

PPAD-E Third Year Standardisation

Data Protection Declaration – Information for Students, Parents and Teachers

About the PPAD-E Pilot

PPAD-E is an English literacy test for use in post primary schools in Ireland. This test, called the Post-Primary Assessment & Diagnosis – English (PPAD-E) test, has been standardised for First Year students already, but is now being extended to Third Year students. The PPAD-E assessment tool was piloted with Third Year students in the autumn of 2024 and is now being standardised with Third Years in a sample of post-primary schools across Ireland.

The preparation for the Standardisation involved test questions being piloted in Autumn 2024 with a large number of Third Year students (n=449) in 20 schools across a selected number of regions in Ireland. Questions were tested to see whether they ‘worked’ in the way we hoped with this year group. Data were analysed to see whether test questions were too difficult, too easy, and whether they provided us with enough useful information.

The Standardisation will create norms for this test with Third Year students. Testing is due to take place in autumn, 2025. It is being standardised for Third Years by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the Educational Research Centre (ERC).

Identity and contact details of controller:

Educational Research Centre
DCU St Patrick’s Campus
Drumcondra Road Upper
Dublin 9
Ireland
Telephone: +353 1 837 3789
Email: ppad-e@erc.ie

For which purpose are data collected and processed?

Data collection and processing are necessary for the purpose of compliance with a legal obligation to which the controller is subject (GDPR Article 6.1c and 7(2)(a) of the Education Act 1998). In this instance, the ERC has a statutory function to provide an assessment support service to schools, and the development of PPAD-E is part of that service. (The ERC’s Establishment Order, which sets out its functions as a statutory body, can be viewed at <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/si/392/made/en/print>)

Which information is requested?

Information from students

Students are invited to complete the PPAD-E Standardisation assessment, which is designed to provide screening and diagnostic information about their literacy in five areas: reading comprehension, reading speed, reading words aloud, spelling, and writing. Student names will be collected to streamline the test administration process in schools but will not be included in the information sent from schools to the ERC.

Participation

There is no obligation on any individual to participate in the study. However, we hope to obtain high participation rates as this will help to ensure that the test is developed in a way that reflects the needs of wide range of students and teachers in a variety of school settings.

- Students will not be disadvantaged in any way by non-completion of the test.
- Parents and students are provided with information letters at least one week in advance of testing. A withdrawal process is provided which can, if desired, be completed by the parent/guardian (or parent/student together).
- Any participant who wants to remove or amend their information can contact the Educational Research Centre (at development@erc.ie). If an individual withdraws from the study, no additional data will be collected from that individual.
- Queries related to how personal information is protected can be directed to the ERC's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@erc.ie).

What kind of data are collected?

Data from answers to the PPAD-E test questions are collected and stored. For some parts of the test, this is in the form of a numeric score (e.g. 1/0). For other parts of the test, it is in the form of a score and the specific answer provided (e.g. if a student is asked to choose a word to fill a gap in a piece of text, the specific word they choose, as well as whether the response is deemed correct (1) or incorrect (0), will be recorded).

Test information cannot, in and of itself, be used to identify individual respondents by name. However, a student ID is recorded to uniquely identify each student. The relationship between this ID and the student name will be known only to the PPAD-E School Coordinator (a teacher in the school). A class ID is used to identify the teacher of each selected class, while a school ID is used to identify the school. While teacher names are not collected formally, if teacher names are supplied by schools as class identifiers and/or are mentioned informally throughout administration, they may be known to the PPAD-E School Coordinator (a teacher in the school), the NEPS/ERC staff who provide quality control and oversee (and may in certain circumstances administer) the assessment, the test development team in the ERC.

Where, how and for how long are data from the PPAD-E Pilot stored?

PPAD-E Standardisation data are stored securely in pseudonymous form, that is: processed in such a manner that the personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information (any such additional information being kept separately and subject to technical and organisation measures to ensure that the personal data are not attributed to an identified or identifiable natural person). These data cannot be accessed by any external persons or systems. Moreover, any ERC employees who access the data for processing have been suitably briefed on what constitutes an acceptable treatment of data and have signed a confidentiality agreement.

The data are stored as follows:

Response data are stored indefinitely so that they remain available for reference/analysis.

Test booklets are stored until Autumn 2026 to allow us to complete data checks and document Standardisation administration procedures. At that point, the data are anonymised so that there is no possibility of an individual participant being identifiable.

With whom and how are data from the PPAD-E Standardisation shared?

As part of initial processing, the ERC may share some data from the PPAD-E Standardisation with its subcontractors. All subcontractors have signed a Data Processing Agreement and confidentiality agreement with the ERC. Pseudonymised test data may be shared with NEPS during the data entry, data coding, and data analysis process (for example, to aid discussions of which responses to a reading comprehension item are given credit). All data associated with this project will be stored on servers located in the EEA (in Ireland with back-ups held on alternative servers in Europe).

PPAD-E student test data will be shared with teachers and students in the spring of 2026.

Anonymised, aggregated data may be used as the basis for research articles (for example, in peer reviewed journals). No individual or school will ever be identifiable from such outputs.

Public accessibility

Anonymised PPAD-E Standardisation data may be made publicly available. In the event this data is published, it will not be possible to identify any individual student or any individual school from the dataset

Automated decision-making and profiling

No automated decision-making, including profiling, referred to in Article 22 GDPR is conducted.

Rights of data subjects

Data Subjects are entitled to the rights set out in Articles 15-21 GDPR.

Data Subjects have the right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority. The relevant authority in Ireland is:

Data Protection Commission

6 Pembroke Row

Dublin 2

D02 X963

Ireland

Website: www.dataprotection.ie

What are my rights and where can I find out more?

You have a right to have your child's data treated with confidentiality and with respect.

If you want to know more you can follow this link: <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Data-Protection/Information.html>

You can exercise your right to correct your data, or ask that it is not used in certain ways.

Please see [Your Rights under the GDPR | Data Protection Commission](#) for the Data Protection Commissioner's Guide to Data Subject Rights.

You have the right to lodge a complaint with the Data Protection Commissioner, please see www.dataprotection.ie

If you have any questions about this study, please email PPAD-E@erc.ie.