

GESS Assessment



What is GESS?

GESS is not a new security standard; rather, it is a crosswalk of internationally agreed upon set of security controls pulled from major cyber security frameworks that are most applicable to the PK20 education ecosystem. By following and becoming certified in GESS, it will streamline the providers' ability to implement required security controls while at the same time meeting school expectations across jurisdictions, all with one common set of controls.

You can view the full control set [here](#).

How does the GESS third-party assessment work?

Each GESS assessment will follow these stages.

Stage	What happens	Who leads
#1: Setup	Agree scope, formalise terms, classify product tier, issue self-assessment workbook and evidence checklist to the vendor.	Assessor
#2: Assessment	Vendor completes self-assessment against GESS controls and submits evidence. Assessor verifies each control against submitted evidence and evidence checklist. Live session for controls requiring demonstration.	Vendor & Assessor
#3: Report	Assessor produces non-conformity register and assessment report. Vendor has a 5-business-day factual review window. Final report and certification outcome issued to client.	Assessor
#4: Remediation & closure	Vendor produces remediation plan for all non-conformities. EDDS Institute reviews and approves. Follow-up verification of Critical and High items. Closure letter issued.	Vendor (Assessor verifies)

What factors are considered in classifying my product's tier?

Tiers are determined by a number of factors, shown in this table overleaf. The tier level determines the exact controls to be evaluated, with lower levels requiring fewer controls than higher levels. This impacts the final price for an assessment.

Note that the tier classification follows a highest tier rule. After determining each level for each factor, the highest level will be your overall tier (e.g., if you have mostly level 2, but then one that is level 3, you will be assessed by the level 3 control set).

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Factor	Tier 1: Foundation	Tier 2: Standard	Tier 3: Enhanced	Tier 4: Critical
Data Sensitivity	None / anonymous only	Standard PII (name, school, grade)	Extended PII + behavioural + communications	Special category / sensitive data
Persistent student records	None - session only	Up to 10,000	10,000 - 50,000	>50,000 or any sensitive data element
Student accounts	None required	Basic identifiers	Full profiles	Rich / sensitive profiles
Student interaction	None / passive view	Supervised, teacher-mediated	Direct - peer interaction possible	Vulnerable groups / clinical context
Third-party sharing and sub-processors	None	Minimal, contractually restricted	Multiple controlled sub-processors; vendor maintains register and agreements	Aggregation or brokering function; or sub-processor independently triggers a higher tier
Data persistence	Session only	Academic year + clear deletion	Multi-year retention	Indefinite / complex deletion
Communications	None	None	Teacher-student or peer messaging	Messaging + sensitive content
AI student profiling	None - no AI, or purely presentational AI with no student data processed	None - embedded AI only (grammar tools, spell check, content recommendations). No student profile generated or persisted.	Session-based adaptive AI; cohort or class-level learning analytics; AI tutoring without persistent individual student profiles	AI generating persistent individual student profiles; predictive risk or attainment scoring; automated decisions about individual students; behavioural pattern analysis producing individual reports
Biometrics	No	No	No	Yes - facial recognition, fingerprint, voice biometric, iris scan, or equivalent
Under-13 sensitivity	Equivalent - no PII collected	Heightened scrutiny applies	Significant - heightened for all under 18	Maximum - especially for under-13 data

What are the prices per tier?

A4L members receive a discount for receiving a GESS assessment.

Non-member	\$2,500	\$6,500	\$10,000	\$12,000
A4L member	\$2,000	\$5,200	\$8,000	\$10,000