



## Personalised assessments – FAQs

### 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)
2018/19	online	paper	paper
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 skills of individual learners and whole classes which teachers can use to plan next steps in learning and teaching. From academic year 2019/20, personalised assessments will also provide detailed information on the reading skills of learners. 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 new personalised assessments are based on the skills set out in the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) ([learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/nlnf/?lang=en](https://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/nlnf/?lang=en)). 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).

Assessments are also being phased in for Reading (English and Welsh), and Numeracy (Reasoning).

### **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.

### **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 2018/19](#).

### **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 by clicking on the icon in the Hwb Tools menu at the top right-hand side of the page in order to schedule assessments for learners
- they 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.

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. The link to book a webinar can be found on the assessment website, once logged in via Hwb.

A managed helpdesk will also be available during school hours providing a bilingual service. For further support, contact the Assessment Helpdesk on 029 2026 5099 or [help@personalisedassessments.wales](mailto: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?**

The assessments can be used on the following devices:

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

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.

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 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 (<https://beta.gov.wales/learning-digital-wales-lidw-investment-broadband>).

The way you use digital technology across your school can also have an impact on connectivity. Welsh Government has produced guidance (<https://beta.gov.wales/education-digital-guidance>) for school leaders on how to manage and invest in their school digital environment to make the most of their broadband connection to facilitate digital learning.

### **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. However, during the transition period, a test window remains for the paper-based tests.

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.

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

Paper-based tests will be phased out as the personalised assessments go live for Numeracy (Procedural), Reading (English and Welsh), and Numeracy (Reasoning), in that order.

### **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 and the areas that are causing them difficulty. Teachers are able to access a range of reports, including individual learner reports and class/group reports.

There will also be reports showing progress over time.

### **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. 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.

Reports for parents and carers will also be provided at the end of the school year, showing progress over time, based on a standardised score.

### **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 ([learning.gov.wales/dysg-newsletters/?lang=en](https://learning.gov.wales/dysg-newsletters/?lang=en)) (please sign up if you haven't already) 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 2018/19](#).

In 2019, the consortium responsible for developing the personalised assessments on behalf of Welsh Government will be running trials for the Reading Personalised Assessments. This will give you an insight into how the Reading 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](mailto:trials@personalisedassessments.wales).