

Frequently Asked Questions



What is ICILS?

The International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS) is an international assessment and research project designed to measure trends in computer and information literacy at the eighth-grade level as well as school and teacher practices related to instruction. ICILS provides a unique opportunity to compare U.S. student skills and experience using technology with that of their peers in other nations, and to provide data on factors that may influence student computer and information literacy skills. ICILS was developed internationally as a response to the increasing use of information and communication technology (ICT) in modern society and the need for citizens to develop relevant skills in order to participate effectively in the digital age. ICILS was first administered internationally in 2013 in 21 education systems. ICILS 2018, the second study in the series, will involve students from about 15 countries. The United States will participate for the first time in spring 2018.

Why was my school selected for participation?

Schools of varying demographics and locations were randomly selected so that the U.S. sample is representative of the overall U.S. school population. The random selection process is important for ensuring that a country's sample accurately reflects its schools and, therefore, can be compared fairly with samples of schools from other countries.

Why should my school and students participate?

ICILS informs national discussions about student skills, education policy, and international competitiveness. It is important for selected schools to participate because they represent similar U.S. schools across the country. When students participate and give their best effort, ICILS gets the most accurate measure possible of student achievement in the U.S. to compare with other countries.

Will all our eighth-grade students be asked to participate?

No. Only up to 30 randomly selected students will be asked to participate.

Who conducts the ICILS assessment?

The entire assessment process will be carried out by trained staff from Westat, a research organization under contract with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S. Department of Education. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543) and approval of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget under OMB# 1850-0929 (Expires 8/31/2019).

How are the teacher and school questionnaires administered?

The teacher and school questionnaires are administered online from a secure website. Teacher questionnaires take about 30 minutes to complete and ask teachers questions about school and classroom contexts for information and communication technology learning, use of information and communication technology for teaching and learning, and teacher views on and confidence in using computers. There are two school questionnaires: a 15-minute principal questionnaire and a 15-minute information and computer technology (ICT) coordinator questionnaire. If there is no ICT coordinator, then the principal or principal designee completes the ICT questionnaire.

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Do teachers need to help administer the assessment?

No, Westat ICILS staff will visit the school on the day of the assessment, bringing with them all the materials and equipment required. These field staff will administer the assessments to students.

When will the assessment be conducted?

The assessment will be conducted between March and May, 2018. Each school will be notified of its scheduled assessment date in summer/fall 2017. Westat ICILS staff will work with schools to identify an alternate date should there be a conflict on that date.

Where will the assessment be conducted?

The assessment will be conducted in the schools that are selected to participate.

How long does the assessment take?

The assessment will take approximately 3 hours, including time for directions.

What will happen with the collected data?

The data from the assessment will be used to evaluate how the knowledge and skills of U.S. students compare to those of their peers in other participating countries. All of the information you provide may only be used for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151). Reports of the findings from the assessment will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those of other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Are schools required by federal law to participate?

No. School participation is voluntary. However, we hope you will participate in this study so that students like those in your school are accurately and fairly represented.

What are the benefits?

The nation as a whole benefits from ICILS by having a greater understanding of how computer and information literacy knowledge and skills of U.S. eighth-graders compare with eighth-graders from other countries. To thank participating schools and individuals for their time and effort, we offer tokens of appreciation: schools that participate in ICILS will receive \$200 and the school coordinator (staff person designated to assist with the study) will receive \$100. Teachers who complete a survey will receive \$20, and each student who participates will receive a small gift.

Where can I find more information about ICILS?

Visit the ICILS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/icils>.

For questions about ICILS 2018, contact the ICILS information hotline at 1-855-445-5604 or by email at icils@westat.com.

