT staff to determine how best to manage or restrict this.

On the competition day

Materials

To sit the competition, students should be provided with your schools' online assessment login page (<https://oars.edu.au/your-school-name>) and their unique usernames and passwords.

Students are permitted to use pens/pencils and paper for working out during the competition. Calculators are not permitted for the Numeracy Ability assessment.

Students should not have access to support resources such as a dictionary, thesaurus, or any other written resources or information for any part of the competition.

Security

The competition must be administered under the standard testing conditions with invigilation. Students must not open different browsers or tabs during testing. Teachers should strictly supervise students to ensure compliance.

If a student navigates away from a test, they will see a warning box appear saying: 'Please do not leave the test'. The online interface monitors student behaviour during the test (e.g. when they navigate away from the test) and records this detail.

Remote testing is not permitted without prior written agreement from ACER.

Administration Instructions

Students will not be automatically locked out of the tests after the allowed time passes. You must monitor and manage the time, including accommodating toilet breaks or other interruptions that may occur.

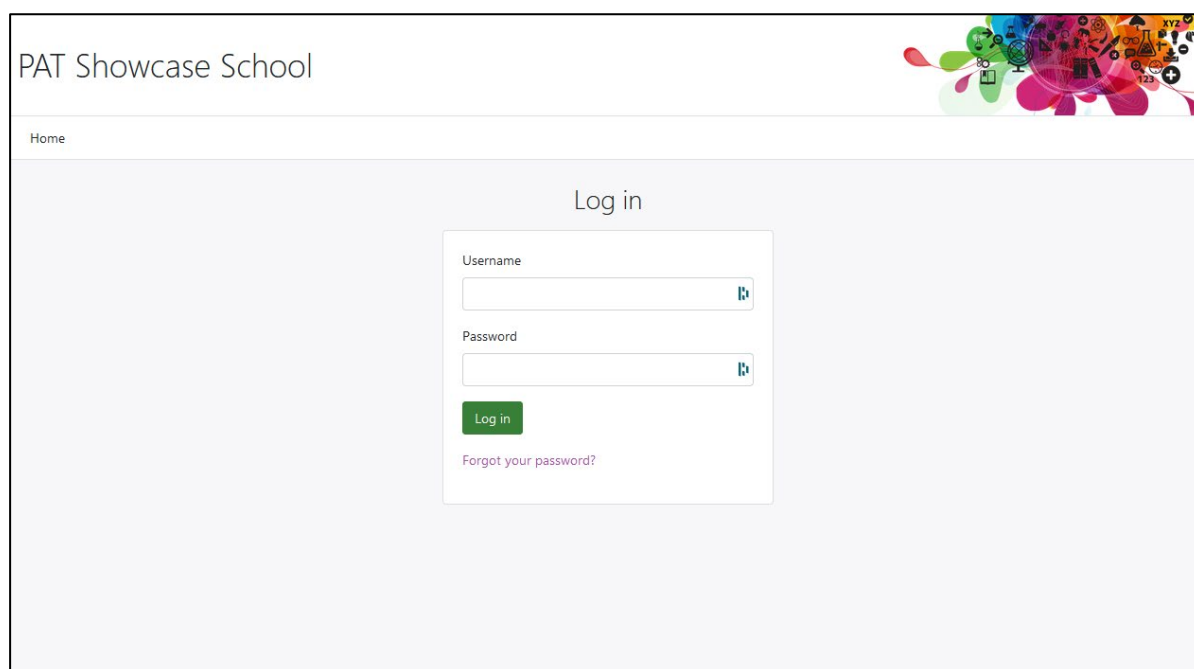
Student responses are automatically saved each time they navigate to another question.

There are no audio instructions within the tests.

If technical problems cause the need to postpone the completion of the competition, students may close the browser without losing their progress.

During the competition

Once students are seated at their computers or devices, instruct them to load your school's online assessment login page. Example: <https://oars.edu.au/your-school-name>.



PAT Showcase School

Home

Log in

Username

Password

Log in

[Forgot your password?](#)

Each student should be given their username and password.

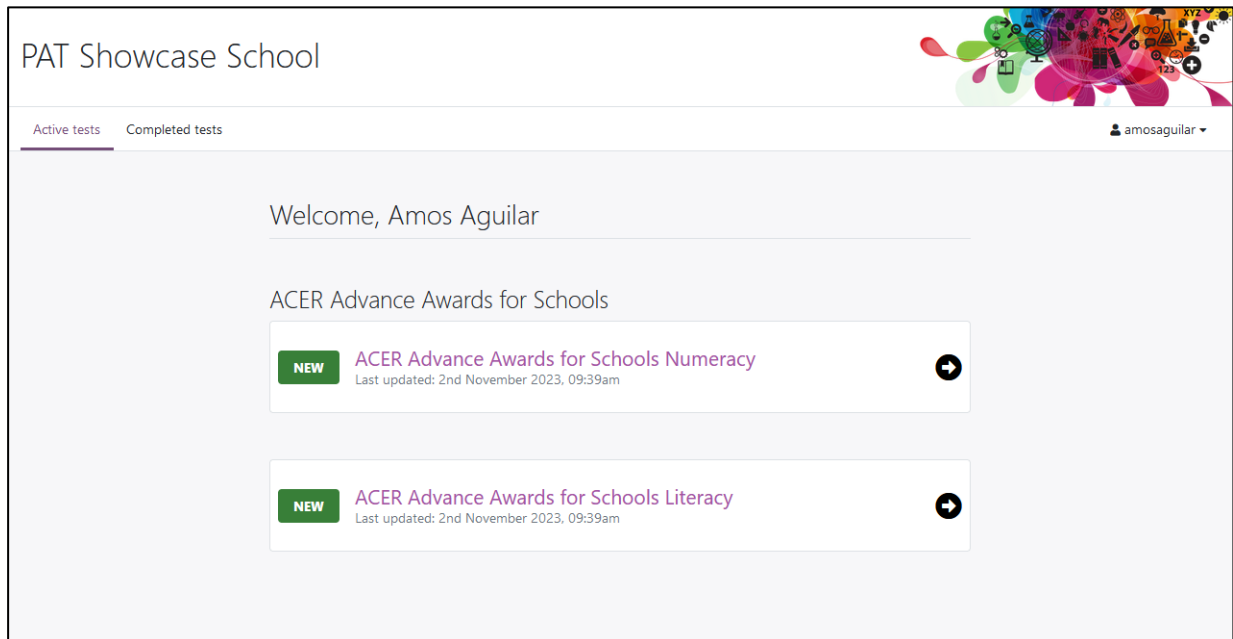
Students should enter their usernames and passwords and then click **Log in**.

Note: Usernames and passwords are case sensitive.

Say:

*'Please follow my instructions and do not click through the screens unless you are told to do so. Please enter the username and password given to you and then click **Log in**.'*

Students will see a screen listing all tests currently assigned to them:



Each student's name will be displayed at the top of the welcome page.

Check that all students are logged in with the correct details.

Say:

Please raise your hand if the name at the top of the page is not your own.

Once you have ensured all students are logged in, they may open the test.

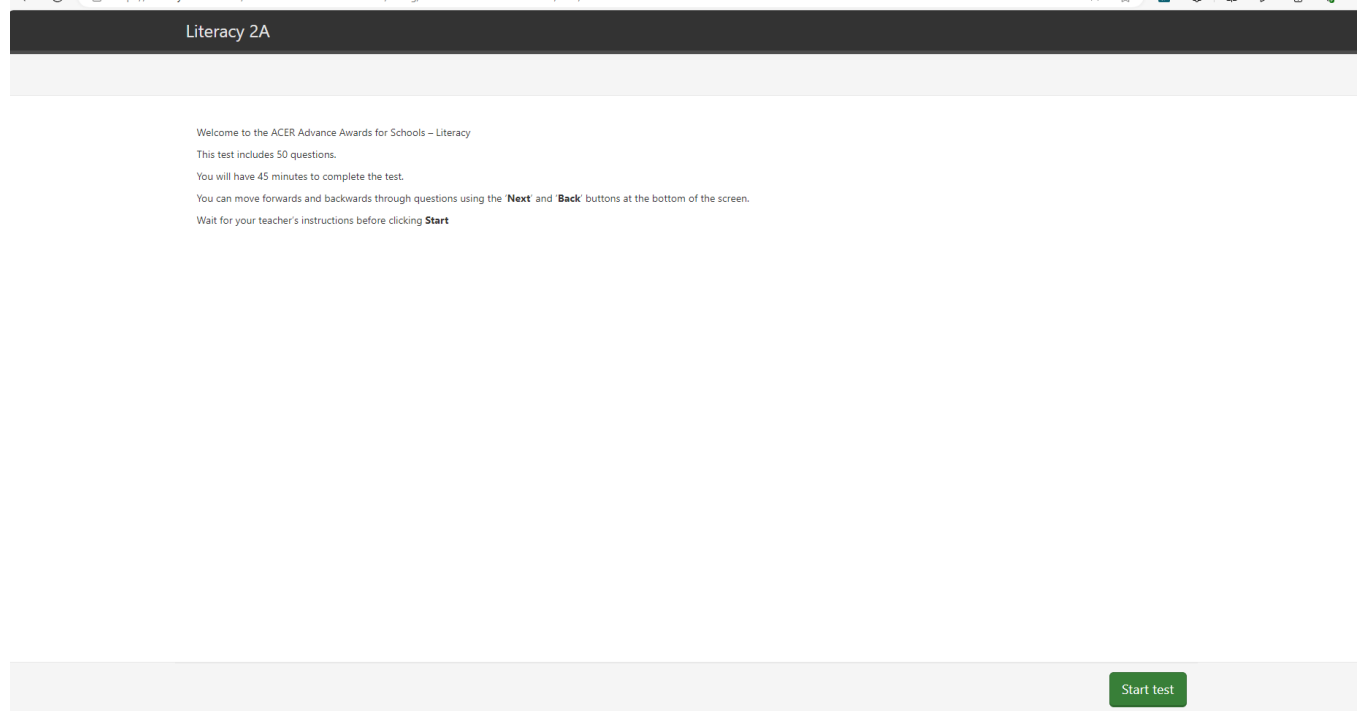
Say:

*'Please click **ACER Advance Awards for Schools**' and indicate which of Numeracy or Literacy is being sat in this session.*

Say:

'I will read through the directions shown on your screen. Please listen carefully and read silently along with me so you understand the instructions. Please do not begin the test until you are told to do so.'

Read through the instructions on the screen:



Then say:

*'Work as carefully as you can. The test will take 45 minutes. Once you have completed your test, check back over any questions that you may have missed. When you are sure that you have completed all questions, click **Finish** on the last page. Are there any questions?'*

Check that the instructions have been understood. Answer any questions about the test but not the test content and make sure that students are ready to begin.

Say:

*Click **Start test** to begin.*

After 30 minutes say:

'You now have 15 minutes left.'

After 40 minutes say:

'There are now have 5 minutes left.'

After 45 minutes say:

*'Please click **End** in the navigation bar and then click **Finish**.'*

Troubleshooting

If you encounter any problems when administering the tests, contact ACER for support:

Phone: **1300 006 577** Email: **school.support@acer.org**

Why can't my student log in?

There are several possible causes:

- Logins are case sensitive. Check that the student is entering their username and password correctly.
- Some devices and browsers will automatically capitalise some words, or automatically fill login fields with saved details. The student should be able to overwrite these automatic suggestions by typing their complete details. If the problem persists, check the browser or device settings, or use another web browser.
- Check that the student is on the correct login page.
- If you have a staff login, check that the student's login details are correct by logging in to the account with your staff login details and clicking the student's name on the **Students** page.

Why is the competition not appearing for my student?

The competition is not currently assigned to the student. Please contact ACER to assign the competition to your student.

Can I re-open a student's test if they submit it before they are finished?

Yes. If you have a staff login, follow the steps below to re-open a student's test to allow them to continue:

1. Log in to your school's account using your staff login.
2. Click **Students** and locate the student's name in your list.
3. Click the student's name to view their profile and then click the **Tests** tab.
4. Click the dropdown menu next to the test you need to re-open and then click **Re-open test**.

Can I close a student's test if they forget to submit it?

Yes. If you have a staff login, follow the steps below to close a student's test:

1. Log in to your school's account using your staff login.
2. Click **Students** and locate the student's name in your list. (You will see the unfinished test listed in the **Active tests** column and marked with a pencil icon).
3. Click the check box next to the student's name and then click **Tests > Close unfinished tests**.
4. Select the test you need to close and then click **Close test**.

Reports and results

The ACER Advance Awards for Schools provides a basic raw score report online immediately after the assessment has been completed. You can access the report through your online school account.

Competition results release

Competition results will be released at the end of Term 3 2026. This will include announcements about your student's certificate results and how they placed compared to other students who sat the competition around Australia.

Awards and certificates

Every student that participates in the ACER Advance Awards for Schools will receive a personalised printed certificate of achievement from ACER. Certificates will be posted to your school in Term 4 2026 and can be presented at school assemblies.

All participating schools will be listed on the *ACER Advance Awards for Schools* website and will receive a participation plaque and the school with the overall highest achievement will be featured in ACER's Teacher Magazine.

Generating reports

After your students have completed their test, you can view reports.

The reports for the ACER Advance Awards for Schools should be generated from the Students page of your OARS account by following the steps below:

- Log in to your OARS account
- Go to the Students page
- Select the group of students you want to include in the report
- Click 'Select all X students'
- Click 'Generate Report'
- Choose 'ACER Advance Awards for Schools Numeracy' or 'ACER Advance Awards for Schools Literacy'
- Choose 'Group Report'
- Click 'Generate Report'
- Click 'View Report'

You can save the report as a spreadsheet by clicking the 'Download' button and choosing 'Table (Excel file)'. You can also click the 'View charts' button and print a chart showing the students' performance, which can be sorted by either question number or the percentage of correct responses to each question.

The reports will only show you the raw scores achieved by each student on the test, as well as the percentage of students within the group that responded correctly to each question.