



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Personalised assessments – IT guidance for schools



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This document is also available in Welsh.

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Introduction

This guide has been produced to help schools prepare for the introduction of the personalised assessments, which will start with procedural numeracy in academic year 2018/19.

Please note that technical details in this document may be updated from time to time. You should check the Learning Wales site for the latest version of this guidance.

Learners will access the assessments at school using Hwb, the Welsh Government's learning platform, at <https://hwb.gov.wales/>. Staff members will be able to schedule and invigilate assessments, and download reports on individual learners and classes, via a dedicated website accessed by logging into Hwb. **All users – learners and staff members – will require their Hwb log-in.** For information on how users find Hwb usernames and passwords see the link at <https://hwb.gov.wales/getting-started>.

We recommend that you read the Welsh Government's Education Digital Guidance at <https://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/raisingstandards/education-digital-guidance/?lang=en>. You will find this resource helpful when managing your digital technology environment to facilitate learning.

Many schools will have internal IT support and will already be confident in their system and its ability to run the assessments. If you have questions relating to your school's IT system, the first point of contact should be your school's digital champion.

How to make the most of your school's internet connection

Once devices access your school's network, the following factors can impact on the strength and reliability of your internet connection.

Factor	Explanation	Recommendation
Network infrastructure This includes network cabling, routers, network switches and wireless access points. If these are not appropriately maintained, your school's network may experience slow speeds and unresponsiveness.	It is important to check and maintain your network infrastructure. Plan to regularly review it – this will provide a solid foundation for all your digital services and help you get the most from your internet connection.	Contact your local authority for advice on your current network infrastructure and ask how they can support you. Address any weaknesses in your infrastructure – this will help maximise the availability of your internet connection.

<p>Competing demands on your internet connection</p> <p>Having simultaneous lessons using media-rich content (such as streaming videos) can lead to a reduction in your speed and impact the end-user experience.</p>	<p>Think of your school network (especially your Wi-Fi) as your home water supply – all taps in the house share the one water supply. The fewer taps running, the better the flow rate.</p> <p>Better management of traffic and data used across your school network will help you to make the most of your internet connection and improve your users' experience.</p>	<p>Check when lessons are scheduled to be using media-rich content. This will help your school plan activities that rely on the internet connection.</p> <p>For further insight please see the case study at https://curriculumforwales.gov.wales/2017/06/21/the-wifi-isnt-down-it-must-be-something-your-end/.</p>
<p>Software and application updates</p> <p>These include the operating system, security software and other application updates, which can impact on your school's internet speed.</p>	<p>If software and applications are updating in the background while an assessment is being delivered, the learner's experience can be impacted by slow responses.</p> <p>Some devices allow automatic updates to be disabled or specific times to be set when these updates can run.</p>	<p>Contact your local authority for advice on how to manage software and application updates successfully.</p>

Checking internet connection and bandwidth

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.

Before you schedule assessments, we recommend checking your internet connection and bandwidth by contacting your internet provider **or** going to www.speedtest.net/, clicking 'Go', then recording the download and ping speed. A 'ping test' measures the bandwidth or reaction time of your school's connection – how fast you get a response after you've sent out a request. A fast ping means a more responsive connection¹.

There will be a self-scheduling tool available which will enable you to stagger how many learners take an assessment at one time. Reducing the number of concurrent assessments can help reduce the strain on your school's internet connection and bandwidth.

For example, if you experience the symptoms above, you should reduce the number of learners taking concurrent assessments and run a speed and ping test. Record the download and ping speeds along with the number of concurrent users and check if these symptoms persist.

An assessment helpline will be available to assist with any problems experienced by schools and to advise on next steps.

Devices

The assessments have been designed to be compatible with:

- desktop computers
- laptops
- tablets

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.

Browser requirements

You should use one of the following browsers (these are the minimum browser requirements):

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

¹ Please note: the speed test is available as a free service on a site that contains advertisements. For this reason it is sometimes blocked on a school network. If this is the case, please speak to your internet provider.

Checklist to prepare for personalised assessments

1. If you haven't done so already, please read the Welsh Government's digital guidance for schools at <https://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/raisingstandards/education-digital-guidance/?lang=en>. This site will guide your school on checking and maintaining IT infrastructure, making the most of your internet connection and managing software/application updates.
2. Before you schedule assessments, be aware of other lessons using media-rich content and consider how this will impact running the assessments.
3. Check devices are fully charged, have a modern browser installed and software updates are complete before any scheduled assessments take place.

Further information regarding internet and IT issues can be found in the post at <https://curriculumforwales.gov.wales/2017/12/08/are-gremlins-causing-your-schools-it-problems-or-is-it-something-else-entirely/> from the Welsh Government's Digital and Strategic Communications Team.