

*Improving Learning*



# Corporate Profile



ACER's mission is to create  
and promote research-based  
knowledge, products and services  
to improve learning across  
the lifespan.



## About ACER

**The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is one of the world's leading educational research centres. ACER provides state-of-the-art research-based knowledge, products and services to improve learning in both formal and informal settings across the lifespan.**

ACER was established in 1930. For the past 76 years ACER has built a strong reputation as a provider of reliable support and expertise to education policy makers and professional practitioners.

As a not-for-profit organisation, independent of government, ACER receives no direct financial support and generates its entire income through contracted research and development projects and through products and services that it develops and distributes.

ACER has experienced significant growth in recent years and now has over 240 staff located in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Dubai and Delhi.



# A Research Leader

**ACER is a leader in the provision of quality educational research, both within Australia and internationally. As a national, independent research body, ACER brings a high level of expertise and objectivity to its work.**

Blending solid experience and creative talent with established methodologies, ACER is a full-service research consultancy specialising in collecting and interpreting information to shape strategic decision making.

One of ACER's great strengths is its people. Researchers bring many years of experience and expertise in a range of disciplines and research methods to their projects.

ACER has seven research programs:

## Assessment and Reporting

Research is conducted into the assessment and reporting of a wide range of educational outcomes (academic and social). This work, undertaken for clients nationally and internationally and in support of ACER's own tests and assessment programs, includes the refinement of test constructs; studies of test validity and reliability; assessment methods and formats; psychometric analyses of test data; and methods for item banking, online test delivery and reporting.

## Learning Processes

Research seeks to identify ways of supporting learners and learning in school and non-school settings and investigates cognitive, affective and behavioural processes and factors that affect learning. Projects include studies of literacy learning; links between education and health; boys' education; and Indigenous education.

## National and International Surveys

Research in this area draws on staff expertise in sampling, survey management, the analysis of survey data and the interpretation and reporting of results in conducting large scale survey research. Current work includes the management of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and work for the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

## System and School Testing

Research focuses on identifying more effective ways of monitoring achievement across entire education systems, providing more usable school-level reports and providing better feedback to teachers and parents. Projects are designed to provide educational decision makers (system managers, school leaders, classroom teachers and parents) with improved information about student learning.

## Teaching and Leadership

Research is undertaken into the development of teachers as professionals and into the relationship between teacher learning and improved student learning. Current work includes investigations of the role of professional standards in improving teacher practice; effective forms of pre-service education and teacher professional development; and links between professional development and student learning.

## Transitions and Economics of Education

Research explores influences on the educational and occupational pathways of young people as they progress from school to further education, training and work. Studies investigate the labour market and social outcomes of different pathways as well as evaluations of particular policies and programs.

## Early Childhood Education

Research focuses on young children's learning, development and care in a range of early childhood contexts including the family and community, child care and preschool centres and the first years of school. Projects include development, evaluation and policy work aimed at improving the quality of children's experiences and learning outcomes; strengthening practitioner professionalism, competence and quality; and supporting families during the critical early childhood years.



# Professional Resources

**In addition to being a national centre for educational policy research and advice, ACER develops and provides a range of research-based products and services to support the work of professional practitioners.**

## ACER Press

ACER Press publishes and distributes an extensive range of research-based resources including tests, kits, books and software for professional practitioners in education, psychology, human resources, parent education, mental health, speech pathology and early learning and development. In addition ACER Press publishes a range of periodicals. These include two academic journals, the *Australian Journal of Career Development (AJCD)* and the *Australian Journal of Education (AJE)*; *Professional Educator*, Australia's premier quarterly education magazine, published for the Australian College of Educators (ACE) and *Teacher*, a monthly education magazine for practising teachers.

## Assessment services

ACER provides secure, fee-for-service testing programs to schools, universities, employers and professional organisations. These programs include selection tests for entry to schools and universities, scholarship tests and tests for diagnostic and monitoring purposes, as well as tests to support the selection of capable and appropriate employees. Examples include the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT), Cooperative Scholarship Testing Program (CSTP), admission tests such as the Undergraduate Medicine and Health Sciences Admissions Test (UMAT) and the Graduate Australian Medical School Admission Test (GAMSAT) used by Australian medical schools and some United Kingdom universities, and recruitment tools such as the Critical Reasoning Test, Problem Solving Skills Test and Graduate Skills Assessment.

## Library services

ACER's Cunningham Library is one of Australia's most comprehensive educational research libraries. It provides educators and researchers with access to more than 50 000 books, 400 professional journals

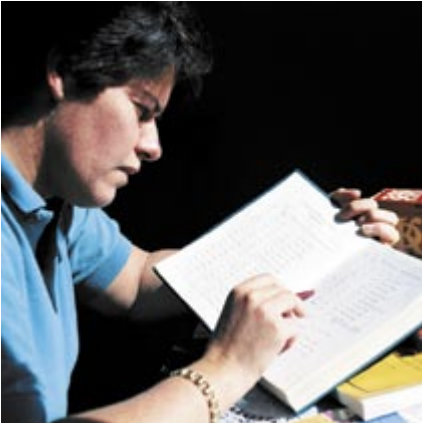
and an extensive collection of conference papers and reports. The library also offers a variety of online information services, including library catalogues, electronic databases, literature searches and document delivery services.

## Professional learning

Through its Centre for Professional Learning, ACER provides workshops, seminars and conferences to support professional learning and research-based professional practice across a range of occupations including education, psychology and human resources. A wide range of options for tailored professional development programs is also available. Professional learning programs draw on the expertise of ACER Press authors as well as ACER researchers and associates.

## Leadership development

The Australian Principals Centre supports the professional learning and work of school leaders. It provides services which include accreditation, career development programs, leadership and management courses and information services.



# ACER's International Work

**ACER works in an increasingly international context. ACER provides support through consultancies and professional development programs to several countries establishing national assessment programs, undertakes commissioned research and provides assessment services to a broad range of international clients.**

## International Studies

ACER manages the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) project to assess the mathematical, scientific and reading literacy skills of 15-year-olds in more than 50 countries. ACER has also been responsible for the Australian component of studies conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). These studies include the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Civics Education Study.

## International Assessment Services

A number of ACER's assessment services have been adapted or specially developed for international clients.

The International Schools Assessment (ISA) was developed by ACER researchers to measure the reading, mathematical literacy

and writing (narrative and exposition) achievement of students in grades 3 to 10 in international schools worldwide.

An international testing program, *globalAchieve* provides pencil and paper tests for students in Years 3 to 10.

The tests measure student performance in the generic skills that underpin the teaching of English, mathematics and science. The program is administered by schools in India and the Middle East.

A number of UK universities now use ACER-designed tests for entry into medical schools.

## Development projects

ACER has extensive experience in providing professional development programs for ministries of education and institutions throughout the Asia-Pacific and through agencies such as Australia's overseas aid program (AusAID) and the World Bank. ACER has undertaken a broad range of consultancy work to support aid-funded projects. Recent examples include:

- work for the Ministry of Education in Papua New Guinea to develop a curriculum standards monitoring test to provide information on literacy and numeracy levels;
- work for the Ministry of Education in Chile to advise on the development of a standards based curriculum and assessment system, refinement of

outcomes statements and alignment of monitoring statements;

- training in test development for teachers from the Maldives as part of a project to establish a national assessment program; and
- advice and training on student achievement testing and teacher-based assessment strategies in the Philippines to help establish systems for monitoring student learning.

## ACER International Institute

ACER draws on its expertise across a range of key educational areas to provide professional learning programs that are immediately relevant to the work of educational practitioners, researchers and other professionals in countries where education is a priority. These include short courses, workshops, seminars and tailor-made programs for special interest groups.



## Future Directions

**ACER's ambition for the future is to enhance the solid reputation and expertise it has developed over more than 75 years and to continue its role as a major international provider of research-based information, products and services.**

ACER will also expand on its program of research and development in support of learning in vocational education and training and in higher education institutions while maintaining and expanding work undertaken in support of schools.

A priority for ACER over the coming years will be to support the professional work of practitioners, providing ready access to reliable, usable research information and research-based materials and services.

With increased world-wide demand for educational research and knowledge, ACER is well-placed to provide leading-edge capabilities to improve learning – at home, in school, in tertiary education institutions and the workplace well into the future.

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