



Department of Education

SENAT

Special Education Needs Assessment Tool

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Western Australian public schools: Assessment and Reporting Policy

This policy will specify how principals and teachers will:

- Provide individual students with feedback on their performances;
- engage in ongoing communication with parents about student achievement and progress;
- use student performance information to plan future learning programs; and
- Identify an alternative reporting format for those students where appropriate.



Where we have come from...

Foundation Outcome Statements:

- not developmental
- not always easy to demonstrate student and achievement

Foundation Reporting Project:

- A scale of *Foundation Indicators* of the knowledge, skills and understandings that students within Foundation may demonstrate.
- *Progressions* that provide fine-grained information about small progressive steps in student learning to enable teachers to consistently assess, monitor and communicate student achievement as well as assist in planning personalised programs that target student's specific learning needs

United Kingdom *P* scales



What are the P scales?

- A set of descriptions for recording the achievement of students with SEN who are working towards the first level of the UK National Curriculum (NC)
- Describe some of the important skills, knowledge and understanding that students may gain from their learning
- Levels P1-3 are generic
 - Ⓢ sub-divided to demonstrate smaller steps of progress
 - Ⓢ learning areas provide context
- P4 – P8 are learning area specific
- <http://www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum/sen/537.aspx>



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Performance Descriptions for assessing students with SEN

- Adapted the UK P scales to the WA context i.e. pupils became students, mapping to the Curriculum Framework
- Consultative groups across WA – DoE and University of Northampton
- 2010 draft scales online for all learning areas

Special Education Needs Assessment Tool (SENAT)



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The Special Education Needs Assessment Tool (SENAT)

- UK *P scales* adapted to reflect the Western Australian context
- Must provide practical support for teachers
- Expansion of indicators with examples
- Consistency across all settings
- Alignment with the Australian Curriculum



What is the *Special Education Needs Assessment Tool*?

- SENAT supports teachers in making reliable judgements when assessing the achievements of a student with special education needs when mapping the progress of students as part of the cycle of planning, teaching, learning and assessment.
- **SENAT uses Performance Descriptions to build a picture of what a student with special education needs may know, understand and do.**



How can the SENAT Performance Descriptions be used?

The SENAT Performance Descriptions can:

- Support periodic and summative assessment, enabling teachers to make and record judgements about student achievement at nominated reporting periods.
- Track student achievement within specific learning areas
- Identify and record individual student achievement
- Report on student achievement to parents
- Strengthen collaboration amongst staff
- Provide information (data) for whole-school development and improvement



Do the *SENAT* Performance Descriptions assess everything a student may achieve?

No.

- SENAT Performance Descriptions do not provide a full account of all that students might achieve.
- SENAT Performance Descriptions complement the student's Documented Plan (Individual Education Plan) and provide teachers with a more detailed map for assessing the knowledge, understandings and skills of the student.



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Are the *SENAT* Performance Descriptions curriculum?

No.

- SENAT Performance Descriptions are designed to assist teachers in making professional judgements when *assessing and reporting* the achievements of a student with special education needs not to provide a checklist of curriculum.



What types of evidence can be assessed using the SENAT?

Assessment is part of the teaching and learning cycle and teachers generally collect many forms of evidence to build a profile of individual student.

Assessments and judgements about student achievement in relation to the SENAT Performance Descriptions can include evidence from a number of different forms. For example:

- Anecdotal observations
- Student work samples
- Student responses to questions
- Photographs, video and audio tapes
- Home/school communication books



How much evidence do I need to make a reliable judgement?

- Large amounts of evidence are not required to make reliable judgements about student performance.
- However, judgements should not be made on one piece of evidence as this would not provide a true picture of the student's performance.
- Teachers will use their professional discretion in deciding what is sufficient evidence to support a best-fit judgement.
- Teacher will need to take into account:
 - Student's prior achievements
 - The levels of support, modelling or prompting the student receives
 - Other contextual issues that might influence learning and responses
 - The effects of the barriers to learning experienced by the student



Does a student need to demonstrate every element of the *SENAT* Performance Description?

No.

The examples of activities or responses provided with the SENAT Performance Descriptions are illustrative rather than prescriptive.

Teachers may use their expertise to provide personalised alternative but cognitively equivalent learning for individual students.



How many *SENAT* Performance Descriptions are there?

There are ten differentiated SENAT Performance Descriptions for each learning area with PD 1 being the lowest and PD 10 the highest.

- PD1 to PD3 show the earliest levels of achievement for students with special education needs and are common across all subjects.
- PD4 to PD7 demonstrates the emergence of skills, knowledge and understanding across all learning areas
- PD 8 to PD 10 aligns with the achievement standards of the Australian Curriculum
 - PD 8 aligns with Foundation
 - PD 9 aligns with Year 1
 - PD 10 aligns with Year 2



Special Education Needs Assessment Tool: Maths

- ⑩ Aligned with *First Steps Developmental Continuum*
- ⑩ *Indicators expanded and examples given*
- ⑩ *Australian Curriculum strands:*
 - ⑩ *Number and Algebra*
 - ⑩ *Measurement and Geometry*
- ⑩ *SENAT Performance Descriptions extended to include PD 9 and PD 10*



Workshop Activity

- ⑩ In pairs, think of a student you work with...
- ⑩ Explore the SENAT Maths Number and Algebra and make a best-fit judgement as to where you feel the student sits
- ⑩ Answer and write down your response:
 1. Could you identify where the student sits within the continuum?



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Western Australian SENAT Trial 2011

- ⑩ 25 schools within 5 clusters
- ⑩ Sharing the expertise of education support to build the capacity of local schools
- ⑩ Establishing moderation practices
- ⑩ Mainframe Reporting to Parents Tool
- ⑩ Development of the system Student Achievement Information System (SAIS)



- “ Great for building positive relationships with all schools involved, be it main stream or Ed Support, teachers or ed assistants. This collaborative involvement of all schools has given greater understanding of the expectation of the levels of students' work between all participants.”*
- “ I found it very beneficial and interesting to talk to different educators about students' abilities and also our expectations of student work and progress. It was also very helpful to share with other educators about different resources, ideas and information that we have.”*
- “ I can see the SENAT being of great use and importance. For me, and the students that are coming through the public school system, these levels are strongly needed. At the present time, there is no level low enough for some students that are currently within the school system. I am looking forward to having an assessment tool such as SENAT to help me guide me in what I need to concentrate on to help those students that do not fit in to the higher levels.”*



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