



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Personalised assessments – FAQs for schools

What is the purpose of personalised assessments?

The purpose of the assessments is to help learners progress, through understanding what they can do, the things they need to work on, and their next steps.

What is the timetable for introduction?

The personalised assessments are replacing the paper tests as follows:

Academic year	Numeracy (Procedural)	Reading (Welsh and English)	Numeracy (Reasoning)
2019/20	online	Online	paper
2020/21	online	Online	online

Why is Welsh Government introducing online personalised assessments?

Personalised assessments provide detailed information on the numeracy and reading skills of individual learners and whole classes which teachers can use to plan next steps in learning and teaching. By moving online, we are taking advantage of the latest technology to provide a personalised assessment experience that adjusts the level of challenge for each learner.

What are ‘personalised assessments’?

In personalised or ‘adaptive’ assessments the questions are generated based on the learner’s response to the previous question. A learner who answers a question correctly will receive a question that is slightly more challenging; a learner who answers a question incorrectly will receive a slightly easier question. This process continues until the assessment system has covered the relevant aspects of the curriculum and gathered sufficient information on the learner’s responses. This provides an individual assessment experience and tailors the level of challenge for every learner.

The personalised assessments are based on the skills set out in the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) (<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales-2008/national-literacy-and-numeracy-framework-curriculum-for-wales-2008-version/>). Currently they provide information to assist teachers to plan next steps in learning and teaching for Numeracy (Procedural) (numerical facts and procedures – the ‘tools’ needed to apply numeracy within a wide range of contexts) and for Reading. Numeracy (Reasoning) will be available in 2020/2021.

What are the benefits?

Personalised assessments:

- provide a tailored, interactive experience to engage learners and assess the level of their skills
- provide teachers with information on their learners' skills and development
- offer high-quality feedback shortly after the assessments have been completed
- have the benefit of automatic marking
- are available for schools to schedule when they choose during the academic year at the best time to support teaching, learning and classroom planning.

Who will be required to take the assessments?

Learners in Years 2–9 studying in maintained schools in Wales are required to take the personalised assessments.

Will they be suitable for learners with special educational needs?

Yes. There are modified versions of the assessments available. These include text enlargement, tab controls, and other adaptations. The assessments are compatible with standard assistive technologies.

Learners will not be confined to questions linked to their year group or age. The 'adaptive' nature of the assessments means that each question is generated based on the learner's response to the previous question. The level of difficulty will vary until the learner's level is established at the end of the assessment.

For more information on the modified assessments, please see Annex 6 of the [National Reading and Numeracy Tests – Test administration handbook 2019/20](#)

How often will learners take these assessments?

It is a statutory requirement for all maintained schools in Wales to ensure that learners in Years 2–9 take the assessments once during the academic year. In response to feedback from practitioners involved in the design and development of the assessments, they are also available for an optional second use by schools.

The timing for taking the assessments is at schools' discretion.

If schools decide to use the assessment a second time, it is recommended that learners do not exceed one assessment per term.

How much preparation do the assessments require?

Personalised assessments do not require learners to undertake any specific preparation.

The assessments are designed to be easy to use. Familiarisation assessments are available so that learners can view the question types and understand how to answer them, and also become familiar with the navigation of the assessments.

Before taking a personalised assessment, schools should allow learners to try a familiarisation assessment.

How will my school access the assessments?

Through [Hwb](#), the Welsh Government's learning platform. Schools are able to schedule the assessments for their learners, and learners access the assessments at school using their [Hwb](#) log-in.

Before learners can take personalised assessments:

- the headteacher, or member of staff acting on their behalf, needs to assign functions and access for relevant staff
- staff need to log in to Hwb and navigate to the personalised assessments website
- learners will need to log in to Hwb and work through a familiarisation assessment so that they understand the question formats.

What support will be available to my school?

Support for schools is available through online videos and a user guide demonstrating how the assessments should be administered and how to access learner and group reports. These support materials are available on the assessment website.

Schools are encouraged to sign up for a webinar to gain an understanding of how the assessments work and how they can use the information from the assessments to support teaching and learning. Schools can also access recorded webinars that include information on administering the assessments and making best use of learner feedback and reports, via the assessment website.

A managed helpdesk is available during school hours providing a bilingual service. For further support, contact the Assessment Helpdesk on 029 2026 5099 or help@personalisedassessments.wales.

How many computers will my school need?

There is no requirement for schools to have a large number of computers or other devices, e.g. tablets. Learners can take the assessments one at a time, in small groups or classes, according to teacher preferences and school facilities.

What are the ICT requirements?

Information on ICT requirements can be found in the IT Guidance for Schools at <https://hwb.gov.wales/personalised-assessments>

The assessments can be used on the following devices:

- desktop computers
- laptops – including Chromebooks
- and tablets – including iPads

that have a modern browser installed (see 'Browser requirements'). Before running an assessment, you should ensure your devices are fully charged and checked for updates. We recommend that operating systems and apps are regularly updated.

Please be aware that Windows 7 will no longer be supported by Microsoft in January 2020. Schools are encouraged to use the Hwb national Licensing arrangements and upgrade to Windows 10. Please work with your Digital Champion and local authority/IT support partner to ensure that your systems are up to date.

One of the following browsers should be used (these are the minimum browser requirements):

- Google Chrome 59
- Internet Explorer 11
- Mozilla Firefox 55
- Safari 10.

Please note: Microsoft Edge is not currently a supported browser. Whilst the personalised assessments website can be accessed using Edge it will not allow users to launch the Reading Personalised Assessments if the Edge browser version is below Version 77. We understand that Edge is due to be updated to Version 77 in Microsoft Windows in early 2020.

Typically, you will need a minimum bandwidth of 2Mbps if you are assessing a class of 30 learners, with no other significant demands on the network at the time.

My school has poor connectivity – how will we access the assessments?

As there is no requirement for schools to have all learners taking the assessments at the same time, you can plan around any connectivity issues you might have by limiting the number of learners connected online at any one time.

If you are concerned about poor connectivity, you should contact your local authority/IT support partner who can advise you on any weaknesses within your school's local area network infrastructure (such as incompatible networking components; lack of Wi-Fi access points, etc.). Your local authority can advise you on the capabilities of your current internal network infrastructure, and what it can support in terms of using the latest technology, as well as what improvements might be needed to make the most of the broadband connection provided to your school under Welsh Government's LiDW (Learning in Digital Wales) Investment in Broadband programme.

Further information regarding internet and School IT infrastructure please visit the Education Digital Standards webpage at <https://hwb.gov.wales/support-centre/education-digital-standards>.

Will there be a 'window' when schools should schedule the assessments?

No. Schools have the flexibility to schedule the personalised assessments at a point during the academic year that they consider most appropriate to gain benefits for learning and teaching.

Personalised assessments must be scheduled for a particular school day and scheduled at least the day before the assessment takes place. They can be taken at any point during the school day.

Will whole classes have to take the assessments at the same time?

No. Schools can schedule assessments for individual learners, groups or whole classes in accordance with their preferences and facilities. Unlike the paper tests, the assessment for each learner will be different, and there is therefore no necessity for learners to take them at the same time.

Are learners able to use paper to help them work out their answers during an assessment?

Yes. Learners should be given access to paper and pens/pencils for any rough working out. Learners' working out will not be assessed as part of the Numeracy (Procedural) Personalised Assessment. It should be made clear to learners that only the answer submitted on screen can be taken into account.

Are learners able to go back to view previous questions?

Due to the adaptive nature of the assessments, learners are unable to go back to previous questions. However, the assessments do not have a time limit so learners can work at their own pace and check that they are happy with each answer before they move on to the next question. The guidance to schools advises teachers to explain to learners to check their answers before they move on.

Are learners confined to questions for their age group?

The assessments are constructed from a large bank of questions and texts (for the reading assessment) which are based on skills identified in the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework for Years 2 to 9. Learners are not confined to questions linked to their year group or age. The 'adaptive' nature of the assessments means each question is selected based on the learner's response to the previous question. The level of difficulty will vary until the learner's level is established at the end of the assessment.

Learners will get some questions right and some questions wrong. The guidance to schools advises teachers to explain to learners that if they see a question they don't understand or find too hard, they shouldn't worry or spend too long on the question, they should just move on to the next question.

Can we opt to have paper-based tests once the personalised assessments are introduced?

No. Paper-based tests are being phased out as the personalised assessments go live for Numeracy (Procedural), Reading (English and Welsh), and Numeracy (Reasoning), as outlined in the table above.

Will feedback be available straight away?

Feedback on individuals will be available on the assessment website one day after the assessments are completed. Teachers will have the opportunity to review individual feedback before releasing it to learners.

What reports will be available?

The reports contain information on the skills of individual learners at the time each assessment was taken. This will include information on their strengths, and areas that may be causing them difficulty. Teachers are able to access a range of reports, including individual learner reports and class/group reports. Schools are encouraged to share individual learner feedback and progress reports with parents and carers when the information is current.

Will the assessment results produce a standardised score? If so, when will standardised scores be available?

The assessments will provide a range of information on learners' skills and progress. Progress over time will be based on a standardised score. For Numeracy (Procedural) Personalised Assessments, an age-standardised score is available the day after an assessment is taken. During the first year of the Reading Personalised Assessments, scores will not be available until the end of the school year.

If learners use the assessment twice in an academic year, which score 'counts'?

Scores are provided to schools so that they can be used alongside the detailed information on skills in order to plan learning and teaching, and support learner progress. The purpose of these assessments is formative. If schools choose to use the assessments twice, information from both assessments is equally important in supporting teaching and learning. Welsh Government does not monitor this data on an individual school basis and does not make judgements on schools based on scores from the personalised assessments.

Will my school need to send reports to parents/carers?

Yes. Schools will need to supply parents/carers with copies of the feedback on individual learners after the assessments have been taken, and also copies of learner progress reports. Schools are encouraged to share this information while it is current. If the assessments are taken twice during the academic year, parents/carers should receive both sets of feedback.

For Numeracy (Procedural) Personalised Assessments, a progress report containing an age-standardised score is available the day after an assessment is taken. Progress reports for the Reading Personalised Assessments will be provided to schools to share with parents and carers at the end of the school year..

How do parents and carers access the reports?

Schools are required to ensure that individual learner feedback and progress reports from the assessments are shared securely with parents and carers after the assessments have been taken.

Schools are encouraged to share the feedback while it is current. If the assessments are taken twice during the academic year, parents and carers should receive both sets of feedback.

Will each question have a time limit?

No. Learners work through the questions at their own pace. Teachers are able to pause the assessments, for example in order to give breaks to younger learners.

How can I find out more?

We will be issuing updates through the Dysg newsletter (please sign up if you haven't already) at https://gov.wales/subscribe-education-and-training-news-dysg?_ga=2.85414428.429415260.1571838800-877243620.1571838800 and you can follow us on Twitter [@WG_Education](https://twitter.com/WG_Education). We will also update the FAQs with more information as the personalised assessments are developed.

For guidance on the administration of the personalised assessments, please visit the [National Reading and Numeracy Tests – Test administration handbook 2019/20](#).

In early 2020, the consortium responsible for developing the personalised assessments on behalf of Welsh Government will be running trials for the Reasoning Personalised Assessments. This will give you an insight into how the Reasoning Personalised Assessments will work and will provide you with feedback on your learners' skills.

If you would like to be involved in trialling, please contact trials@personalisedassessments.wales.