

Participant Information Sheet

Why should I participate?

The NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey (PSDES) helps the NSW Government to better understand how to improve educational and career outcomes achieved by school students in NSW. It collects important information on the factors that may influence the engagement, retention and pathways choices of secondary students.

What will the researchers do and when?

If you are contacted to participate, you can choose to complete the survey yourself online or by a telephone interview. The survey will take about 6 minutes of your time and will be conducted from August to December 2026. If you complete the survey before Sunday 13 September 2026, you will be entered into two prize pools totalling **\$2,500** (excluding any options that can be used to purchase alcohol or tobacco). All survey completers will be entered into the draw for \$1,000 at the completion of fieldwork.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in the research because administrative records show that you may have left or finished school in 2025. The survey is voluntary. You can choose not to take part in the survey at any time. If you do not want to take part in the survey, you can either: advise SRC through one of the methods discussed at the end of this information sheet or let SRC know that you do not want to participate when they contact you to complete the survey.

What is the project about?

The PSDES collects information to provide up-to-date research and informed advice to schools, the NSW Department of Education, the NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning, the NSW Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education and other education agencies about what young people in NSW do after they leave school. The survey collects information on the education pathways, destinations, attainment, further education and training and influences of school leavers. The survey is now in its 13th year, and approximately 31,000 young people took part in the survey in 2025. Reports from previous years are available on the NSW Department of Education website (<https://edu.nsw.link/PSDES>).

Who is involved in the project?

The NSW Department of Education, through the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE), has engaged the Social Research Centre (SRC) to manage and conduct the survey. CESE will be undertaking all analysis and reporting components of the survey. This research project is supported by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), Catholic Schools NSW and the Independent Schools NSW.

What are the research steps?

Sample frame: NESA, in conjunction with the Department of Education, will create a sample frame that includes student administrative data of recent school leavers. NESA will provide this sample frame to the department's contractor SRC, who will use the sample frame to conduct the opt-out process for the survey. The final sample frame for the survey will consist of former students who do not opt-out of the survey during this initial opt-out period. This sample frame component of the survey will be led by SRC.

Fieldwork: SRC will invite former students to take part in the survey. SRC may send this invitation via email, text or mail. You will be asked to complete the survey either online or via the phone. You can also choose to opt-out of the survey when you are contacted by SRC to take part in the survey. You will be asked information about your post-school destinations and experiences by an interviewer from SRC. This may include some basic information about your background. NESA will then provide SRC with NAPLAN and HSC data if you take part in the survey.

Prior to completing the survey you will be asked if you consent to having identifiers included with your survey responses so that CESE can link your survey responses to other government held data sources (including disability, education and employment information). The linked data will be used for measuring post-school

outcomes and informing school policy (see 'Optional linkage' section below). This will help schools to better support students to achieve positive post-school pathways. If you consent to having student identifiers included with your survey responses, you will be asked to re-confirm your consent at the conclusion of the survey. If you do not agree, but still want to participate in the survey, SRC will de-identify your survey responses prior to providing this data to CESE. The fieldwork component of the survey will be led by SRC.

Research: CESE will use the datasets provided by SRC to analyse and report on findings from the survey. Only aggregated findings will be reported, with no individual student survey responses reported. This research component of the survey will be led by CESE.

What data will be linked through student identifiers?

Data may be linked in two ways: standard use and optional linkage. In addition to the standard use, there is an additional optional linkage. The below headings contain further information on both the standard use and optional linkage.

Standard use:

NAPLAN, HSC, disability, HSC minimum standard, education, employment and administrative data, already collected or held by the NSW Department of Education, NESA, TAFE NSW and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) will be used as part of conducting, analysing and reporting on the survey. Sharing of data for this purpose is authorised by legislation. This linkage uses the separation principle. This means that the departments nominated contractor will have access to identified data to facilitate the data collection component and conducting of the survey. Identifiers will be removed from the data when it is provided to the NSW Department of Education. Analysis of the data will be undertaken by the NSW Department of Education.

Optional linkage:

Should you provide your consent, an additional data linkage will be conducted for use in the Pathways for the Future Program. This linkage uses the separation principle. This means that access to identifying information will be restricted to specialised linkage teams within ABS and Centre for Health Records Linkage (CheReL) who will create the link, while authorised researchers will analyse and manage the de-identified survey data. Linkage officers will not have access to survey data, while researchers will not have access to any personal identifying information.

The Government held data that will be linked to your survey responses includes education, employment and demographic data such as:

- Government school enrolments and attendance
- Record of School Achievement (RoSA) / Higher School Certificate (HSC)/ ATAR/university applications and offers
- NAPLAN
- Government funded VET enrolments, including Apprentices and Trainees
- ABS-held databases from the Person Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA) (including Social Security and Related Information, Personal Income Tax Payment Summaries, Census of Population and Housing 2011 & 2016, Higher Education data and VET activity)
- For more information about this linkage or authorised linkage agencies, including the full list of types of data currently in the asset, how data is stored, who can access the data, and how/when you can have your data removed from the program, visit: <https://edu.nsw.link/PFTFP>.

What will happen to my information?

All information and data associated with the survey will be handled in accordance with privacy and other relevant legislation¹. Individuals who take part in the survey will not be identified in any report or publication. Although we are using students' identifiers to link the data, your individual results will not be identified in any reporting from the survey: we will only report de-identified, aggregated results.

¹ For CESE and NESA – Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW); Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW); Education Standards Authority Act 2013 (NSW). For the SRC – Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

If you consent to the optional linkage for the Pathways for the Future Program, the data will be collected in a well-governed NSW Department of Education data server for analysis by the authorised CESE researchers for linking. Once the data has been linked, the student identifiers will be securely disposed of, so that only the de-identified data remain in the dataset for further analysis. Identifiers will still be held by the ABS and CheReL for the purposes of future linkages.

You have the right of access to personal information held about you by the NSW Department of Education, the right to request correction and amendment of it, and the right to make a complaint about a breach of the Information Protection Principles as contained in the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW). Further information on how the NSW Department of Education protects personal information is available in the NSW Department of Education's Privacy Management Plan: www.srcentre.com.au/EduNSWPrivacyManagementPlan.

To ensure confidentiality of your information, each participant will receive a unique survey login. Your personal information will be used to invite you to participate in the survey and to send reminders. Your details will be kept by SRC for the purposes of maintaining any request to opt-out of the survey or if SRC is legally required to disclose information collected as part of the survey.

How will my data be used?

The survey data will be de-identified and reported in aggregate. De-identified data may be used to:

- Report on the findings of the survey. The report for the 2026 survey will be published on the NSW Department of Education website in 2027
- Advise the NSW government on education and career outcomes for NSW school leavers
- Advise the NSW government about the post-school destinations of students with disability
- Inform policy and program decisions to improve the post-school outcomes of recent school leavers
- Report high-level information back to schools about the post-school destinations of their recent school leavers to improve post-school outcomes of students at a school level.
- Advise the NSW government of the impact of the HSC minimum standard on students' post-school destinations.
- If you consent to the optional data linkage, your data will be used in the Pathways for the Future Program (<https://edu.nsw.link/PFTFP>.)

All information collected for the study will be managed in accordance with *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW) and NSW State Records legislation.

Is there anything that might make me upset if I take part in the survey?

This survey is not likely to be upsetting. If you feel uncomfortable during the survey, you may stop the survey at any time. You can skip any questions if you prefer not to answer. If you feel worried or anxious, please contact the researchers or seek help from your family, friends or health professionals. Alternatively, there is free counselling available 24 hours a day by phone through Lifeline on phone 13 11 14.

Who should I contact for more information or to make suggestions?

For information about the research project, please contact the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) via email at info.cese@det.nsw.edu.au. More information: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/educational-data/cese>

For information about the opt out process or survey, please contact the Social Research Centre (SRC) on 1800 023 040 (free hotline) or email studentdestinations@srcentre.com.au
More information: www.srcentre.com.au/NSWdestinationssurvey

Where can I find the results from past surveys?

You can see the reports from previous surveys on the NSW Department of Education website (<https://edu.nsw.link/PSDES>).

Who should I contact with my concerns or to make a complaint?

If you have concerns about privacy issues, in the first instance you can contact the organisation that you believe holds the information. If you have concerns about privacy issues in relation to this letter, please contact the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) via email at info.cese@det.nsw.edu.au.

If you remain dissatisfied, you can write to the Information and Privacy Commissioner, GPO Box 7011, Sydney NSW 2001 or phone 1800 472 679 or ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au.

If you have concerns about privacy issues in relation to the survey you can contact the Social Research Centre.

Who should I contact if I would no longer like to be contacted for this survey?

If you would no longer like to be contacted for this survey, please provide the following identifying details when you call, email or mail so that we can remove your name from our mailing list.

Family name: «SNAME»
Given name: «FNAME»
SRC ID: «ID»
Previous School: «SCHNAM»

By email

Email: studentdestinations@srcentre.com.au

Subject: NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey 2026 opt-out

By phone

Phone: 1800 023 040 (free hotline)

By mail

Please sign and return this page to the Social Research Centre at:

NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey 2026

Social Research Centre

Locked Bag 13800

MELBOURNE VIC 8010

If you remain dissatisfied, you can write to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, GPO Box 5288 Sydney NSW 2001 or call 1300 363 992.