

PISA 2009 Main Study
OMB # 1850-0755 v.8
Responses to Questions from OMB
June 17, 2009

1. What is the justification for adding math and science queries on a reading survey? Are these “out of scope” items considered optional or mandatory? Did NCES raise concerns at the international meeting about these additions?

Response: PISA is an international assessment of the reading literacy, mathematics literacy, and science literacy of 15-year-old students. All three areas are core components of the assessment. Although one of the three subject areas is assessed in depth while the other two are considered minor subject areas in each cycle. Reading literacy is the main domain in PISA 2009.

In PISA 2009, the field test included only reading items because that was the only area in which new items were being tested. The mathematics and science items to be used in the main study were all used in previous administrations of PISA.

2. What is the rationale for asking about the sex of the administrator questionnaire respondent?

Response: All the PISA instruments including the School and Student Questionnaires were designed by a consortium of international organizations. The item concerning the sex of the respondent was added and approved by the consortium after the field test. This item will provide data on the distribution of school principals by gender -- whether school leadership tends to be more male or more female varies from country to country and it was felt that this was a variable of interest so was added by the Consortium.

3. Does NCES think it is odd to have only one demographic question on the administrator questionnaire?

Response: See the response to Question 2 above. We do not think there are other appropriate demographic questions to ask the administrators in the international study. For instance, we cannot ask about the race of the administrator since the race categories are not universal. Many of the demographic questions are cultural sensitive and cannot be compared at the international level. However, for response burden reasons, we are pleased that there are no additional demographic questions.

4. Would you provide an invitation to the June conference?

Response: The invitation to the PISA 09 Summer Conference on June 25-26 will be sent within a day.