

High Performing Students Unit[^]

Application Information

Year 5 entry to an opportunity class in

2014

Please read this information carefully before submitting the application.

All applicants with access to the internet, a printer and their own email address (not the student's) should apply online by going to the following website: www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement. All other applicants must complete a commercially printed form.

Important dates

Online application opens	Monday 29 April 2013
Application information and forms available in schools	Monday 6 May 2013
Parents return printed application forms to schools and online application closes	Friday 17 May 2013
Government school principals process applications online and send paper-based applications to the Unit	Friday 7 June 2013
Non-government school principals complete Part B and send paper-based applications to the Unit	Friday 7 June 2013
Test centre advice received by parents or carers	Wednesday 10 July 2013
Opportunity Class Placement Test	Wednesday 24 July 2013
Outcome advice	late October 2013

Contact details

High Performing Students Unit

NSW Department of Education and Communities

Email: ssu@det.nsw.edu.au

Postal address: Locked Bag 53, DARLINGHURST NSW 1300

Telephone: 1300 880 367

Fax: 02 9266 8435

Website: www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement

For regular updates on the placement process join: www.facebook.com/Opportunityclassplacement

Note:

[^] In this document, 'Unit' refers to the High Performing Students Unit.

'Parent' is defined under the Education Act 1990 as 'a guardian or other person having custody or care of a child'.

A list of the primary schools with opportunity classes is shown on page 2 of this document.

A student number for the opportunity class placement process is provided by email when parents apply online. On printed application forms the student number is printed under the barcode.

Please record the student number here for future reference. Please quote this number in all correspondence and enquiries regarding your application.

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Public schools with Year 5 opportunity classes in 2014

The following OC codes should be referred to when completing an online application or Section 19. School Choices, on page 6 of the paper application form.

OC code	School	OC code	School	OC code	School
ALX	ALEXANDRIA PARK + Park Rd, Alexandria	GOO	GOONELLABAH Ballina Rd, Goonellabah	POR	PORT MACQUARIE Grant St, Port Macquarie
ALS	ALSTONVILLE Main St, Alstonville	GSF	GOSFORD Mann St, Gosford	QUA	QUAKERS HILL Medlow Dr, Quakers Hill
ART	ARTARMON McMillan Rd, Artarmon	GOU	GOULBURN WEST Combermere St, Goulburn	QUE	QUEANBEYAN SOUTH Cameron Rd, Queanbeyan
BGH	BALGOWLAH HEIGHTS Lewis St, Balgowlah	GRE	GREENACRE Waterloo Rd, Greenacre	RIC	RICHMOND Windsor St, Richmond
BLM	BALMAIN Eaton St, Balmain	GRY	GREYSTANES Merrylands Rd, Greystanes	RUT	RUTHERFORD Weblands St, Rutherford
BHW	BATHURST WEST Suttor St, Bathurst	HAR	HARRINGTON STREET Harrington St, Cabramatta	RDE	RYDE Pope St, Ryde
BEE	BEECROFT Beecroft Rd, Beecroft	HOL	HOLSWORTHY Infantry Pde, Holsworthy	SMI	SMITHFIELD O'Connell St, Smithfield
BIR	BIRABAN Beckley St, Toronto	HUR	HURSTVILLE Forest Rd, Hurstville	SOL	SOLDIERS POINT Cromarty Rd, Soldiers Point
BTS	BLACKTOWN SOUTH Flushcombe Rd, Blacktown	ILL	ILLAROO ROAD Illaroo Rd, Nowra	GTS	SOUTH GRAFTON Vere St, South Grafton
BCS	BLAXCELL STREET Blaxcell St, Granville	IBR	IRONBARK RIDGE Withers & Ironbark Ridge Rds, Rouse Hill	STA	ST ANDREWS Ballantrae Dr, St Andrews
BRA	BRADBURY Jacaranda Ave, Bradbury	JEW	JEWELLS Lepton Pde, Jewells	STJ	ST JOHNS PARK Sandringham St, St Johns Park
CAM	CAMDEN SOUTH Hume Hwy, Camden	KIN	KINGSWOOD Second Ave, Kingswood	STU	STURT White Ave, Wagga Wagga
CBN	CARINGBAH NORTH Cawarra Rd, Caringbah	LEU	LEUMEAH Burrendong Rd, Leumeah	SUM	SUMMER HILL Moonbie St, Summer Hill
CAS	CASULA De Meyrick Ave, Casula	LIT	LITHGOW Mort St, Lithgow	SUT	SUTHERLAND Eton St, Sutherland
CES	CESSNOCK WEST Wollombi & Campbell Sts, Cessnock	MAR	MARYLAND John T Bell Dr, Maryland, Newcastle	TAH	TAHMOOR Bronzewing St, Tahmoor
CHW	CHATSWOOD Pacific Hwy, Chatswood	MAT	MATTHEW PEARCE Astoria Park Rd, Baulkham Hills	TAM	TAMWORTH Napier St, Tamworth
COL	COLYTON Nelson St, Mount Druitt	MON	MONA VALE Waratah St, Mona Vale	TAS	TAMWORTH SOUTH Petra Ave, Tamworth
COO	COONABARABRAN John St & Newell Hwy, Coonabarabran	MOR	MOREE Albert St, Moree	TIG	TIGHES HILL Elizabeth St, Tighes Hill
CUD	CUDGEGONG VALLEY Madeira Rd, Mudgee	NEU	NEUTRAL BAY Ben Boyd Rd, Neutral Bay	TOO	TOORMINA Cavanba Rd, Toormina
DUB	DUBBO WEST East St, Dubbo	NEW	NEWBRIDGE HEIGHTS Lewin & Magree Cres, Chipping Norton	WAI	WAITARA Edgeworth David Ave, Wahroonga
DUR	DURAL Old Northern Rd, Dural	NLS	NEW LAMBTON SOUTH St James Rd, New Lambton	WEN	WENTWORTH FALLS Falls Rd, Wentworth Falls
EAR	EARLWOOD Homer St, Earlwood	NOR	NORTH ROCKS North Rocks Rd, North Rocks	WIL	WILKINS Park Rd, Marrickville
ERM	ERMINGTON Winbourne St, West Ryde	PIC	PICNIC POINT Prince & Thomas Sts, Picnic Point	WOL	WOLLONGONG Church St, Wollongong
GEO	GEORGES HALL Pennington Ave, Georges Hall			WOO	WOOLLAHRA Forth St, Woollahra
GLE	GLENBROOK Woodville St, Glenbrook			WYO	WYONG Cutler Dr, Wyong

+ Places are reserved for Aboriginal# students.

In this document 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders.

Opportunity classes

Opportunity class placement provides intellectual stimulation and an educationally enriched environment for academically gifted and talented children in Years 5 and 6 who would otherwise be isolated from a suitable peer group.

Opportunity class students are accommodated in one of the following class groupings according to the school structure: a Year 5 opportunity class; a Year 6 opportunity class; a Year 5/6 composite opportunity class; or a composite class consisting of opportunity class and non-opportunity class students.

Offers for opportunity class placement will be made on the basis of the Opportunity Class Placement Test, school assessment and other evidence of academic merit.

For further information in other languages see: http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/languagesupport/documents/selective_oc/shs_oc_facts.php

Important stages of the placement process

All applicants with access to the internet, a printer and their own email address (not the student's) should apply online. All other applicants must complete the commercially printed form.

1. Parents read the application information
2. Parents complete an application. (see How to apply)
3. Principals complete school processing of applications

Principals process applications after parents complete their section by providing school assessment scores in English and mathematics based on the student's performance. Where relevant, principals also confirm residency status, Aboriginal background or language background other than English.

4. Parents receive test centre advice

The Unit will notify all applicants by mail and email (if relevant) in early July of the name and location of the test centre their child will attend for the Opportunity Class Placement Test. If parents have not received this advice by Wednesday 10 July 2013 they should contact the Unit or the child's government primary school. The test centre to which each primary school with candidates has been allocated will also be published on the Unit's website.

5. Students attend the Opportunity Class Placement Test at 9 am on Wednesday 24 July 2013

Parents are responsible for ensuring that students are transported to and from the test centre on the test day.

6. Selection committees meet in September 2013 to determine the outcome of applications.

7. Parents receive the outcome of their application in late October 2013.

How to apply

Online applications

Go online to www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement

Read the instructions carefully.

Click on the link, **Online application**. Register your application by entering your email address. Click **Submit**. You will be sent an email from the Unit with a link to the correct website and your password. Go to the website and log on using your email address and password.

Instructions on completing the form are provided at the website. Each page of the form will be presented to you in turn. Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory and the program will not let you proceed to the next page unless they are completed. When you have completed all of the required fields on the page click the **Next** button to go to the next page. To return to the previous page click the **Previous** button.

To leave your application before you have finished go to the next page then close your browser. You will need to log in again when you return.

Please provide your own email address. **Do not supply a student's address.**

When you have completed your application click **Submit**. Once you have submitted your form you will **NOT** be able to return to it to make further changes online. To do that you will need to contact the Unit in writing.

After submitting your application you will receive a return email with:

- a confirmation of your application
- your child's student number which is required for all communication with the Unit
- a copy of the application form which you just lodged
- an *Attachments Cover Sheet* which you will need if you are required to forward other documents (See **Attachments** on page 4)
- a page for the student's school principal to complete (for students attending non-government schools and for late applications whether from government or non-government schools).

Please note:

If you discover that you have made an error after submitting your online application please do not complete another online application or a paper application for the same student. Just email or write to the Unit explaining the correction(s) you would like to make.

All applications for students attending government primary schools will be made available to the student's primary school principal who will complete the school

section of the application online. No further action is required unless your application is late (see page 9).

For applicants attending **non-government** primary schools, parents are required to:

- indicate whether or not they give consent for the school principal to be consulted about the school assessment scores and other related details.
- print a copy of the application form and the principal's page emailed to them by the Unit. They should hand both to the principal of the student's non-government school. The principal is asked to complete the principal's page and forward it to the Unit.

Paper applications

Parents without internet access must apply using the commercially printed application form. Since each form has a unique barcode, under no circumstances should a photocopied version of the form be used.

Since the form will be processed using electronic scanning techniques, please print neatly within the boxes using black pen and BLOCK CAPITALS. Do **NOT** write 'not applicable', 'nil' or draw a line through any of the boxes that are not relevant as this will interfere with the scanning process. If a section of the form is **not relevant** leave it **blank**.

Please photocopy your application for later reference and hand the original to the principal of your child's primary school by the due date. The principal will complete the school section and forward the completed application to the Unit.

Please note:

In the unlikely event that your application is not received by the Unit, you will be required to produce a copy of your application or at the very least the number shown on the top right hand corner of your application form in order to prove that you submitted your application by the due date.

Attachments

In making an application you may be required to provide copies of supporting documents such as birth certificates, medical certificates or other documentation as indicated in the application form.

If applying with a **paper application** form, please fasten your attachments to the back of the form. Please provide photocopies only but note that originals may be required at a later date.

If you are applying **online** you may forward attachments by post, fax or email. Please complete and include with your documents a copy of the *Attachment Cover Sheet* which you will have received by email when you submit your application. When emailing please use the contact email account you provided in your application.

Attachments that **should** be included are:

- information about a disability, medical condition or behavioural disorder and their effects on the academic performance of the student and special test provisions that may be required
- the results of individual IQ tests if appropriate. Note that these must be provided as a complete IQ report
- supporting information where the student is outside the normal age range
- copy of court orders if they apply (see page 5)
- supporting information where the student is in Year 3 or Year 5 in 2013.

DO NOT SEND attachments such as:

- school reports
- school-specific merit or behaviour certificates
- achievements in the performing arts or sports
- copies of State or national tests such as NAPLAN
- certificates from statewide competitions.

Note: Attachments should be A4 one-sided copies.

If further information is necessary the selection committee may approach the current primary school or request further information from parents.

Communication

All correspondence and telephone advice is provided to the parent(s) or carer(s) indicated on the application.

This parent or carer is usually the parent living with the child. Ensure you complete the 'Name or names for correspondence' section on page 3. All correspondence will be sent using this information.

Information cannot be provided to any person who is not listed on the application form.

Under normal circumstances, as parents make all applications for entry to opportunity classes, no correspondence or telephone conversations will be conducted directly with students.

Irrespective of whether or not a parent wishes to keep application information confidential from another parent or interested person, the Unit will provide the information wherever it has a legal obligation to do so or where the person requesting the information is entitled to access such information.

A parent, not listed as either Parent/Carer 1 or 2 (usually a parent not living with the child), who wishes to receive correspondence related to the application, must send a request in writing to the Unit, so that arrangements can be made for copies of correspondence to be sent if appropriate.

Enquiries

Advice about the suitability of opportunity class placement for your child should be directed to your child's government school principal or teacher.

Enquiries about entry procedures should be directed to the Unit at the address or numbers shown on the cover of this document.

Enquiries about programs offered by specific schools with opportunity classes should be addressed to the schools concerned.

Parents will need to quote the student number or give other identifying information before officers of the Unit will discuss confidential student details on the telephone. Parents who cannot provide adequate identifying information on request will need to make written enquiries.

The Unit's internet page is updated regularly throughout the placement process. The updates show what is happening at each stage of the process. If you have a question you may find the answer on the Unit's website.

The Unit also uses a telephone service to assist you to understand what is happening at each stage of the process. The telephone system provides answers to commonly asked questions.

Emailing

The Unit will send correspondence by email wherever possible. Since all communication about the application is conducted with the parents, please do **not** supply a student's email address. Email addresses found to belong to students will be removed and all correspondence will be conducted by mail. You must contact the Unit in writing if you change your email address or email provider or no longer have email access. If you email the Unit please use the email account provided with your application or one you subsequently updated in writing.

It is the parents' responsibility to monitor the receipt of emails at critical times such as the fortnight prior to the test and when outcome advice is due.

Special contact

Please show when prompted, the name and telephone number of another adult the Unit may contact if the parents are unavailable.

Change of application details

Please inform the Unit by mail or email if there is a change in details such as your email address, your child's name, postal address or school or if you want to withdraw your application. Changes of application details will not be accepted over the telephone.

Court orders

If there are any family law, apprehended violence orders or other relevant court orders in relation to such matters as the education of the student, the parental responsibility

for the student, the student's main residence, restricting access to the student's record or restricting the provision of information about the student, please complete the relevant section of the application and attach a complete copy of the orders.

Interstate and overseas students

Australian citizens or permanent residents temporarily living interstate or overseas who are unable to take the Opportunity Class Placement Test will be considered by the selection committee through either the interstate/overseas procedures or the illness/misadventure procedures.

- To use the illness/misadventure procedure students must have attended a NSW primary school during Year 4 and must have school assessment scores which can be moderated.
- To use the interstate/overseas procedure you should download from the Unit's website a *Report of academic merit for use by interstate and overseas applicants* and arrange, at your own expense, for individual and standardised testing of your child by a registered psychologist or other qualified practitioner. You need to complete both the *Report of academic merit for use by interstate and overseas applicants* and the application.

Interstate or overseas students not returning to do the Opportunity Class Placement Test

Interstate or overseas applicants who wish to apply online should complete the application by **Friday 17 May 2013**. If you are submitting a printed application it must reach the Unit no later than **Monday 24 June 2013**. The *Report of academic merit* and all other material must reach the Unit by the day of the test, **Wednesday 24 July 2013**.

Interstate or overseas students returning to do the Opportunity Class Placement Test

Some interstate and overseas applicants return to NSW to do the Opportunity Class Placement Test. If this is the case you do not need to complete the *Report of academic merit* but you must submit your completed application by **Monday 24 June 2013** and you must show on the application form a town or suburb in NSW so that a test centre can be allocated.

Criteria for entry

Academic merit

Students must compete academically with all other candidates for entry to each opportunity class. Academic merit is determined mainly by the combination of the results of the Opportunity Class Placement Test in reading, mathematics and general ability, together with the primary school assessments of student performance in English and mathematics.

Additional evidence of academic merit may also be considered at the discretion of the selection committee.

Academic record

All applicants attending schools in NSW are required to have school assessment scores completed by the school principal. Where a NSW non-government school does not provide school assessment scores the parent should attach a letter of explanation to the application form. Applications without school assessment scores or without an acceptable reason for not having school assessment scores may be ineligible for placement.

Schools with a very small number of applicants

If a student is identified as one of a very small number of applicants from either a government or non-government school, (after all applications have been received but prior to the test) the parent will be contacted and requested to send the Unit a passport photo of the student which has been endorsed on the back in the following manner by the principal of their current school.

I verify that this photo is of:
(Student name)
Date:
Principal's signature:

This photo will be scanned and attached to the student's electronic record. A copy of the photo will be sent to the test centre the student is allocated to for the test and the presiding officer in charge will be required to verify on the test day that it is the same student who takes the test.

Other considerations

Disability, medical condition or behavioural disorder

The selection committee will give special consideration to the applications from students with a disability, medical condition or behavioural disorder to determine whether the students have been disadvantaged in their ability to demonstrate academic merit.

Cultural background

The selection committee will give special consideration to students of Aboriginal background or students with a language background other than English who have been doing most school work in English for less than four years. This consideration will determine whether they have been disadvantaged in their ability to demonstrate academic merit.

Age

Students entering Year 5 in an opportunity class in 2014 will usually have been born between 31 December 2002 and 31 July 2004.

Where applicants are in Year 4 in 2013, but were born after 31 July 2004, they are younger than the majority of the cohort. Such students may be required to attend an interview to enable the school to assess their needs.

School Year

Students entering Year 5 in an opportunity class in 2014 are normally in Year 4 in 2013.

Students not yet in Year 4 in 2013

Where students have not reached Year 4 in 2013 and are seeking to accelerate to Year 5, this acceleration should be strongly supported by the school principal.

In determining a student's suitability for accelerated progression into an opportunity class, selection committees will be guided by the *Policy and Implementation Strategies for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students* (Revised 2004). This document is available from the Department of Education and Communities website www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/curriculum/schools/gats/PD20040051.shtml.

Selection committees will also be guided by the *Guidelines for Accelerated Progression*, published by the Board of Studies. This document states on page 21:

Has the student demonstrated a comprehensive achievement well in advance of the enrolment cohort when performance is assessed against the outcomes for the current curriculum stage?

AND

on a statewide basis, it is probable that only one in 200 (0.5%) students would be capable of acceleration in all subjects.

Students already in Year 5 in 2013

Applications for students already in Year 5 in NSW in 2013 are not normally accepted for Year 5 opportunity class entry in 2014 unless there are extenuating circumstances e.g. the student is very young. In such circumstances a detailed explanation with supporting documentation should be attached to the application cover sheet for online application or the application form. Selection committees will determine whether such applications will be accepted. Note that selection committees will generally not accept applications for repetition of Year 5 where it is clear that such repetition is not academically appropriate.

Applications for students whose age or school year is outside the limits described above may not be finalised at the same time as the applications of other candidates. These applications may be placed temporarily on 'hold' to allow the selection committee to complete further enquiries.

Sitting test previously

Parents are reminded that selection committees may also consider whether or not students who took the Opportunity Class Placement Test in 2012 have gained undue advantage from their previous experience with the test.

Twins and other siblings

Please complete the relevant item of the application if a brother or sister is **also** applying for opportunity class placement in Year 5 in 2014.

Because there is so much competition for placement in opportunity classes you should not expect that, if one of your children has been successful, the other child(ren) in your family will be placed. The placement of one twin does not guarantee the placement of another.

Enrolment policy

The NSW Department of Education and Communities has a responsibility to assess and manage any risk of harm to its staff or students. This includes assessing and managing risks posed to students or staff at a school by any student. Where relevant, such situations will be dealt with in accordance with the NSW Department of Education and Communities' enrolment policies and procedures.

Information for parents regarding enrolment is available at: www.schools.nsw.edu.au/schoolfind/enrolment/parentsinfo.php

Residency

Candidates must generally be Australian citizens or holders of a visa granting permanent resident status in Australia. Information on Australian citizenship is available on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship website at: www.citizenship.gov.au. Official evidence of Australian citizenship may be obtained by the issue of a *Certificate of Evidence of Australian Citizenship*.

Citizens of New Zealand living in New South Wales are eligible for opportunity class placement. Permanent residents of New Zealand are treated in the same manner as temporary residents of Australia and are not eligible.

School principals are required to check claims of residential status and citizenship against school records.

Applicants who do not meet these residency requirements at the time of applying, but expect to meet them in the near future, are allowed to apply. Such applicants will have to show evidence that they meet all residency requirements before being offered a place. Places will NOT be held for students who do not meet the residency requirements.

Applicants who qualify for entry on academic grounds but do not meet the residency requirements, including those who hold diplomatic visas, will have the opportunity to appeal for special consideration through the appeals process (see page 11).

All successful applicants will be required to show original documentation such as certificates of evidence of Australian citizenship, birth certificates or visas before enrolment can be finalised by the school. Offers or enrolments will be terminated if placement is made on the basis of false or misleading information.

NSW Residency

The family must be living in NSW by the beginning of the 2014 school year. If parents normally live in NSW but are temporarily out of the state, they should expect to return permanently before the student is enrolled in an opportunity class.

Applications from parents who continue to live outside NSW after the 2014 school year begins will be considered only if there are vacancies after all suitable applicants from NSW have been placed.

Points to consider

Travelling times

The selection committee does not consider distances, travelling times and transport arrangements from the student's home to the school with an opportunity class. Before listing any school, you should consider available transport and the time your child will take to reach the school.

Order of choice

All applicants seeking placement in opportunity classes in 2014 can choose to be considered for placement in up to two schools.

Ensure that you consider carefully the two schools and the order in which you put them before completing the application.

If your child qualifies for both schools, you will be offered your first choice of school only. If you are offered your second choice, you may also be placed on a reserve list for your first choice.

The entry score required for each school varies from year to year depending upon the demand for the school and the scores achieved by those students who have listed the school as a choice.

For example:

- If your child qualified for **both** Neutral Bay PS and Artarmon PS, you would receive an offer only for Neutral Bay PS, the higher choice for which the student qualified.
- If your child qualified for Artarmon PS **only**, you would be offered a place at that school regardless of whether you placed that school first or second on your list.

Change of choice before Friday 9 August 2013

If you wish to change your choice of schools before Friday 9 August 2013 you should notify the Unit in writing of your request. This is the date by which all information starts to be prepared for selection committees.

After Friday 9 August 2013

Changes of choice cannot be accepted after 4.00 pm on this date as they cannot be processed in time for selection committees to be presented with the relevant information.

If you have clearly demonstrable extenuating circumstances such as the purchase of a new residence in a suburb or town very far from the previous residence, you may request a change of choice. This should be accompanied by a full explanation and supporting documents. The request will be subject to approval by the selection committee.

Approval will not be given for a change of choice on the grounds that the student did not qualify for the original choices.

Please consider your choices carefully.

Transfers

Opportunity class placement cannot automatically be transferred. Refer to *Later round and subsequent offers* on page 10 for further information.

School assessment scores

The school assessment scores in English and mathematics provided by the primary school principal are moderated (scaled) according to the performance of the candidates from your child's primary school in the reading and mathematics sections of the Opportunity Class Placement Test.

Moderating the school assessment scores makes them comparable statewide and gives school assessment scores and test scores in English and mathematics equal weighting.

Moderated school assessment scores are a measure of academic performance.

Further details about the processing of scores can be found on the Unit's website.

Test information

The Opportunity Class Placement Test will be conducted on the morning of **Wednesday 24 July 2013**. It will be administered statewide in designated test centres, usually established in government high schools. All applicants are required to sit for the test, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The test is conducted **only** on this day and **only** in designated test centres in NSW.

Students who miss the test through illness or other unavoidable mishap may be considered through the illness/misadventure process detailed on page 9.

Students unable to take the test because they are interstate or overseas at the time should contact the Unit to determine whether they should apply to be considered under the illness/misadventure or the interstate/overseas procedures.

Further details of the interstate/overseas procedures are given on page 5.

The Opportunity Class Placement Test measures academic potential and is set to discriminate at a very high level. It is very rare for even the highest scoring candidates to score full marks on all components of the test.

Test answer sheets will be identified by numbers and not by name to ensure anonymity in the marking process.

Test components

There are two parts to the test: Parts 1 and 2. Each part consists of a mix of multiple-choice questions in English, mathematics and general ability. Answers are recorded on computer-marked answer sheets. Students have half an hour to complete each part.

The Department does not endorse coaching for the Opportunity Class Placement Test as it is designed as a measure of ability rather than mastery of the curriculum. It is rare for any student to score full marks in any of the test components. Generally students' final scores include a school-based component. Practice with multiple-choice questions of any sort may help students to become familiar with test technique. There will be a practice session before the test begins to ensure that students are familiar with the format of the test.

Students must be careful not to look at the work of others during the test. Students found to be cheating risk disqualification from the test.

The test is developed by an external test development company under contract to the Department of Education and Communities. It is a secure test and papers are unavailable for scrutiny before or after the test session.

Markers will not be able to identify students' names. Test answer sheets will be identified by numbers only to ensure anonymity. The test does not usually contain any questions used in previous tests. For further information about the test in other languages see: www.schools.nsw.edu.au/languagesupport/documents/selective_oc/ocp_test.php

Test centre advice

All applicants will be advised of their designated test centre by mail and email (if they have provided an email address). This is the only correspondence to be sent in two different ways.

Parents must make appropriate transport arrangements to and from the test centre for their children.

If you have not been advised by **Wednesday 10 July 2013** about the test centre your child has been allocated to, contact the principal of your child's government primary school or contact the Unit on the number shown on the cover of this document.

A full list of the test centres will also be available from the website shown on the cover of this document.

All candidates from the same primary school are usually sent to the same test centre. Variations to allocated test centres will be considered only in exceptional circumstances and will depend on space being available at the test centre. If your child does not meet the criteria for entry you should not assume that your application has been accepted because your child has been assigned to a test centre.

Note: Parents must not remain on the school premises during the test unless special permission has been granted for student welfare reasons.

The test centre advice will include a **Test Information Bulletin**. This bulletin will detail the Opportunity Class Placement Test procedures, show how students should indicate their answers and list the equipment to bring. You are advised to use this information and the sample test papers found on the Unit's website to ensure your child becomes familiar with the test format and knows how to record his or her answers.

Sample tests

These are published on the Unit's website. They assist applicants to become more familiar with the Opportunity Class Placement Test.

A sample answer sheet is available on the website to enable students to become familiar with the correct way to answer questions.

Selection committees and appeals panels will not make placement decisions based on students' performance in the sample tests.

Special test provisions

Some applicants request special test provisions for their children because of a disability, medical condition or behavioural disorder e.g. students with ADHD or Asperger's Syndrome can be seated at the front of the test centre; large print papers can be arranged for students with visual impairments; FM transmitters can be arranged for students with hearing impairments. Parents or school principals should request special test provisions in the application. The Unit evaluates the feasibility of the request and writes to both the applicant and the student's current government primary school principal explaining whether or not the special test provisions can be granted.

Illness or misadventure

If some problem such as sickness or an accident stops your child from taking the test or from doing his or her best, you should download an illness/misadventure form from the Unit's website or request one from the Unit. The completed form should be returned to the Unit by **Friday 9 August 2013**. You should include evidence to support a misadventure claim where possible.

If your child was sick you **must** include a medical certificate covering the day of the test and have the medical practitioner complete the *Independent evidence of illness* section of the *illness/misadventure* form.

Generally it is better to take the test where possible and make an illness/misadventure claim than to miss the test.

All claims for consideration based on illness, should be made using the illness/misadventure process and not the appeals process. Although there is an appeals process which occurs later in the year after the outcome is known, appeals based on illness will be considered only in

exceptional circumstances. Further details of the appeals process are given on page 11.

Students who miss the test for unavoidable reasons may be considered on their moderated school assessment scores at the discretion of the selection committee. Where neither test scores nor moderated school assessment scores are available, applicants may be considered on the basis of alternative evidence. In some cases applicants will be invited to use the interstate/overseas application procedure. This procedure is outlined on page 5.

Late applications

Late applications will not generally be considered except where there are extenuating circumstances.

If you have a good reason for making an application after the closing date, you **must** apply online and forward a written explanation and a supporting statement from the school principal or other appropriate person where applicable. If no explanation is provided the late application cannot be considered.

The selection committee will decide whether or not the late application will be accepted. If the selection committee accepts the reason for the late application but the student is unable to take the Opportunity Class Placement Test, the student might be considered on moderated school assessment scores. Where neither test scores nor moderated school assessment scores are available, applicants might be able to use the interstate/overseas application procedure or may be considered on the basis of any alternative evidence presented.

Where possible, late applicants will be allocated to test centres but where applications are received after Monday 24 June 2013, a test centre will be organised in Sydney, where all very late applicants can be tested. Applicants who apply after Monday 24 June 2013 and cannot attend the very late test centre in Sydney will be considered only if there is a shortage of suitable applicants.

Selection committees

All placement decisions are made by selection committees using the 'Criteria for Entry' as described on page 5 and 6. There is a separate selection committee for each school with an opportunity class and each committee makes its decisions independently of the other committees.

Each selection committee will consist of at least three people including the school education director, the principal of the school with an opportunity class, and a district guidance officer or school counsellor.

Outcome of application

Outcome advice

The Unit will send you advice by mail or email in late October 2013 telling you whether your child:

- is being offered a place and/or

- has been placed on a reserve list and/or
- has been unsuccessful for one or more choices.

Applications on hold

In some cases students are not sent outcome advice at the same time as the rest of the candidates. These students' applications could be placed 'on hold' while the selection committee carries out further investigation and enquiries usually related to residency status, age or any extenuating circumstances.

Response to offers

If you receive an offer you must fill out a response form and return it by the date shown on the response form (generally 14 days after the date of the offer).

Some late offers will be made by telephone and these will usually require responses within the specified time, usually within 24 hours. The Unit may assume that the offer has been declined if you do not respond by the due date. If you accept an offer and later change your mind you should let the Unit know immediately in writing, so that the next eligible applicant can be offered the place.

Acknowledgement of response

Whether you accept or decline an offer, you will be sent a confirmation of your decision. If this confirmation is not received within 21 days of submitting your offer response form you should contact the Unit.

Reminder advice

In January 2014, parents or carers who have accepted a place or are on a reserve list will be sent a reminder to advise that they should notify the Unit if they no longer want the place, so that an offer can be made to the next eligible applicant.

Authority to attend

Once you have accepted an offer you might be asked to fill in enrolment forms for your child during the school's orientation program. Even if you have completed enrolment papers at the school, you will be sent an *Authority to attend* letter from the NSW Department of Education and Communities authorising your child to attend the school. This authority will be sent in mid January 2014. The student must present this authority to the school on the first day of Term 1 2014 to finalise enrolment.

This authority serves as a reminder to people who no longer wish to take up their offer that they should notify the Unit, so that the place can be offered to the next eligible applicant.

To finalise enrolment in an opportunity class you must have:

1. received an *Authority to attend* from the High Performing Students Unit
2. satisfied all NSW Department of Education and

Communities enrolment requirements.

All successful applicants will be required to show original documentation, such as birth certificates and relevant visas as proof of residency status, before enrolment can be finalised by the school.

Holiday arrangements

If you will be away when offers are being made, you should notify the Unit of a contact address, telephone number or email address and the length of time you will be away. In some circumstances the Unit may contact the special contact person listed on the application.

Later round and subsequent offers

Parents whose children are on reserve lists will be offered a place if their position on a reserve list is reached. Reserve lists remain active for placement throughout Years 5 and 6 provided that students have not already enrolled in another opportunity class.

Students who have been offered a place and are also on a reserve list for a higher choice will be sent a subsequent offer if their reserve list position is reached.

If your child has accepted a place at a primary school with an opportunity class and is also on the reserve list for a higher choice school with an opportunity class, your child will stay on that reserve list until 5.00 pm on **Tuesday 28 January 2014**.

After 5.00 pm on Tuesday 28 January 2014, unless there are extenuating circumstances, no further offers will be made to applicants who have offers they have accepted and not subsequently declined.

Extenuating circumstances for an applicant who has accepted an offer to one opportunity class and now wants to be placed at a different opportunity class would have to involve an unforeseen and considerably distant change of residence.

In cases such as these attempts will be made to relocate the student if there is a vacancy at the new opportunity school, the student qualifies academically for the school and both primary principals approve.

Reports for schools

The Unit will send reports to government primary schools listing the outcome for each of their candidates.

The Unit may, upon request, send reports to non-government schools listing the outcome for each of their candidates whose application forms provide school assessment scores and where the parent has given approval for the Unit to contact the school.

Details of scores

Candidates will receive in their outcome advice the score out of 300 they achieved in the opportunity class placement process, provided that they sat the Opportunity Class Placement Test.

Further details of the scores achieved by your child will be available by submitting an online request available on the Unit's website. Details of scores will not be provided over the phone.

Withdrawal of offers

Offers will be withdrawn if it is found that students do not satisfy all the requirements, such as permanent residency, or if students do not enrol at the school at the beginning of the school year without providing a satisfactory explanation.

Offers will lapse if the Unit, after at least three attempts, is unable to contact the applicant to make an offer or determine the response.

Offers or enrolments may be terminated if placement is made on the basis of false or misleading information.

You cannot defer enrolment beyond **Friday 28 February 2014**. Any deferment must be negotiated with the principal of the school with the opportunity class or the Unit (in cases where offers are being made over the school holidays) before enrolling the student.

Even if a student has been offered a place and the offer has been accepted, the applicant must still show that all criteria have been met before enrolment can be finalised. This is done using procedures described in this document.

Appeals

You may appeal against the decision of the selection committee if you feel there were special factors which might have prevented the student from gaining higher school assessment scores or test scores, or if there were other factors which might not have been considered by the selection committee. Documentary evidence should accompany the appeal wherever relevant.

All appeals must be made on an appeal form which is available from the Unit's website or by contacting the Unit. You should complete the parents' section of the appeal form and pass it on to your child's primary school principal by **Monday 4 November 2013**. The principal should complete the principal's section and return the form to the Unit by **Monday 11 November 2013**.

If the student's school or test performance was likely to have been affected by illness, the Unit should have been notified by **Friday 9 August 2013** as part of the illness/misadventure process (see page 9). Appeals based on illness will therefore be considered only in exceptional circumstances and all such appeals must include a medical certificate covering the day of the test.

If your appeal is based on the student's school performance, the panel will consider only evidence concerning performance up to **Friday 7 June 2013**.

If you are appealing on other grounds, you should include evidence to support your appeal.

The appeals panel may consult with the primary school principal to seek further information if applicable.

You will be notified of the outcome of your appeal in **early December 2013**.

Frequently asked questions

1. Must I list two schools?

You should list only those schools you are prepared to accept. You may list one or two choices. Consider your choices carefully.

2. Does the order in which I list my choices matter?

Yes. If your child qualifies for both of your choices, you will be offered a place only at the school of first choice. However, if your child qualifies for only one of the two choices, you will be offered that place regardless of whether it was your first or second choice.

3. What provision is made for students from non-government schools?

The selection procedures are exactly the same for all students. Principals of non-government primary schools have been asked to accept your application, add school assessment scores and comments, and send it to the Unit. In circumstances where this is not possible you should submit a letter of explanation to the Unit.

4. How is the profile score derived if my child is the only one applying from his or her school?

Students who do not have school assessment scores or those who are the only candidates from the school will be considered on test scores only.

5. Will my child be disadvantaged if the school cannot provide school assessment scores?

Over the entire candidature, about half of the profile scores are increased by the moderated school assessment scores while the other half are decreased. Where students are not provided with school assessment scores it is not possible to guess whether or not having school assessment scores would have increased their profile score. Students without school assessment scores who are considered exempt will be considered on their test scores only.

6. What can I do to prepare my child for the Opportunity Class Placement Test?

Children should be encouraged to familiarise themselves with the kinds of questions they will be asked. Students can practise answering the questions in the sample test papers available on the Unit's website. Students will also be given practice questions before the test begins.

7. What happens if my child gets sick on the day of the test?

You should immediately download an *Illness/misadventure form* from the website shown on the cover of this document. You should complete the form, whether or not the student attempted the test, attach a medical

certificate which covers the day of the test, and return the completed form to the Unit by **Friday 9 August 2013**. The selection committee will then consider the student's illness/misadventure claim as part of the selection process. Remember, it is generally better to attempt the test than to miss it. You will not be able to appeal on the grounds of illness after the outcome is known.

8. Can I change my choice of schools after submitting the application?

Parents are advised to consider carefully their choices when submitting the application. Before **Friday 9 August 2013**, when selection committee lists are created, parents can submit a change of choice without explanation. After this date, it is much more difficult. Changes are subject to approval and must be accompanied by documentary evidence of the reason for the change at this stage. In some cases changes of choice may need to be submitted as an appeal.

9. If my outcome advice indicates that my child is unsuccessful, can his or her name be placed on a reserve list?

No. Three key expressions are used in outcome advice: 'offer', 'reserve list' and 'unsuccessful'. The selection committees decide the students who will receive offers and those who will be placed on a reserve list. These students have higher scores than those who are unsuccessful. Students placed on a reserve list will be given a number indicating their position on the reserve list. Progress on the reserve list varies from year to year. When offers begin to be made from the reserve list, the progress of each school's reserve list is available on the website shown on the front of this document.

10. What does the Opportunity Class Placement Test tell me about my child's performance?

The Opportunity Class Placement Test is designed to help identify students for entry into opportunity classes on the basis of academic merit. It is not meant to identify the student's strengths and weaknesses in English or mathematics performance. The student's primary school is in a far better position to advise you on your child's performance in these areas.

11. If my child was unsuccessful for opportunity class placement, does it mean he or she will be unsuccessful for selective high school entry?

Not necessarily. The entry requirements for opportunity classes and selective high school placement can vary quite significantly. Moreover, there is scope for improvement in the ability and performance of students over the time since they applied for opportunity class placement. Conversely, not all students from opportunity classes are successful for selective high school entry.

12. If I receive an offer to my second choice as well as being on the reserve list for my first choice, do I have to give up the offer to stay on the reserve list?

You can accept an offer to your second choice school while remaining on the reserve list for your school of higher choice until **Tuesday 28 January 2014**. After that time no further offers will be made to students who have already accepted placement in an opportunity class.

13. If my child is one of the last to be made an offer, does that mean he or she will struggle in the opportunity class?

There are many things which can affect student performance, including your child's willingness to learn, his or her response to teachers, and interaction with other students. The majority of students who receive an offer should have no difficulties. The selection committee offers places or reserve list positions only to those students considered capable of doing well in an opportunity class.

14. What should I do if my child does not get into an opportunity class?

As there is one place for approximately every six people applying, not all students can be placed. Be supportive and explain to your child that he or she can be very successful at a comprehensive primary school.

15. What score does a student have to gain to be successful for opportunity class placement?

There is no pre-determined score that a student has to achieve to be successful for opportunity class placement. The minimum entry score for each school with an opportunity class depends on the score achieved by the candidates applying for that school and can vary from school to school and from year to year. The greater the demand for the school the higher the entry score is likely to be.

16. How can I find out my child's score?

Most applicants will receive their child's profile score at the bottom of their outcome advice in **October 2013**. To receive further details of your child's scores in the opportunity class placement process, after you have received your outcome advice, please submit an online *Request for scores form* which is available from the Unit's website.

17. How does the reserve list work?

If the student is on a reserve list for an opportunity class the number on the outcome advice shows the student's position on the list. The progress of the reserve list depends on whether students accept or decline an offer and whether other students receive subsequent offers to a school of higher choice. If a student's position is reached on the reserve list, parents will be contacted by the Unit with an offer. From **early November 2013** you can track the progress of the reserve lists on the website. The page is updated regularly.