



Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE



## MEDIA RELEASE

### SINGAPORE’S ADULTS REGISTER IMPROVED RANKINGS IN OECD STUDY ON INFORMATION PROCESSING SKILLS

**Singapore, 10 December 2024** – Singapore has improved in ranking against other countries in Cycle 2 of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)’s Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), which assesses our workforce’s capacity to acquire further knowledge and new skills.

2 The PIAAC assesses the proficiency of adults in literacy, numeracy, and adaptive problem-solving skills. The OECD recognises these proficiencies as key information processing skills that enable an adult to acquire new knowledge and skills.

3 Thus far, there have been two Cycles of PIAAC, and Singapore participated in both cycles. Cycle 1 was conducted from 2014 to 2015, while Cycle 2 was conducted from 2022 to 2023. For Cycle 2, about 5,000 Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents aged between 16 and 65 participated.

#### ***Singapore adults improved in literacy and numeracy proficiency rankings, younger adults scored above average***

4 Singapore was the most improved country for numeracy alongside Finland, rising in ranking from 25<sup>th</sup> out of 39 countries in Cycle 1, to 10<sup>th</sup> out of 31 countries in Cycle 2. While our literacy proficiency scores remained stable, Singapore rose in ranking from 28<sup>th</sup> out of 39 countries in Cycle 1, to 18<sup>th</sup> out of 31 in Cycle 2. Our adaptive problem-solving score (252 points) was comparable to OECD’s mean<sup>1</sup>.

**Fig 1: PIAAC Ranking and Scores for Singapore**

Domain	Cycle	Ranking	Singapore Mean Scores	OECD Mean Scores	Top Mean Scores
Literacy	1	28 of 39	258	268	296 (Japan)
	2	18 of 31	255	260	296 (Finland)
Numeracy	1	25 of 39	257	263	288 (Japan)
	2	10 of 31	274	263	294 (Finland)
Adaptive Problem Solving	2	14 of 31	252	251	276 (Finland and Japan)

<sup>1</sup> Adaptive problem-solving skills were not measured in Cycle 1.



5 Our younger adults (aged 16 – 34) scored above the OECD’s average in all three domains.

Fig 2: PIAAC scores across different age groups

Age	Domain and Mean Scores		
	Literacy	Numeracy	Adaptive Problem-Solving
16 – 24	285	298	276
25 – 34	280	296	272
35 – 44	261	282	259
45 – 54	242	265	241
55 – 65	219	241	223

**Skills proficiency linked to higher wages, workers engage in continuous education for career-related reasons**

6 Apart from the three proficiency tests, PIAAC respondents also contributed information about themselves and their jobs. For Singapore, the following findings show that skills are linked to higher wages and adults are embracing upskilling and reskilling to progress in their careers:

- (a) Job roles with more skills requirements tend to come with higher wages;
- (b) Workforce participation in continual education remains comparable to the OECD average;
- (c) Majority who participated in job-related training did so to enhance their job performance or career prospects.

**Implications of study results**

7 While the results suggest our workforce has raised its capacity to acquire further knowledge and new skills, this progress must be reinforced with continued investment in our people beyond formal education, through the SkillsFuture movement.

8 The Government is providing support for all Singaporeans to learn throughout life, through various programmes, such as the SkillsFuture Credit for Singaporeans aged 25 and above; and the SkillsFuture Level-Up Programme for mid-career Singaporeans aged 40 and above to pursue substantive training. Companies too have a key role to play, to invest in their employees’ development, and recognise their attainment of skills. Individuals also need to take charge of their own upskilling and career health, and tap on available resources to guide themselves in their learning and career journeys.



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9 Mr Tan Kok Yam, Chief Executive Officer of SkillsFuture Singapore and Chairman of Institute for Adult Learning Council said, “The PIAAC results give us confidence that our workforce has raised its collective capacity to upskill and adapt. At the same time, there is room to do even better. Companies, institutions and Government need to work together to advance the SkillsFuture movement and achieve three objectives: help our mid-careerists benefit from further education and training; maintain Singaporeans’ capacity to learn after they leave school; ensure that our workforce stay relevant amid technological change.”

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### **About SkillsFuture Singapore**

SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) drives and coordinates the implementation of the national SkillsFuture movement, promotes a culture of lifelong learning and strengthens the ecosystem of training and adult education in Singapore. Through a holistic suite of national SkillsFuture initiatives, SSG enables Singaporeans to take charge of their learning journey in their pursuit of skills mastery. SSG also works with key stakeholders to ensure that students and adults have access to high quality and industry-relevant training that meet the demands of different sectors of the economy for an innovative and productive workforce. For more information, visit [www.skillsfuture.gov.sg](http://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg).

### **About the Institute for Adult Learning**

The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) is the National Centre of Excellence for Adult Learning (NCAL) and an autonomous institute of the Singapore University of Social Sciences. As NCAL, IAL closely collaborates with and supports Adult Education professionals, enterprises, human resource developers, and policymakers through its comprehensive suite of programmes and services aimed at enhancing capabilities and catalysing innovations in Continuing Education and Training (CET). IAL also champions research to sustain economic performance through skills development, shapes employment and CET policies, and fosters innovations through learning technology and pedagogy to enhance adult learning experiences. For more information, please visit [www.ial.edu.sg](http://www.ial.edu.sg).

### **About the Ministry of Education**

The Ministry of Education (MOE) formulates and implements education policies on education structure, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. It oversees the management and development of Government-funded schools, and the Institute of Technical Education, polytechnics and universities. More information on MOE can be found at [www.moe.gov.sg](http://www.moe.gov.sg).