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Group of National Experts on the AHELO Feasibility Study

INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION MANUAL

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Contact:

Consortium: ahelo@acer.edu.au

OECD Directorate for Education: Diane.Lalancette@oecd.org

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Institutional Coordination Manual

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Introduction

Overview

- 1. The Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) Feasibility Study is a major OECD project. Its objective is to determine a robust approach to measuring learning outcomes in ways that are valid across cultures and languages, and across the diversity of institutional settings and missions.
- 2. Following the conclusion of a pre-implementation phase, AHELO is moving into full implementation in 2012. The information in this document is relevant to test administration in all three testing strands: Generic skills, Economics and Civil Engineering.
- 3. AHELO involves testing thousands of students at hundreds of institutions in many different countries. ICs play a very important role in making sure that their institution is able to participate in AHELO and that all activities are carried out smoothly and in a standardised way. In so doing, ICs contribute significantly to the success of AHELO, nationally and internationally.
- 4. This Institutional Coordinator Manual summarises the work required of Institutional Coordinators (ICs) in 2011 and 2012 to implement AHELO. The document is relevant to institutional coordination in all three testing strands: Generic skills, Economics and Civil Engineering.
- 5. Broadly, this IC Manual details processes and materials required for training, preparation, test administration and monitoring, and analysis and reporting. It is important that ICs follow procedures closely. ICs should review all directions in advance so that they are familiar with the procedures.
- 6. The Institutional Coordination Manual is a non-secure document, intended for distribution to people coordinating the involvement of participating institutions. It is imperative to keep in mind that the AHELO test instruments are secure materials and their confidentiality must be assured. All data collected in AHELO is kept strictly confidential.
- 7. If you have any questions about any of the activities outlined in this document, or require any support, please contact your NPM. To enable efficient communication, please ensure that your NPM has up-to-date contact details for you and all members of your institutional team.

Key national resources

8. This section provides an overview of the main national human and organisational resources required for administration of the AHELO tests and surveys. Depending on national contexts and progress it may be necessary to draw on additional experts and resources.

- 9. The AHELO Feasibility Study is a large international project involving many different organisations and roles. The AHELO National Centre (NC) and roles of NPM, IC, Lead Scorer and Test Administrators (TAs) are of most direct relevance to institutional coordination.
- 10. The AHELO National Centre (NC) is the organisational group that manages AHELO in your country.
- 11. The NPM is responsible for the implementation of AHELO at the national level. The NPM has overall responsibility for ensuring that all required tasks are carried out on schedule and in accordance with the prescribed technical standards and operations guidelines, and for documenting processes implemented at national level. Your country's NPM is your primary point of contact and support for AHELO.
- 12. In each country a Lead Scorer is responsible for the scoring of all student responses. In countries which are participating in more than one strand of AHELO, one Lead Scorer is required for each strand. Lead Scorers are supported by a national scoring team.
- 13. An IC represents each institution participating in AHELO. Each IC's role involves close liaison with the NPM, assisting the NPM draw samples of students and faculty, providing institutional information, and working with TAs to organise administration of test and context instruments.
- 14. Test Administrators work closely with ICs to administer tests to students within institutions. TAs should have experience in the management and supervision of testing and examination in university settings. They should be familiar with the use of computer-based testing systems.

Key institutional activities

- 15. The implementation phase of the AHELO Feasibility Study is proceeding to the broad schedule outlined in Figure 1. The timelines are necessarily broad to take account of variations in academic calendars around the world.
- 16. Institutional management activities are outlined in the following sections. A detailed timeline is provided at the end of this document in Figure 2. All deadlines are given in bold type throughout this document.

	20)11				20	12			
	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Training and preparation										
Test administration and monitoring										
Analysis and reporting										

Figure 1: Key institutional activities

Training and preparation

Overview

- 17. Between November 2011 and March 2012, training will be conducted on all key aspects of implementation. At the same time, sampling of students and faculty will be undertaken and the test system will be tested. During this stage, institutional management involves:
 - attending a national IC training session;
 - sampling students and faculty;
 - scheduling testing sessions;
 - trialling the test system; and
 - recruiting and training TAs.

Attend national training session

- 18. Institutional Coordinators must attend a national training session conducted by the NPM. The training covers sampling, institutional management, use of the test system, test administration and scoring. Ideally, this should occur approximately **one to two months before testing**.
- 19. Institutional Coordinator training should include the use of the test system and the administration of testing. When ICs return to the institutions they will need to train TAs in the administration of testing.
- 20. NPMs will send background materials to ICs before the training session so that ICs can prepare for the training sessions. All AHELO materials are prepared in English. NPMs may have translated certain materials for use with ICs.
- 21. For their part, ICs should come prepared to the national training session to discuss institutional matters such as:
 - institutional involvement in learning outcomes assessment;
 - qualification and curriculum structures;
 - student populations, samples and recruitment strategies;
 - testing spaces and computer/internet resources;
 - the availability and capacity of Test Administrators; and
 - institutional strategic and research contexts.
- 22. It is important that ICs are well prepared in advance of the testing session(s) so that they are familiar with procedures. ICs should ensure that they:
 - have a thorough familiarity with and understanding of the Institutional Coordination and Test Administration Manual (and any other materials distributed by the NPM);
 - receive, check and secure any test-related materials before the test;
 - prepare any lists and other test documentation required;
 - find, select and book rooms (with computers) for test administration;
 - maintain security of all test materials at all times;
 - select and brief TAs assigned to testing spaces on their precise duties;

- ensure that TAs receive and return test materials;
- oversee and support TAs during testing sessions; and
- check all materials that are to be returned to NPMs.

Sample and recruit students and faculty

- 23. During the training session, participants will be given detailed guidance on how NPMs will work with ICs to sample students and faculty. NPMs may provide the AHELO Sampling Manual for discussion. Sampling of students and faculty needs to be completed at least two months before testing. To uphold data protection, NPMs will put in place confidentiality procedures where data protection laws prohibit personal information being transmitted to the National Centre.
- 24. Institutional Coordinators may use a number of strategies to recruit students to participate in AHELO. The desirability and utility of these strategies depends on a range of national and institutional factors. ICs could discuss with NPMs:
 - securing the active support of teaching and support staff in promoting AHELO;
 - providing extra credit for students who participate in AHELO;
 - offering gift certificates;
 - paying students money;
 - entering students into a raffle;
 - offering credit for a university shop;
 - giving students a small gift (university paraphernalia, USB drive, etc.); or
 - noting participation on student transcripts.
- 25. ICs could work with NPMs to develop posters and emails for contacting students. In contacting students it is helpful to:
 - send correspondence from known and respected institutional or national leaders;
 - personalise correspondence;
 - keep messages brief; and
 - emphasise the benefits of participation.
- 26. A sample letter for contacting students is provided in the following box. This letter is provided as a guide only, and for modification as required by local circumstances and requirements.

INSTITUTIONAL LETTERHEAD

DATE

Dear **STUDENT NAME**

I am writing to invite you to be part of a groundbreaking OECD study – the Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO).

AHELO is an innovative study being conducted to assess whether it is possible to measure at the international level what final-year undergraduate students know and can do. Several countries are participating and your institution has been specially selected to be one of just NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS in NAME OF COUNTRY taking part in this exciting and significant initiative.

An NAME OF STRAND assessment test has been developed by international experts. We invite you to spend approximately two hours completing this test. DETAILS OF TESTING SESSION AND HOW STUDENTS SIGN-UP TO PARTICIPATE You do not need to do any extra study before you take this test.

Because we value your input, students who participate will receive \$50 VOUCHER FOR THE UNIVERSITY BOOKSHOP.

Your participation will be confidential and the results will not have an impact on your grades or your standing at NAME OF UNIVERSITY. Your name will not be recorded and your privacy will be protected throughout the AHELO study. Your participation is voluntary and you can decide to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions about AHELO or would like further information please visit WEB PAGE, IC/NPM CONTACT DETAILS.

Thank you for participating in AHELO.

NATIONAL/INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Schedule testing spaces and sessions

- 27. After training, ICs should work with NPMs to schedule testing session(s) at each institution. This involves determining a date and time for the testing session and booking computer laboratory space to hold all students participating in the testing.
- 28. It is imperative that appropriate testing spaces typically existing computer laboratories are booked for AHELO. The IC should ensure that appropriate test venues have been selected and booked for the test. As well, ICs and TAs should ensure that the test rooms have been set out appropriately. This includes that:
 - test rooms have adequate temperature;
 - test rooms have adequate lighting and ventilation, are away from noise distractions, and have nearby toilets sign-posted;

- there is one working computer (with keyboard, monitor, mouse and internet access) per student;
- space between work stations allows for TAs to circulate between students;
- microphones and loudspeakers are available for announcements, if necessary; and
- one computer is provided for each TA.
- 29. At least two computers in the testing space should be kept free for use by ICs and TAs, and in case of breakdown on other computers.

Trial of the test system

- 30. Between December 2011 and January 2012 the test delivery system will be tested. This involves ensuring that the assessment instruments can be deployed in all the languages of the participating countries and that technical requirements are in place at all participating institutions. System testing must be completed before the end of **February 2012**.
- 31. Institutional Coordinators must develop a good working knowledge of the test system and obtain necessary technical support within their institution. Institutional Coordinators should work with NPMs and technical support staff to investigate aspects of system performance, plan for a range of problems, and identify how these could be managed and resolved.

Recruit and train Test Administrators

- 32. NPMs should work with ICs to recruit and train TAs in each institution. Test Administrators need to have experience in the monitoring or invigilating of student examinations in university settings.
- 33. One TA is needed for each room in which the testing of students will take place. If a testing room is large, there will need to be one TA per 40 students.
- 34. Test Administrators need to be recruited and trained at least one month before testing.

Test administration and monitoring

Overview

35. Between **February and May 2012** AHELO tests will be implemented in all participating countries and institutions. The exact timing of this depends on the academic calendar in each individual country. This involves confirming system requirements are met, setting up test computers, administering testing sessions, and monitoring testing sessions.

Administer testing sessions

- 36. To ensure consistent implementation across all participating countries, it is important that AHELO tests are administered with strict adherence to the AHELO Test Administration Manual.
- 37. Student samples for each institution are determined by NPMs and ICs. In general, up to 150 students will take the test at each of the ten institutions per country which participate

- in AHELO. In institutions with less than 150 students in the relevant cohort, as many students as possible should take the test.
- 38. ICs are responsible for ensuring that international and national guidelines and practices are implemented at the institutional level. ICs must work closely with NPMs and TAs to ensure consistency.
- 39. Test administration involves setting up one or more testing rooms at each institution. The testing room needs to have one computer per student. TAs set up the room, login to the test system on each computer and then monitor students as they take the test. AHELO's Test Administration Manual provides guidance. Details are provided in the Test Administration manual.
- 40. Technical support should be made available in case of any problems with the test system.

Confirm system requirements are met

41. Before the test session commences, ICs must ensure each computer meets the minimum system requirements and profile settings detailed below. For further assistance, please contact your institution's technical support personnel.

Minimum system requirements

Internet browser: Internet Explorer 6+, Firefox 3.6+, Safari 3.0+, Opera 10.5+, Chrome 6+

Screen resolution: 1024x768 or higher

Active internet connection

Set computer profiles

- 42. It is recommended that a profile with restricted access is created to ensure students cannot change system settings, or access other online material or applications during the test session.
- 43. The method of creating profiles with restricted access will vary from one institution to another and from one internet browser to another. Instructions are provided here for Internet Explorer. You will need to consult your institution's technical support personnel for more details on how this can be done.

Profile and proxy settings

Restrict user access to the default internet browser, for example Internet Explorer or Firefox.

Restrict Internet access to the Assessment Master proxy server IP address 203.220.78.171 or host name www.ahelo.org. For example, push the browser setting in the login script. Users should not be able to access any other external content.

Disable user access to change system settings.

Disable user access to any non-browser applications installed on the computer.

Monitor testing sessions

- 44. AHELO is an international study and it is important to ensure that students around the world take the test under similar conditions. International monitoring of test implementation is undertaken by the international management team. National monitoring is provided by each country's NPM.
- 45. AHELO requires a high participation rate of selected students within participating institutions. If a significant number of students are absent a follow-up session will need to be scheduled. Guidance on minimum participation rates will be provided by the international management team and NPMs.

Quality control checklist

- 46. Institutional Coordinators play a critical role in the conduct and outcomes of AHELO. ICs are responsible for assuring the quality of their institution's test preparations, administration and outcomes. The following checklist highlights key areas in which ICs are expected to uphold international and national standards. To ensure reliability and validity of results, the NPM or international team may investigate the:
 - a. identification or selection of student samples;
 - b. preparation of computers and spaces for testing;
 - c. operation and supervision of testing sessions;
 - d. security of test materials;
 - e. communication with students:
 - f. destruction of confidential test materials; and
 - g. management of data and reports.
- 47. ICs must report all variations to standard AHELO procedures to the NPM to discuss implications for the data and possible corrections.

Testing session list

Allocate students to test sessions

- 48. The test session list contains a list of the students sampled at your institution to participate in testing. Your NPM will provide you with an Excel spreadsheet which lists participating students as well as the usernames and passwords they will need to access the Test System.
- 49. When you have booked computer rooms for the test sessions, you should allocate students to each test session. This list should be provided to the TA before each test session so they know which students are due to attend which session.

View students and test status

50. You can log in to the test system to view all the students from your institution which are participating in the testing and to see what their status is. To log in to the test system:

Open an internet browser (for example Internet Explorer or Firefox)

In the address bar, type http://assessmentmaster.com.au/admin and press Enter

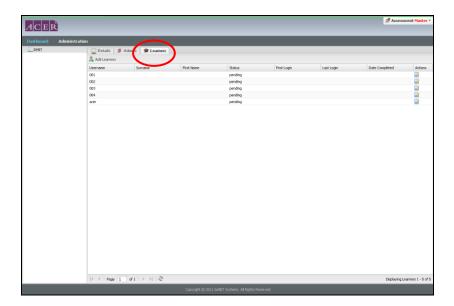
At 'Username' enter your email address, and then press Tab

At 'Password' ender your password and then select Login

51. When this is complete you will see this screen on the TA computer. If you do not see this screen, check that the computer has an internet connection and refresh the page. If you continue to have problems, contact your institution's technical support personnel.



52. To view student information, click on the **Learners** tab. Student information is displayed, including their test status.



53. If a student has completed the test, this will be indicated with the word 'complete'. You cannot add or delete students or change their details. If there are errors, please contact your NPM.

Analysis and reporting

International and national analyses

54. Between June and August 2012, data from the test and context instruments will be collected and analysed. The AHELO Consortium will work with NPMs to verify national data and seek feedback on how successfully the testing has been implemented in your country. The international team will also help NPMs and ministries conduct national analyses of AHELO data and results.

Institutional analyses

55. Institutional Coordinators should work with the NPM to clarify the focus or scope of any planned institutional analyses. In your institutional work it is important to be clear about the scope and limitations of analyses and reports. It is important not to overstretch limited data currently to hand, or to artificially raise expectations. It is of course very important to be mindful of the technical and legal constraints around current data and secure instruments.

Key activities and dates

2. Figure 2 provides a schedule that flags timelines for key activities and dates.

Figure 2: Schedule of key activities and dates

Attend national training session	2 months before testing	
Sample and recruit students and faculty	2 months before testing	
Schedule testing spaces and sessions	1 to 2 months before testing	
Technical trial of AHELO Test System	December 2011 to February 2012	
Recruit and train Test Administrators	1 month before testing	
Confirm system requirements are met	Before testing	
Set computer profiles	Before testing	
Allocate students to test sessions	Before testing	
Monitor testing sessions	Between February and May 2012	
View students and test status	During and after testing	
International and national analysis	Between June and August 2012	