

Memorandum

United States Department of Education
Institute of Education Sciences
National Center for Education Statistics

DATE: December 9, 2019

TO: Robert Sivinski, OMB

THROUGH: Kashka Kubzdela, OMB Liaison, NCES

FROM: Holly Xie, Program Officer, PIAAC, NCES

SUBJECT: International Study of Adult Skills and Learning (ISASL) [Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) Cycle II] 2022 Field Test Change Request (OMB# 1850-0870 v.8)

The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) is a cyclical, large-scale study of adult skills and life experiences focusing on education and employment. PIAAC is an international study designed to assess adults in different countries over a broad range of abilities, from simple reading to complex problem-solving skills, and to collect information on individuals' skill use and background. PIAAC is coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and developed by participating countries with the support of the OECD. In the United States, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education (ED) conducts PIAAC. The U.S. participated in the PIAAC Main Study data collection in 2012 and conducted national supplement data collections in 2014 and 2017. All three of these collections are part of PIAAC Cycle I. A new PIAAC cycle is to be conducted every 10 years, and PIAAC Cycle II Main Study data collection will be conducted from August 2021 through March 2022. In preparation for the main study collection, PIAAC Cycle II will begin with a Field Test in 2020, in which 34 countries are expected to participate with the primary goal of evaluating newly developed assessment and questionnaire items and to test the PIAAC 2022 planned operations. PIAAC 2022 defines four core competency domains of adult cognitive skills that are seen as key to facilitating the social and economic participation of adults in advanced economies: (1) literacy, (2) numeracy, (3) reading and numeracy components, and (4) adaptive problem solving. The U.S. will administer all four domains of the PIAAC 2022 assessment to a nationally representative sample of adults, along with a background questionnaire with questions about their education background, work history, the skills they use on the job and at home, their civic engagement, and sense of their health and well-being. The results are used to compare the skills capacities of the workforce-aged adults in participating countries, and to learn more about relationships between educational background, employment, and other outcomes. In addition, in PIAAC 2022, a set of financial literacy questions will be included in the background questionnaire. As in Cycle I, a user-friendly name for PIAAC Cycle II was created – the International Study of Adult Skills and Learning (ISASL) – to represent the program to the public, and will be used on all public-facing materials and reports. As this international program is well-known within the federal and education research communities, we continue to use "PIAAC" in all internal and OMB clearance materials and communications, and use the "PIAAC" name throughout this submission; however all recruitment and communication materials refer to the study as ISASL.

The request to conduct the PIAAC Cycle II Field Test in April-June 2020 was approved by OMB in December 2019 (OMB# 1850-0870 v.7). This request provides NCES response to the comment received during the 30-day public comment period (see ISASL [PIAAC Cycle 2] 2022 Field Test Response to 30-day Public Comment.docx).