The overall aim of the Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment (OUCEA) is to investigate the impact of educational assessment. Connections between policy, assessment theory and practice need to be elucidated, researched and critiqued for assessment to play a better role in improving education.

Current doctoral research projects

- What motivates A-level students to achieve? The role of expectations and values, Carol Brown
- Comparing assessment in citizenship education, Kristine Görgen
- Reasoning about reasoning: Investigating the scientific reasoning skills of primary science pupils in written assessments, Diana Ng Yue Ping
- Exploring school resource and teacher qualification policies, their implementation and effects on schools and students’ educational outcomes in Brazil, Christine Paget
- School-level use of national exams data in Indonesia: A mixed-methods exploratory study, Agni Paramita
- Of words and washback: how has PISA influenced the assessment of reading ability in national contexts? Jeanne Ryan
- Constructs, valuations and counterfactuials: a mathematical theory of assessment, Alex Scharaschkin
- Challenges to maintaining standards in the presence of strategic entry to GCSE Mathematics assessments: A case study of early and multiple entry, Rachel Taylor
- The effects of poverty on children’s vocabulary development in Ethiopia, Nardos Tesfay
- Learning about academic writing through holistic peer review, Natalie Usher

Highlights 2015-16

Professor Pamela Sammons delivered the OUCEA Annual Lecture at the Ashmolean Museum in May 2016: What can we learn from students’ reports of their secondary school experiences and their role in shaping academic outcomes at GCSE?


Former OUCEA Director Professor Jo-Anne Baird became Director of the Oxford University Department of Education in 2016 and was also appointed Standing Specialist Adviser to the House of Commons Select Committee on Education.

Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins advises on research in OUCEA, particularly the Assessment for Learning in Africa project. Her research interests include language testing and assessment, programme evaluation and issues around language in education in multilingual contexts.

Dr Josh McGrane joined OUCEA as a Research Fellow in Educational Assessment funded by AQA. He has a breadth of experience in educational assessment across academic and government contexts, and has worked on local through to system-level assessments. His research interests include applications of different psychometric models, particularly the Rasch models, the assessment of non-cognitive attributes, and the history and philosophy of measurement and assessment.

Research Fellow Dr Jenny Lenkeit secured funding from the John Fell OUP Research Fund to carry out research on Indicators of Education System Effectiveness and is editing a special issue on Assessment in Reading in International Studies. She is working on the PIRLS National Centre and the PIRLS for Teachers project and has been selected by the Department for Education to be a member of its Analytical Associate Pool.

Research Fellow Dr Daniel Caro obtained funding from the World Bank for a longitudinal study about differential school effectiveness in Peru. He was appointed convenor of the MSc Education (Research Design and Methodology) Programme and co-convenor of the Quantitative Methods Seminar Programme in the Department of Education.

Dr Yasmin El Masri published two papers: El Masri, Baird & Graesser, Language effects in international testing: the case of PISA 2006 science item and El Masri, Ferrara, Foltz & Baird, Predicting item difficulty of science National Curriculum tests: The case of Key Stage 2 assessments. She is currently leading on the project: Task complexity in language assessments: A systematic review.