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**Group of National Experts on the AHELO Feasibility Study**

**NATIONAL MANAGEMENT MANUAL**

**8th meeting of the AHELO GNE**

**Paris, 28-29 November 2011**

*This document was prepared by the ACER Consortium.*

*It is a finalised version of the document presented at the 8th meeting of the AHELO GNE and is declassified with the GNE and Consortium's approval.*

*It is only available in PDF format.*

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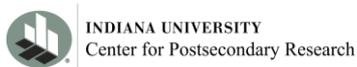
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## National Management Manual

November 2011



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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 from mid 2011 to late 2012. The information in this document is relevant to national management in all three testing strands: Generic skills, Economics and Civil Engineering.
3. The document provides an overview of the work required of National Project Managers (NPMs) in 2011 and 2012. It is supplemented by a number of further NPM manuals which give detailed explanations of sampling, test administration, using the testing system, and scoring. Countries that are relatively new to the study should read earlier documentation, particularly document 09 ‘NC and NPM role descriptions’ of the AHELO NPM Manual (all NPM Manuals are provided on the AHELO Exchange (<https://ahelo.acer.edu.au>)).
4. If you have any questions about any of the activities outlined in this document, or require support, please contact the AHELO Consortium via [ahelo@acer.edu.au](mailto:ahelo@acer.edu.au). The Consortium is always happy to arrange a conference call if helpful.

### Schedules and key dates

5. The international implementation of the AHELO Feasibility Study is proceeding to the broad schedule outlined in Figure 1. National management activities for each phase are outlined in the following sections. A detailed timeline is provided at the end of this document in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Phase	2011					2012												
	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
System and material development	█	█	█	█	█													
Deployment and training			█	█	█	█												
Test administration and monitoring						█	█	█	█	█	█							
Psychometric and statistical analysis										█	█	█						
Data and written reports	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█

**Figure 1: International implementation phases**

6. Some of the activities described in this manual need to occur by fixed deadlines. They must be completed by these dates so that the international project is not delayed.
7. If a country is not able to meet the fixed deadline for any activity, the AHELO Consortium should be informed as soon as possible by sending an email to [ahelo@acer.edu.au](mailto:ahelo@acer.edu.au). This allows Consortium staff to work with the country to resolve potential difficulties.

8. Other activities have deadlines which are relative to the testing period. This means that they must be done before testing but, because testing will take place at different times in different countries, it is not possible to indicate the exact date by which they must occur in each country.
9. All deadlines are given **in bold type** throughout this document and are summarised at the end of the document.

#### Key national resources

10. This section provides an overview of the main human and organisational resources required for the implementation phase of the AHELO Feasibility Study. Depending on national contexts and progress it may be necessary to draw on additional experts such as people with skills in adaptation and translation.
11. The AHELO National Centre (NC) is the organisational group that manages AHELO in your country.
12. The AHELO 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 the national level.
13. 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.
14. The Institutional Coordinator (IC) represents each institution participating in AHELO. The IC role involves close liaison with the NPM, assisting the NPM draw samples of students and faculty, providing institutional information, and working with test administrators to organise administration of assessment and context instruments.
15. Test Administrators (TAs) 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 deployment systems. TAs should not have a direct personal or professional relationship with any of the students in the testing sessions they administer.
16. Given the significant differences in wages and costs of living between the countries participating in the AHELO Feasibility Study, it is not possible to give an estimate of the costs involved in each individual country's participation in the implementation phase of the study. It is hoped, however, that the details contained in this document and the other documents which comprise the NPM manuals will help estimate the funding required to conduct national activities associated with the implementation of the AHELO Feasibility Study.

#### Communication

17. All enquiries about AHELO should be directed to the international management team at [ahelo@acer.edu.au](mailto:ahelo@acer.edu.au). The management team will ensure that your messages reach the team members best placed to respond to your enquiries. We endeavour to respond within two

working days. If you send a message to any individuals in the international management team please always remember to copy [ahelo@acer.edu.au](mailto:ahelo@acer.edu.au). For the Generic Skills Strand, please also copy [ahelo@cae.org](mailto:ahelo@cae.org) and [cae.ahelo@cae.org](mailto:cae.ahelo@cae.org).

18. NPMs are responsible for managing communication within their country. Primarily, this involves communicating with institutions (via ICs), Lead Scorers and translators. ICs communicate with other institutional staff, such as TAs and Lead Scorers, who then communicate with members of the scoring team.
19. To enable efficient communication, please ensure that we have the up-to-date contact details for all members of your national management team.
20. The AHELO Exchange (<https://ahelo.acer.edu.au>) is used for exchanging technical and operational documents. If you have forgotten your password or have any trouble logging in please send an email to [ahelo@acer.edu.au](mailto:ahelo@acer.edu.au).

## **System and material development (September to early November 2011)**

### Overview

21. Assessment and context instruments are being finalised between September and early November 2011. At the same time, the test deployment systems are being developed. At this stage, national management involves:
  - reviewing translated contextual dimension instruments;
  - revising translation of assessment instruments;
  - reviewing support manuals;
  - sampling institutions; and
  - recruiting Lead Scorer(s).
22. In addition, in the Generic Skills strand, the collection of student responses in advance of implementation should take place.

### Review translated context instruments

23. The context instruments will be translated by the AHELO Consortium's translation agency in September. When completed translations are sent to countries, NPMs should review the translation and make national adaptations in the Excel spreadsheet provided. This should then be returned to [ahelo@acer.edu.au](mailto:ahelo@acer.edu.au) for verification by **10 October 2011**.

### Revise translation of assessment instruments

24. In early October, NPMs in the Economics and Engineering strand will be sent the revised English source version of the assessment instruments and scoring rubrics. NPMs will receive guidelines on how to revise their national version to match the revised English source version. A limited translation will then need to be conducted. **It is not necessary to retranslate the whole document.**
25. The national version of assessment instruments should be revised by **21 October 2011**. It will then be verified by the AHELO Consortium. Past that date, the AHELO Consortium

will implement the revisions and countries will have very little time to review the Consortium's work.

26. New countries which have joined AHELO should complete comprehensive translation and adaptation of test materials. Please send an email to [ahelo@acer.edu.au](mailto:ahelo@acer.edu.au) if you have any questions about this process.

#### Review support manuals

27. The AHELO Consortium is drafting a number of manuals to support national activities. As with this National Management Manual, when the first drafts have been prepared NPMs will be asked to provide feedback to assist with revisions. Important manuals include:

- Sampling Manual;
- International Scoring Manual;
- Scoring Guides (strand-specific);
- Institutional Coordination Manual; and
- Test Administration Manual.

28. When the support manuals are finalised, NPMs may wish to translate these for use in their country. This is only necessary if scorers and TAs at participating institutions have limited English language skills which would make it difficult for them to understand the manuals.

#### Sample institutions

29. Ten institutions in each country will participate in the implementation phase of AHELO. Countries that are relatively new to the study should read earlier documentation, particularly document 12 'Selecting and engaging institutions' of the AHELO NPM Manual, accessed via the AHELO Exchange.
30. Depending on strand and institutional contexts, up to 150 students at each institution will be sampled to trial the assessment instrument and the Student Context Instrument, although this depends on the size of the student cohort.
31. In addition, relevant faculty will be sampled to respond to the Faculty Context Instrument, and ICs will be asked to work with colleagues to collate responses to the Institutional Context Instrument.
32. By **31 October 2011**, NPMs need to have secured the participation of the ten institutions which will participate in the implementation of AHELO. It is important to ensure that these institutions are willing to participate and that they are aware of what their participation will involve. Please refer to document 13 of the NPM Manual 'Example Letters of Invitation' for more information, accessed via the AHELO Exchange.

#### Recruit a Lead Scorer

33. 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 need to be recruited by **31 October 2011** so that they can participate in the training between **23 and 27 November 2011 in Paris**.

34. The AHELO Consortium will work with NPMs to identify the person who will serve as the Lead Scorer in each participating country. The Lead Scorer is responsible for:
- coordinating with the NPM and the AHELO Consortium to complete the scoring of the constructed response tasks according to the requirements provided and within the timeline allotted;
  - participating in an international training session in late November 2011 and, as helpful given national testing schedule, an NPM meeting in April 2012 to learn about scoring rubrics and procedures;
  - working with NPMs to adapt and translate relevant information in the AHELO Scoring Guides (only the scoring rubrics will be translated and adapted by the AHELO Consortium);
  - working with NPMs on software systems for scoring operations;
  - identifying and recruiting between three and 10 individuals (depending on test volume) who will score student responses;
  - working with NPMs to select and assemble student sample responses as scorer training material;
  - pre-assigning scores to student sample responses included in the scorer training material;
  - training selected scorers using international materials, scoring rubrics and guidelines;
  - monitoring scoring to ensure that scorers are completing scoring activities in an accurate, consistent, and timely fashion; and
  - responding to scorer questions about general requirements or specific student responses.
35. As this list suggests, Lead Scorers play an enormously important role in AHELO. They are responsible for working with NPMs to interpret international contexts and requirements, prepare for and manage scoring activities, and monitor the quality of scoring processes and outcomes. Lead Scorers play a vital role in ensuring that student responses are scored accurately and consistently across countries. Unless this is done correctly it is not possible to compare student scores across cultures and languages.
36. If NPMs have the appropriate professional background it is possible for them to act as the Lead Scorer. Otherwise, a Lead Scorer needs to be recruited.
37. Lead Scorers, ideally, should have appropriate qualifications and experience. They should have:
- a PhD in a relevant academic field;
  - national or international high standing in their field;
  - extensive experience assessing university students;
  - strong language skills in both English and the language of testing;
  - ability to travel to Paris in November 2011 for international training;
  - ability to participate in follow-up calibration training;
  - ability to recruit, train and manage from 3 to 10 scorers;

- ability to learn the response features of the constructed response tasks used in AHELO;
- ability to score responses accurately and explain the reasoning behind the allocation of scores; and
- ability to monitor scoring.

38. An overview of requirements for the Lead Scorer is given above. Further details are provided in the International Scoring Manual and strand-specific Scoring Guides.

39. Lead Scorers will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement before they are provided with access to any secure materials.

## **Deployment and training (October 2011 to January 2012)**

### Overview

40. Between November 2011 and January 2012, international and national 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, national management involves:

- attending a training session for NPMs and Lead Scorers;
- sampling students and faculty;
- trialling the test system;
- training ICs;
- scheduling testing sessions;
- recruiting and training TAs; and
- recruiting and training scorers (note that this may be scheduled closer to testing time).

### Attend training session for NPMs and Lead Scorers

41. Training sessions will be conducted in Paris for NPMs **from 23 to 27 November**. The training covers sampling, national management, institutional coordination, using the test system, test administration, and scoring.

42. NPMs and Lead Scorers are expected to attend the training. They can then return to their countries and train national and institutional staff in each of these activities.

43. Training materials will be sent to NPMs in early November so that they can prepare for the training sessions. NPMs and Lead Scorers attending the training should bring examples of student responses to constructed response tasks, collected during earlier parts of the project. Further details about requirements will be provided in advance of training.

### Sample students and faculty

44. During the November training session, participants will be given detailed guidance on methods of sampling students and faculty in their country. The AHELO Sampling Manual will be provided to NPMs in October 2011.

45. From December onwards, NPMs need to implement the sampling strategy in each country. The AHELO Consortium will closely support and supervise national sampling activities. Sampling of students needs to be completed **at least two months before testing**.

#### Trial of the test system

46. During 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 by **31 January 2012**.

#### Train Institutional Coordinators

47. Once NPMs have received training on test administration and the use of the test system, they will need to conduct training for ICs at participating institutions. Ideally, this should occur approximately **two months before testing**.
48. IC training should include the use of the test system and the administration of testing. When they return to their institutions, ICs will need to train TAs in the administration of testing. If desired, the training of TAs could also be undertaken centrally in the National Centre. This is not essential, however.
49. National centre staff may wish to translate relevant sections of the Test Administration Manual and the System Manual for ICs and TAs to use. This is only necessary if ICs are likely to have limited English skills.

#### Schedule testing sessions

50. After training ICs, NPMs should schedule testing sessions at each institution. This involves determining a date and time for the testing session and booking space(s) to hold all students participating in the testing. This will likely require booking multiple computer rooms, depending on the capacity of each room.

#### Recruit and train Test Administrators

51. NPMs should work with ICs to recruit and train TAs in each institution. TAs will need to have experience in the monitoring or invigilating of student examinations and tests. Reliability, integrity and a calm helpful manner are essential for all TAs. Test administration involves detailed clerical work requiring accuracy and organisation.
52. 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 at a minimum.
53. TAs will need to be recruited and trained at least **one month before testing**.

#### Recruit and train the national scoring team

54. NPMs should work with Lead Scorers to recruit and conduct training for all other scorers. The number of scorers required will depend on the strand and the number of students which take the test in each participating country. Generally, at least three scorers per

testing strand should be recruited and trained. Further details will be provided during Scoring Training in November 2011.

55. Scorers should have a graduate qualification in a domain relevant to the test they score and experience in scoring assessment tasks at the university level. They should have excellent communication skills in the language of testing and be able to follow rubrics to accurately score student responses.
56. The scoring training session lasts at least one day. It should introduce scorers to the tasks, International Scoring Manual, scoring guide and rubrics and allow for thorough practice of scoring using sample student responses. Scorer recruitment and training should take place **approximately one month before testing**.

## **Test administration and monitoring (January 2011 to May 2012)**

### Overview

57. Between **February and May 2012**, tests will be implemented in all participating countries. The exact timing of this will depend on the academic calendar in each individual country. This involves:

- attending support meeting;
- administering testing sessions;
- monitoring testing sessions;
- scoring responses; and
- reporting data.

### Attend support meeting

58. It is likely that there will be a face-to-face meeting of NPMs during **April 2012** that is timed to coincide with the AHELO GNE Meeting. The purpose of this meeting will be to review progress and to provide support to countries in their national activities. Further details will be determined nearer the time.

### Administer testing sessions

59. To ensure consistent implementation across all participating countries, it is important that the test is administered with strict adherence to the AHELO Test Administration Manual.
60. Up to 150 students will take the test at each of the ten institutions per country which participate in AHELO. The number of students will depend on sampling.
61. Test administration involves setting up one or more testing rooms at each institution. The testing room will need to have one computer per participating student. TAs set up the room, login to the test system on each computer and then monitor students as they take the test. TAs will use the AHELO Test Administration Manual to guide their activities.
62. Technical support will be available in case of any problems with the test system.

### Monitor testing sessions

63. International monitoring of test implementation will be undertaken by the AHELO Consortium. Monitoring arrangements will be developed with NPMs, OECD and Expert Groups, and could include visits to institutions, phone interviews with ICs or TAs, or the completion of questionnaires.

### Scoring of responses

64. Scoring commences as soon as testing is complete. First, the Lead Scorer in each country needs to have trained scorers in scoring constructed response tasks. Full details about how this should be conducted will be discussed during the face-to-face training in November 2011.

65. Scoring can take place either centrally or around the country. Whichever approach is used, it is important that guidelines are strictly adhered to and that quality control processes are used, including double-scoring. Scoring procedures, including the recruitment and training of scorers, are detailed in the International Scoring Manual, and strand-specific Scoring Guides.

## **Psychometric and statistical analysis (May to July 2012)**

### International analyses

66. Between June and August 2012, data from the test and context instruments will be collected and analysed. At this stage the AHELO Consortium will contact NPMs to verify national data and for feedback on how successfully the testing has been implemented in your country. All feedback will need to be received by **31 August 2012** to be included in the international file.

### National analyses

67. The international team is very supportive of NPMs and ministries conducting national analyses of AHELO. These are very important for institutional and stakeholder engagement, and for developing ideas on how AHELO can be researched and managed.

68. Please make contact with the AHELO Consortium if we can help clarify the focus or scope of planned national analyses. In your national 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 at this feasibility stage.

69. The AHELO Consortium is limited in the extent to which we can support national work as we understandably have to devote resources to designing and progressing the international study. It is of course very important to be mindful of the technical and legal constraints around current data and secure instruments.

## Data and written reports (August 2011 to December 2012)

70. Between September and December 2012 the AHELO Consortium will be preparing a number of reports on the implementation of the AHELO Feasibility Study. NPMs will be asked to provide input on this reporting.

## Summary of key dates

71. As noted at the start of this document, some activities have fixed deadlines whereas some have deadlines which are relative to testing. Table 1 summarises fixed deadlines.

**Table 1: AHELO implementation: fixed national deadlines**

Activity	Active period	Deadline
Review of translated of context instruments	September–October 2011	10 October 2011
Revise translation of instruments and rubrics	October 2011	21 October 2011
Review support materials	August–October 2011	31 October 2011
Recruit institutions for participation in Phase 2	August–October 2011	31 October 2011
Recruit Lead Scorer(s)	August–October 2011	31 October 2011
Participate in NPM and Lead Scorer(s) training	November 2011	23 November 2011
System testing	December 2011–January 2012	31 January 2012
Face-to-face NPM meeting	March–April 2012	March–April 2012
Reporting national data	March–June 2012	30 June 2012
International data verification	May–August 2012	31 August 2012
Feedback to manuals and emails	September–November 2012	30 November 2012

Table 2 illustrates deadlines which are relative depending on when students will be tested in each country.

**Table 2: AHELO implementation: relative national deadlines**

Activities	Deadlines relative to national testing period
Training for Institutional Coordinators	2 months before
Schedule testing sessions	2 months before
Student/faculty population definition, sampling and recruitment	1 month before
Recruit and train Test Administrators	1 month before
Recruit and train scorers	1 month before
Scoring of students responses	Immediately afterwards

## Schedule of key national activities

72. Figure 2 provides a schedule that flags timelines for key national activities for system and material development, and deployment and training. Figure 3 provides a schedule for national activities to be undertaken between February and August 2012. Darker shading indicates times by which specific activities must be completed.

	26-Sep	3-Oct	10-Oct	17-Oct	24-Oct	31-Oct	7-Nov	14-Nov	21-Nov	28-Nov	5-Dec	12-Dec	19-Dec	26-Dec	2-Jan	9-Jan	16-Jan	23-Jan	30-Jan
Review translation of context instruments	█	█	█																
Review of support manuals	█	█	█	█	█	█													
Revise translation of instruments and scoring rubrics		█	█	█	█	█													
Recruit institutions for participation in Phase 2	█	█	█	█	█	█													
Recruit Lead Scorer	█	█	█	█	█	█													
Participate in NPM/Lead Scorer training							█	█	█										
Recruit Test Administrators		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Student/faculty population definition, sampling and recruitment											█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Recruit national scoring team	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Facilitate in-country training										█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Organise testing sessions	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Pilot of testing system										█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█

**Figure 2: Schedule of key national activities: September 2011 to January 2012**

	6-Feb	13-Feb	20-Feb	27-Feb	5-Mar	12-Mar	19-Mar	26-Mar	2-Apr	9-Apr	16-Apr	23-Apr	30-Apr	7-May	14-May	21-May	28-May	4-Jun	11-Jun	18-Jun	25-Jun	2-Jul	9-Jul	16-Jul	23-Jul	30-Jul	6-Aug	13-Aug	20-Aug	27-Aug	3-Sep	10-Sep	17-Sep	24-Sep		
Student/faculty population definition, sampling and recruitment																																				
Recruit national scoring team																																				
Facilitate in-country training																																				
Organise testing sessions																																				
Coordinate and monitor testing sessions																																				
Coordinate and monitor scoring operations																																				
Report national data																																				
Finalise national operations																																				
International data verification																																				
Participate in analysis/reporting																																				

**Figure 3: Schedule of key national activities: February 2012 to September 2012**