

National Reading and Numeracy Personalised Assessments – Administration handbook 2020/21

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Guidance

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National Reading and Numeracy Personalised Assessments – Administration handbook 2020/21

Audience

Headteachers, teachers, practitioners, governing bodies of mainstream and special schools; local authorities; church diocesan authorities; national bodies with an interest in education.

Overview

This handbook sets out the arrangements for the National Reading and Numeracy Personalised Assessments to be taken by all learners in Years 2 to 9 in academic year 2020/21. It provides guidance on administration of personalised assessments and access and disapplication arrangements.

This handbook forms the National Tests administration handbook ('NT administration handbook') for the purposes of the Education (National Curriculum) (Assessment Arrangements for Reading and Numeracy) (Wales) Order 2013.

Action required

Headteachers and staff members should refer to this handbook for information on the principles and processes for the administration of the personalised assessments.

Further information

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Additional copies

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at hwb.gov.wales/personalised-assessments

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Introduction

The purpose of personalised assessments and requirements for 2020/21

In 2020/21 learners in Wales in Years 2 to 9 will take online assessments in Numeracy (Procedural) and Reading.

Online assessments in reading and numeracy are being phased in ahead of the introduction of the new Curriculum for Wales. They are designed to support individual learner progression both now and when the new curriculum and assessment arrangements are in place. The assessments are for **formative** use, so that teachers in all maintained schools have information on the reading and numeracy skills of their learners and a common understanding of strengths and areas for improvement in these skills.

The assessments are focused on understanding learner progress, and are not to be used for school performance or accountability purposes.

The online assessments have replaced the paper-based versions of the National Tests. This handbook forms the National Tests administration handbook ('NT administration handbook') for the purposes of the Education (National Curriculum) (Assessment Arrangements for Reading and Numeracy) (Wales) Order 2013. The handbook refers to the **online** assessments as 'personalised assessments' and sets out the arrangements for their administration. With regard to the reference to the National Tests assessment timetable ('NT assessment timetable') in the Order, it is important to note that online assessments in Reading and Numeracy (Procedural) are available for scheduling from September 2020, and that schools are able to select the dates for scheduling assessments during the academic year (see ['Timing of personalised assessments'](#) on page 3).

In the academic year 2020/21, learners in Years 2 to 9 in maintained schools (including community, voluntary-aided, voluntary-controlled and foundation) are required to take the online National Numeracy Personalised Assessment (Procedural) and the online National Reading Personalised Assessment. In 2020/21 the 'National Numeracy Tests' of the Order refer to the National Numeracy Personalised Assessment (Procedural) only. The National Numeracy Personalised Assessment (Reasoning) is not statutory during this academic year.

There are no statutory paper-based tests in 2020/21.

The National Numeracy Personalised Assessment (Reasoning) is being trialled in schools in 2020/21. It will become a statutory requirement from the 2021/22 academic year.

Please note that the requirements set out in this handbook were correct at the time of publication. If any requirements change as a result of disruption caused by COVID-19 during the 2020/21 school year, a notice will be published on the Welsh Government website.

Benefits of personalised assessments

By moving reading and numeracy assessments online, the Welsh Government is providing an individualised assessment experience that adjusts the level of challenge for each learner.

Personalised assessments are 'adaptive' which means that questions are selected based on the learner's response to the previous question or questions. In the National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural), the assessment system adapts at the individual question level, so a learner who answers a question correctly will receive a question that is more challenging, and a learner who answers a question incorrectly will receive an easier question. In the National Reading Personalised Assessments, the assessment system adapts at the text level, so a learner will respond to a group of questions linked to a common text and, based on their responses to that group of questions, the system will select a new text and questions. In both assessments this process continues until the assessment system has covered the relevant aspects of the curriculum and gathered sufficient information on the learner's responses.

Responses are marked automatically and feedback is made available to staff the day after an assessment is taken. The feedback provides information on the skills of individual learners, showing some of their strengths and possible next steps. Reports are also available showing a learner's progress over time, and schools have access to a range of reports on groups and classes.

Timing of personalised assessments

The assessments are available from September 2020. Schools have the flexibility to schedule the personalised assessments in Numeracy (Procedural) and Reading **at a point during the academic year that they consider is most beneficial to inform learning and teaching.**

Schools should note that **the assessment site will be unavailable for approximately two weeks during June 2021** in order to produce the first progress reports and age-standardised scores for the National Reading Personalised Assessments. (Progress and scores for the Numeracy (Procedural) assessments update automatically after each assessment is taken.) Dates of the planned closure will be published in advance on the assessment website.

Learners are required to take the National Numeracy Personalised Assessment (Procedural) and the National Reading Personalised Assessment **once** during the 2020/21 academic year. Schools also have the option to use the assessments a second time during the academic year. If schools decide to use an assessment for a second time, it is recommended that learners do not take the second assessment in the same term as the first.

Learner well-being

The purpose of the personalised assessments is to support teachers to assess how learners' reading and numeracy skills are developing and to use the information to inform learning and teaching.

Personalised assessments should **not** be a cause of worry or anxiety for learners and it is very important that schools consider how the assessments are presented. Familiarisation assessments are available for learners to use at any time so that they can view and become accustomed to the different types of questions available in advance of taking an assessment. Familiarising learners with the format of questions is good practice; however, overemphasis on preparation and 'practising' with questions is inappropriate in the context of formative assessment and can cause anxiety for learners.

Using personalised assessments

Access to personalised assessments

Staff and learners access the personalised assessments via Hwb, the Welsh Government's online learning platform, using their Hwb logins.

Before learners can take personalised assessments:

- the headteacher, or staff member 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 personalised assessments in the menu near the top right-hand side of the page or on the Hwb homepage) in order to schedule assessments for learners
- learners need to log in to Hwb and work through familiarisation assessments in Numeracy (Procedural) and Reading so that they understand the question formats and how to navigate through the assessments.

For information on how users find their Hwb usernames and passwords, please go to hwb.gov.wales/getting-started.

Schools should note that the assessment website relies on data retrieved from schools' management information systems (MIS). Schools need to ensure that their MIS is up to date, that their Hwb Provisioning Client¹ is updated to the latest version and that this runs successfully on a regular basis.

Headteacher agreement and user management

Data protection is the responsibility of schools as independent data controllers. Schools need to ensure full compliance with the data protection principles as well as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements.

Schools must therefore ensure that access to data about individual learners complies with the GDPR. This includes access to data related to the statutory personalised assessments.

In order for personalised assessments to be administered in any school, the headteacher (or a suitable staff member acting on their behalf) must log in to the assessments website (accessed via Hwb) and assign functions and access for relevant staff to schedule and facilitate assessments and to view learner and group reports.

The headteacher (or suitable staff member acting on their behalf) also needs to agree that the personalised assessments will be administered in accordance with this administration handbook and must re-sign this agreement each year. Access for other staff members will be restricted until this has been signed.

¹ See the help section on the Hwb Provisioning Client at hwb.gov.wales/support-centre/hwb-services/user-management

The functions allocated by the headteacher determine which activities staff can undertake on the assessment website. Access can be restricted to particular year groups or classes, to ensure that staff are accessing relevant and appropriate information. The headteacher should review these functions and access requirements each year.

The functions shown in the table below are available for headteachers to assign to their staff members. The headteacher is automatically assigned the 'Administrate' function, which enables them to manage other users' functions. The 'Administrate' function can also be allocated to other staff members who have been delegated responsibility for assessment arrangements. It is recommended that the 'Administrate' function is assigned sparingly, and only to those staff members for whom this level of access is essential.

Figure 1: User management – functions

Function	Schedule personalised assessments	Facilitate personalised assessments	Access feedback and reports	Manage users
Administrate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Facilitate and analyse	✓	✓	✓	
Facilitate	✓	✓		
No access				

Scheduling assessments

Scheduling

Schools have the flexibility to schedule the National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural) and the National Reading Personalised Assessments **throughout the academic year**. Schools can schedule the assessments for individual learners, small groups or whole classes, in accordance with their preferences and their IT facilities. As the personalised assessments are different for each learner, there is no requirement for a whole class of learners to take the assessments at the same time.

Personalised assessments must be scheduled for a particular school day and be scheduled **at least the day before the assessment takes place**. They can be taken at any point during the school day. If a learner does not start an assessment on the scheduled day, it will be cancelled overnight, and the school can reschedule the assessment. **If a learner starts an assessment on the scheduled day but does not complete it, the results will be submitted overnight unless the assessment is cancelled. It is important in this situation that the assessment is cancelled and rescheduled.**

Assessment length

There is no fixed duration for the assessments; learners work through them at their own pace. The length of assessments varies depending on how long it takes the system to establish the learner's ability level. When the system has gathered enough information, the assessments automatically end.

The National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural) generally last between 20 and 40 minutes. The National Reading Personalised Assessments generally last between 35 and 45 minutes. If you are scheduling for a group of learners or a whole class, you may need to plan a suitable activity for those who finish their assessment ahead of the rest of the group.

Before learners take the assessments, you will need to ensure that there is sufficient time to set up, e.g. ensure all devices are working and all learners have their Hwb login details.

Devices and infrastructure

Guidance on the devices and browsers that can be used for the personalised assessments is available at [Annex 1](#).

Guidance on how to make the most of your school's internet connectivity is available at hwb.gov.wales/draft-curriculum-for-wales-2022/reading-and-numeracy-assessments/personalised-assessments-it-guidance-for-schools/.

Language

The National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural) can be taken in English or Welsh. The language of a learner's assessment is chosen when a staff member schedules the assessment. However, a learner is able to view the question in the other language at any point during the assessment by clicking the 'globe' icon at the bottom of the screen.

When scheduling National Reading Personalised Assessments for learners, staff members select which assessments will be taken: English Reading or Welsh Reading. Questions and texts are not available in the alternative language as the assessments assess learners' skills in reading each language. Statutory requirements for which assessments learners should take are covered in [Annex 3](#).

Familiarisation assessments

Before taking personalised assessments, schools should allow learners to try familiarisation assessments in the National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural) and National Reading Personalised Assessments. This will enable learners to view the question types and understand how to answer them, and also to become familiar with the navigation of the assessments.

Familiarisation assessments are accessed on the assessment website via Hwb.

Assessments in other settings, e.g. pupil referral units (PRUs)

Learners in Years 2 to 9 who are registered in mainstream schools must take the personalised assessments at least once during each academic year. This includes learners who have dual registration in a mainstream school and also at a PRU or special school (unless a disapplication decision has been made). The responsibility for ensuring the assessments are administered rests with the headteacher of the mainstream school at which the learner is registered, who can arrange for the learner to take the personalised assessments in either setting.

Access, modification and disapplication

The personalised assessments are suitable for many learners with special educational needs (SEN) and are compatible with standard assistive technologies; modified versions are available. For more information on the modified personalised assessments please see [Annex 4](#).

For information on disapplication, please see [Annex 5](#).

Taking the assessments

Before a learner can take a personalised assessment, a staff member with the appropriate access to facilitate an assessment must release the assessment scheduled for the learner. Staff members have the option to release assessments for individual learners, or for a whole class. Please note that there is no option available for releasing assessments for groups of learners larger than a class, e.g. a year group composed of several classes.

Detailed guidance on how to schedule and facilitate assessments is available in the videos and user guide on the assessment website. The user guide includes checklists for staff to use before and during an assessment.

Once an assessment has been released, the learner can access the assessment on the assessment website via Hwb.

Learners should be given paper and pens/pencils for any rough working out/notes. Learners' working out/notes are not assessed as part of the assessments and therefore it should be made clear to learners that only the answer submitted on screen will be taken into account.

Staff should explain to learners that they should not worry about seeing a question they find hard or don't understand. If learners cannot answer a question they should be encouraged to move on to the next one; if learners skip a question, they will then be given a slightly easier question. Staff should explain to learners that they **cannot go back to a previous question or amend an answer once they have moved on to the next question**. In personalised assessments questions are selected based on responses to the previous questions. It is therefore not possible to move backwards through the questions.

Assessment conditions

Each learner receives a different set of questions, and therefore a less formal approach can be taken to the administration of personalised assessments compared with paper tests. It is not necessary for whole classes to take the assessments at the same time; schools can schedule assessments for individual learners, small groups or whole classes, depending on preferences and facilities available.

In order that teachers can gain the most accurate information about learners' skills, schools should ensure that:

- learners have all necessary resources
- the work produced in the assessments is genuinely that of the learners
- there is appropriate supervision at all times
- the assessments are administered according to the guidance given in this handbook for the National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural) and the National Reading Personalised Assessments.

Learners should:

- be able to work in comfortable conditions, undisturbed and individually
- understand that the purpose of the assessments is to find out what they can and cannot do, so that teachers can help them develop their skills. Therefore the answers must be their own and they should not discuss the questions.

Breaks

Breaks can be provided to learners of any age by pausing the assessments at any point. Staff members should give particular consideration to allowing breaks for younger learners. The length of the break is at the discretion of the school and learners may leave the classroom during this time. The staff member can pause the assessment, and learners can log out of the assessment and then log back in after the break. It is important that the staff member pauses the learner assessment within the assessment website; otherwise the learner will be able to access it from a different device.

The assessment must be completed in a single day. If a learner cannot complete it in a single day, the assessment should be cancelled and rescheduled, otherwise the results will be submitted overnight.

Absence

Should a learner be absent on the day of a scheduled assessment, the assessment can be rescheduled for another time. If the learner has not started the assessment, it will automatically be cancelled overnight. **If a learner has started the assessment but cannot complete it (e.g. they are sent home ill) then the assessment should be cancelled.**

Staff facilitating the assessments

Schools have discretion as to which of their staff administer the assessments. When making arrangements for their staff to schedule and facilitate the personalised assessments, schools must be mindful of the provisions of the Welsh Government's School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document 2019 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions: September 2019 (see gov.wales/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions-wales-document-2019) or relevant terms and conditions where they are not part of the National Joint Council.

After the assessments

Feedback and reports

A range of reports is available for individual learners and groups of learners, including whole classes.

Feedback on individuals is available on the assessment website the day after assessments are completed. Staff have the opportunity to review feedback before releasing this to learners. Guidance on this is available on the assessment website.

Progress reports for the National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural), which show progress from one assessment to the next, are also available. These progress reports include the age-standardised score for the learner's most recent assessment. The progress chart is automatically updated after each assessment.

Progress reports for the National Reading Personalised Assessments, showing a learner's starting point for progress and their age-standardised score, will be produced towards the end of the 2020/21 academic year. Schools should note that the assessment site will be closed for approximately two weeks during June 2021 so that progress reports for the National Reading Personalised Assessments can be made available before the end of term.

Reports are only available to those staff members allocated either the 'Administrate' or 'Facilitate and analyse' functions.

Individual learner feedback and progress reports must be shared with parents/carers as part of the normal reporting process. Schools are encouraged to share these with parents/carers while the information is current. If the assessments are taken twice during the academic year, then parents/carers should receive both sets of feedback.

Schools also have access to a range of group reports to support planning and progression. These include skills profiles and progress reports for groups and classes. Training materials on making use of the information in the reports are available on the assessment website.

Monitoring of assessment arrangements

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to monitor the assessment arrangements in at least 10 per cent of their schools. With the change from paper to online assessment, and to support the formative purpose of personalised

assessments, monitoring will now focus on promoting good practice in the delivery of the assessments and encouraging the use of information on learners' skills to inform learning and teaching.

Monitoring of how schools are implementing the personalised assessments may take place at any time and is carried out by the local authority or regional education consortium working on the local authority's behalf. Headteachers and governing bodies have a duty to permit the local authority or regional consortium to access school premises for this purpose.

The assessments are designed to support individual learner progress and are not to be used for school performance or accountability purposes. Schools are therefore not required to share assessment scores with their local authority.

Support

Further guidance on the personalised assessments, including managing user access, scheduling and taking assessments, as well as accessing feedback and reports, is available on the assessment website. Training materials in the form of pre-recorded webinars are also available on the assessment website. For further support, schools can also contact the Assessment Helpdesk on 029 2026 5099 or help@personalisedassessments.wales.

Annex 1: General administration guidance for the personalised assessments

This general assessment administration guidance should be read in conjunction with the assessment-specific guidance presented in [Annex 2](#) and [Annex 3](#).

Structure of the assessments

The National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural) and the National Reading Personalised Assessments are constructed from large banks of questions (and texts for the reading assessments) which are based on the skills in the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) for Years 2 to 9.

Each assessment is tailored to the learner's responses. This personalisation means that every learner will see a different set of questions (and texts) and the number of questions (and texts) will vary. The assessment stops once the system has collected sufficient information in order to make a reliable decision about the learner's skills, or once the learner reaches the maximum number of questions allowed.

Setting up access to the assessments

Accessing the assessments

Schools will use Hwb (hwb.gov.wales) to log in and access the assessments.

For information on how users find their Hwb usernames and passwords see the following link: hwb.gov.wales/support-centre/hwb-services/getting-started.

Schools should note that the assessment website relies on data from schools' MIS. Schools will need to ensure that their MIS is up to date and that the Hwb Provisioning Client² is run on a regular basis.

Setting up access

At the beginning of each academic year the headteacher, or staff member acting on their behalf, must use their Hwb login details to access the assessment website; they will be prompted to accept responsibility for safeguarding school data.

Once this is done, access can be allocated for other staff members to use the assessment website.

There are four different access options that can be assigned to users.

1. **Administrate:** users can schedule and facilitate an assessment, and access feedback and reports for the whole school. In addition to this, users can edit the functions and access for other staff members. A headteacher, or a staff member acting on their behalf, can allocate the 'Administrate' function to additional users. (A 'user' is any staff member with access to the assessment website.)

² See the help section on the Hwb Provisioning Client at hwb.gov.wales/support-centre/hwb-services/user-management.

2. Facilitate and analyse: users can schedule and facilitate an assessment, and access feedback and reports.
3. Facilitate: users can schedule and facilitate an assessment.
4. No access: users cannot access assessments or feedback and reports. (All users, except the headteacher, are allocated 'No access' to begin with.)

Note: It is recommended that the 'Administrate' function is assigned sparingly, and only to those staff members for whom this level of access is essential.

All staff will be reminded about the confidentiality and security of data.

Before running an assessment

Checking IT set-up

To run personalised assessments, schools need:

- internet connection – 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
- devices – schools can use a combination of devices when running assessments
- Hwb login details for all learners taking the assessments.

Devices that can be used

The assessments have been designed to be compatible with a wide range of devices. Staff members will be able to schedule assessments in accordance with their school's preferences and facilities. The assessments can be taken by individual learners or in small groups depending on the devices available.

The assessments can be used on:

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

that have a modern browser (see next section) installed.

Before any assessments are run, devices should be fully charged and checked for updates.

Browsers that can be used

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

- Google Chrome
- Internet Explorer 11
- Mozilla Firefox
- Safari.

Note: Personalised assessments will not operate with Microsoft Edge version 77 or below. Please use an alternative browser or install Edge v81 or higher via the Microsoft website.

Scheduling assessments

Note: The headteacher, or nominated staff member, must allocate access before users can schedule assessments or access feedback and reports.

Assessments must be scheduled for a particular school day and **scheduled at least the day before the assessment takes place by 7.00 p.m.** Schools must use the assessment website, which is accessed via Hwb, to schedule assessments. A step-by-step guide to scheduling assessments is available on this website.

For the National Reading Personalised Assessments, learners are allocated a set of starting questions and a text based on their curriculum year group for the first assessment they take (or the teacher can override to give an easier set of starting questions and a text if appropriate).

For the National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural) the system selects a question based on a learner's curriculum year group, unless the teacher overrides this to give an easier starting question.

When scheduling assessments, staff members can select accessibility options, colour and contrast changes (see [Annex 4](#)).

Timing and rest breaks

Before starting assessments, time should be allowed for learners to log in and take familiarisation assessments, if they have not already done so.

No time limit is set for the assessments, so the learner can respond to the questions at their own pace. Learners should be encouraged to move on through the questions, rather than spending too long on questions they cannot answer.

The approximate length of the personalised assessments is set out in [Annex 2](#) and [Annex 3](#). Staff members are advised to use their professional judgement with learners who take longer than this to complete the assessment. Staff members may choose to encourage the learner to work more quickly or to stop an assessment that is taking an unreasonably long time. The staff member can pause or cancel the assessment.

Breaks may be given to learners of any age, and an assessment may be spread throughout the school day. It is recommended that staff members give particular consideration to younger learners, and that learners in Years 2 and 3 should have rest breaks. The length of the break is at the discretion of the school. Staff members should monitor to decide when or if breaks are appropriate for other learners.

When an assessment is paused or stopped, the results for the questions the learner has answered will be uploaded at 5.00 p.m. on the day the assessment is taken

unless the assessment is cancelled. An assessment with submitted answers cannot be restarted.

Classroom set-up

On the day of assessments, please ensure that:

- the room is set up to allow learners to work on devices independently
- if laptops and tablets are being used, they are charged and ready to use for assessments
- learners have paper and a pen or pencil available for any rough working out/notes
- staff members have considered activities for learners who finish early.

Learner login

When their assessments have been released by a staff member in the assessment website, learners should navigate to hwb.gov.wales and enter their Hwb login credentials. They should be given assistance entering these where required. Learners should navigate to the assessments website and click either 'Numeracy (Procedural)', 'English Reading' or 'Welsh Reading'.

Facilitating a personalised assessment

On the date an assessment has been scheduled, staff with 'Facilitate', 'Facilitate and analyse' or 'Administrate' functions are able to facilitate an assessment. Staff should log in to Hwb and navigate to the assessment website. The assessments will first need to be released for the learners to use. Users can facilitate the assessments from the 'Today's assessments' section of the 'Home' page, or the 'Assessments' page. See the guidance on the assessment website for details about this.

Before the assessments have started, staff members should remind learners of **key features** of these assessments.

- The purpose is to provide information on their skills so that they understand what they can do and the areas they may need to work on.
- Learners **cannot go back to a previous answer and make amendments once they have moved on to the next question.**
- If learners get stuck on a particular question and cannot answer, they should **move on to the next question.**
- Learners may need to scroll down on screens to see the full question content. A green notice will pop up on the screen to warn them of this.
- If a learner encounters problems with their computer/device, they should raise their hand and advise a staff member.
- There is no fixed end point in terms of duration; when the system has gathered enough information the assessments will end automatically.

During the assessments, the staff member should check that:

- learners are progressing through questions and moving on if they don't know the answer to a particular question
- learners are working honestly and independently
- learners have rough paper and a pen or pencil for working out/notes
- if there is an incident or interruption, assessments can be paused, resumed or cancelled in the assessment website.

Access arrangements

See [Annex 4](#) on the access arrangements for the personalised assessments.

After the assessment

Learner feedback is available to those staff members with 'Administrate' or 'Facilitate and analyse' functions the day after the assessments have been taken. These staff members should log in to Hwb and the assessment website to access the feedback. The learner feedback must be released by the staff member in order for the learners to see it. Once the learner feedback is released, the learners will be able to access it via Hwb.

Learner progress reports are also available on the assessment website; the reports include an age-standardised score for the learner's most recent assessment and show progress from one assessment to the next.

A number of reports for groups of learners, summarising the performance of the whole group, are also available for staff to request and use. More information about the available reports and how to use them is provided on the assessment website.

Annex 2: National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural) – administration guidance

This guidance relates to the specific requirements of administering the National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural).

Structure of the assessments

Each National Numeracy Personalised Assessment (Procedural) is tailored to the learner's responses. However, the first question in an assessment is selected to be appropriate for a learner in their current curriculum year, although the teacher can override this where necessary if a learner is working at a level significantly below their curriculum year. Subsequent questions are selected from the bank of questions as described in [Annex 1](#).

Learners will work at their own pace, and the length of an assessment will typically be about 30 minutes.

Familiarisation assessments

Familiarisation assessments are provided for staff to use with learners prior to taking the assessment.

Each contains eight or nine questions, which include examples of each of the question types used in the personalised assessments. Some learners may not be familiar with some of the question types or may not have completed assessments on computer. It is **very important**, therefore, that you spend time familiarising learners using these materials so that when they take an assessment it will provide the best information on their skills.

For learners in Years 2 to 6, it is recommended that you **read the familiarisation questions aloud** and work through each question, checking that learners are clear about how to complete each question.

For learners in Years 7 to 9, you do not have to read the questions aloud but you must ensure that learners are clear about how to complete each of the different types of question and should discuss the most appropriate answer for each of them.

Familiarisation assessments may be accessed at any time. They should be taken shortly before a personalised assessment (though not necessarily in the same lesson due to time constraints and in case learners become tired).

Scheduling assessments

When scheduling an assessment for learners, staff members can select whether the assessment will be taken in English or Welsh.

Timing

The assessments take, on average, about 30 minutes and generally vary between 20 and 40 minutes.

Facilitating a personalised assessment

Before the assessment has started, staff members should remind learners of the key features of the assessments – see page 15 – and remind them of the following.

- If a learner needs help reading a question, they should raise their hand and ask a staff member (who may read the question aloud to the learner but should not help with the numerical content).
- If learners want to see the question in the alternative language (English/Welsh) they should click the icon at the bottom of the screen.
- Learners understand that they can use paper and a pen or pencil for working out, but that they must type their answer onscreen.
- The **length of the assessment is not a reflection of the learner's ability and learners should work at their own pace**. The assessments will be about 30 minutes, but this will vary (they generally last between 20 minutes and 40 minutes depending on how fast the learner works and how many questions they receive).

During National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural), the staff member should check that:

- **calculators and other tools are not being used**
- learners are assisted with reading question content if needed, but not with working out or method.

Alternative language function

When scheduling an assessment for learners, staff members can set the language in which the assessment will be taken: English or Welsh. In either case, the alternative language version of the question will be available as a pop-up window at any time. Clicking on the icon at the bottom of the screen allows learners to see the assessment content in the other language. The alternative language version is displayed as an image and the learner cannot input an answer in the alternative language.

Responding to questions

The assessment questions may be read aloud to learners if needed. No help should be given with any of the numerical content of the questions.

You should answer questions such as 'Is this the right one?' by saying 'Choose the one you think is the correct one'.

Annex 3: National Reading Personalised Assessments – administration guidance

This guidance relates to the specific requirements for administering the National Reading Personalised Assessments.

Structure of the assessment

Each National Reading Personalised Assessment is tailored to the learner's responses. At the start of the assessment the learner will receive either a sentence completion question or a short text with three associated questions. The initial questions will be at a difficulty appropriate for learners in that curriculum year, although the teacher can override this where necessary if a learner is working at a level significantly below their curriculum year. Subsequent texts and questions are selected from the bank based on the learner's answers to the previous questions. For example, if a learner is presented with a text and three associated questions, the system will evaluate the responses they have given to the questions and then select a more challenging text and group of questions or an easier text and group of questions as appropriate.

Learners will work at their own pace, and the length of an assessment will typically be about 35 to 45 minutes.

Familiarisation assessments

Familiarisation assessments are provided for staff to use with learners prior to taking the assessment. There are three familiarisation assessments: primary Years 2–3, primary Years 4–6 and secondary Years 7–9.

Each familiarisation assessment contains one text and a range of questions, which include examples of each of the question types used in the personalised assessments. A sentence completion question is included in the familiarisation assessments for Years 2–3 and Years 4–6.

It is very important that you spend time familiarising learners with these assessments so that when they take an assessment it provides the best information on their skills.

Familiarisation assessments may be accessed at any time. They should be taken shortly before a personalised assessment (though not necessarily in the same lesson due to time constraints and in case learners become tired).

The questions are presented in a fixed order to enable staff to talk a whole class through a familiarisation assessment, e.g. by reading the text and the questions together, and discussing the answer and how to respond.

Scheduling assessments

When scheduling an assessment for learners, staff members select English or Welsh National Reading Personalised Assessments as appropriate.

Learners in Years 2 and 3 who are following the Welsh Programme of Study are only required to take the Welsh National Reading Personalised Assessments, with the English National Reading Personalised Assessments available as an additional option to those in Year 3 only. Learners in Years 4 to 9 who are following the Welsh Programme of Study are required to take both the Welsh and English National Reading Personalised Assessments.

Timing

The assessments take, on average, about 40 minutes and generally vary between 35 and 45 minutes.

Facilitating a personalised assessment

Before the assessment has started, staff members should remind learners of the **key features** of the assessments – see page 15 – and remind them of the following.

- They may have sentence completion questions and these may not be at the start of the assessment.
- When they have a text to read, they should read it carefully before they move on to the questions.
- There will be an instruction to use the 'Next' button to answer the questions after the learners have read the text.
- The questions (other than the sentence completion questions) will appear with a button that can be used to open the reading text so learners can refer back to it.
- Learners can select the 'X' button to close the text.
- If the text covers a question the text can be dragged to one side to view the question again.
- Learners cannot have texts or questions read to them as this is an assessment of reading.
- **The length of the assessment is not a reflection of the learner's ability and learners should work at their own pace.** The assessments will be about 40 minutes, but this will vary depending on how fast the learner works and how many texts and questions they receive.

Annex 4: Modifications to personalised assessments

The assessments have been designed with learners' access in mind; it is expected that nearly all learners will be able to access them without special arrangements. However, where accessible versions are needed the assessments have been devised to meet the widest possible range of access needs, and to work with a wide range of commonly used access technologies and usual access arrangements. Where possible, learners should be provided with support to access the assessments in the same way as it is provided to them in day-to-day classroom practice for computer-based working.

Access arrangements

Rest breaks and time allowed

The personalised assessments do not have a fixed duration or a fixed number of questions (although there is a maximum number of questions). The assessment system stops the assessment when it has made a reliable decision about the learner's ability. The National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural) are generally between 20 and 40 minutes long (depending on the speed at which the learner works) and the National Reading Personalised Assessments are generally about 40 minutes long.

Rest breaks can be given to learners of any age. If it is considered that the learner requires a break to allow them to perform to the best of their ability, this can be done by pausing the assessment in the assessment website. The learner can log out and then log back in to resume the assessment at the point they left it. It is important that the assessment is paused during this break or the learner may be able to access it from another device. The assessment must be completed on the same day that it is started. Any uncompleted assessment will automatically be submitted at 5.00 p.m. on the day it was scheduled.

There is no fixed assessment duration, so learners have as much time as they need to complete; the staff member can determine how long to give the learner to complete the assessment based on classroom practice and learner well-being. The staff member facilitating the assessments should encourage learners to move on through the questions, rather than spend too long on questions they cannot answer. If necessary, the assessment can be stopped, cancelled and rescheduled for another day.

Enlarged versions

The personalised assessments have been designed to work with the magnification tools available within learner devices (e.g. Windows Magnifier, or using the browser zoom function). These should be used in the way that the learner uses them in normal classroom practice. An enlarged version will probably require additional scrolling which the learner may need support with (that is when using browser zoom; Magnifier automatically scrolls if using mouse navigation). The assessments are designed so that a prompt is given when scrolling is required. For further guidance on using the magnification tools, please see the user guide on the assessment website.

Colour and contrast changes

When scheduling an assessment for a learner it is possible to select a range of different colour and contrast options. The colour and contrast options can be applied by the staff member when scheduling the assessments in the assessment website. The colour and contrast selected should be in line with what the learner uses every day in the classroom.

If this set-up is not suitable for the learner, then it is possible to use colour overlays on the computer or laptop screen (though not on a tablet device) or for the learner to use coloured filter lenses. Again, the approach selected should reflect the approach used in normal classroom practice for the learner.

Using screen readers

The **National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural)** have been designed to be compatible with dedicated screen readers and have been tested with the latest versions of JAWS (Job Access With Speech) screen reader and with SuperNova. Alt text has been added to the images where this is appropriate.

A screen reader should be used in line with the usual classroom practice for the learner.

A screen reader cannot be used with the **National Reading Personalised Assessments** because this is an assessment of the learner's reading.

Use of tactile diagrams

A small number of the questions in the National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural) require the use of tactile diagrams. It has been necessary to include these to ensure curriculum coverage for learners who are using screen readers or having the assessments read by a staff member or other adult. The booklet of tactile diagrams should be made available to the learner when taking the assessment. The learner will only need to use the booklet if one of the questions requiring a diagram is selected by the system. If this occurs, the learner may need support in locating the correct diagram.

Copies of the booklet of tactile diagrams can be obtained by contacting the Assessment Helpdesk on 029 2026 5099 or help@personalisedassessments.wales.

Braille reading booklets

For those learners with visual impairments whose usual classroom practice is to use Braille materials for reading, hard copy Braille materials are available. For the National Reading Personalised Assessments, the Braille booklets include the texts and the questions. The assessment system will prompt the learner as to which text and questions to use. The answers must be inputted into the assessment system so that the system can select the next appropriate text and questions. It is likely that a scribe will need to be used to input the learner's answers into the assessment system.

The Braille booklets are available in grade 1 and grade 2 Braille. Copies of the booklets can be obtained by contacting the Assessment Helpdesk on 029 2026 5099 or help@personalisedassessments.wales.

Use of sign language

In the National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural) any question or instruction can be signed to the learner. Sign language versions of the assessments are not provided owing to the wide range of sign languages in common use in schools. The learner's usual sign language support can be used to sign text to the learner. You may sign all or part of any question and record the learner's sign language responses if appropriate, and if this is usual classroom practice.

In the National Reading Personalised Assessments, only the instructions can be signed to the learners. Texts and questions cannot be read to the learner as this is an assessment of the learner's reading skills.

Scribes

Scribes may be used for learners who would normally receive this type of support in a classroom setting or have the need for a scribe as a result of a recent impairment. A scribe should only be used to support a learner who:

- uses Braille
- is physically unable to use a keyboard
- has a motor impairment or experiences physical or mental discomfort when typing responses.

Readers

Any question or instruction in the National Numeracy Personalised Assessment (Procedural) can be read to the learner.

In the National Reading Personalised Assessments, only the instructions can be read to the learners. Texts and questions cannot be read to the learner as this is an assessment of the learner's reading skills.

Entering learners for assessments other than those for their national curriculum year group

The assessments are personalised, which means the assessment system will select a text or a question to present to a learner based on their response to the previous questions. This means that the assessment will adapt to the learner's ability level.

The first question in an assessment is determined by the learner's current national curriculum year group. It is possible for the teacher to override the starting question difficulty, to make it easier than would normally be presented to learners in their national curriculum year. The override is available to the teacher in the assessment website when scheduling an assessment for a learner.

Note that for learners in Year 2 the starting point in the National Numeracy Personalised Assessments (Procedural) is one of the easiest questions in the bank. For the National Reading Personalised Assessments there are a number of easy texts and questions in the bank aimed at learners who are finding it difficult to access Year 2 reading skills in the LNF.

For learners unable to access these questions, it may be inappropriate to proceed with the personalised assessment. Teachers should use their professional judgement and consider the disapplication guidance at [Annex 5](#).

Annex 5: Disapplication

As a statutory part of the assessment framework, the personalised assessments have been designed to allow as many learners as possible to have access to them and there is an expectation that nearly all learners will take them. Staff are able to change the level of difficulty for the start of each assessment, where they consider it appropriate. There may, however, be a small number of learners who are unable to access the assessments. Schools have responsibility for making arrangements to identify learners who are unable to work at the level of the easiest questions in the personalised assessments question bank or who are unable to access the assessments with modifications in place.

The decision that a learner should not take the personalised assessments is for the headteacher to make. When making a decision the headteacher must:

- have regard to this statutory guidance
- have considered whether any of the access arrangements would support the learner to access the personalised assessments
- maintain a list of disapplications, which may be requested by the regional consortia (acting on behalf of local authorities) at the end of the school year.

It is not necessary for headteachers to make a direction disapplying the national curriculum in order to do this.

All disapplication decisions must be made individually; a learner disapplying from the National Numeracy Personalised Assessment (Procedural) is not automatically disapplying from the National Reading Personalised Assessment or vice versa.

Learners who cannot access the personalised assessment even with modifications

Some learners' additional learning or other needs will be sufficiently significant or severe that, in the view of the headteacher, they will not be able to access the personalised assessments even with full use of the modified personalised assessments and the access arrangements available.

This is particularly likely to be the case for learners with severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Headteachers may therefore determine that such learners are not required to take the personalised assessments.

Learners in relation to whom relevant sections of the national curriculum have been disapplied

Some learners may have a statement of SEN which (as provided for in section 113 of the Education Act 2002) modifies or disapplies some or all of the national curriculum. In addition, under sections 113–116 of the Education Act 2002, headteachers may temporarily disapply the national curriculum for a particular learner if, for the time being, it is inappropriate to offer the national curriculum as it currently applies to them. Where such a disapplication has an effect on the literacy and/or numeracy elements of the curriculum such that the learner's ability to access the personalised assessments would be adversely affected, the headteacher may determine that that learner need not take them.

Learners entering from different education systems and whose ability to access the personalised assessments cannot be established

Due to the facility to adjust the starting question of the assessments, and their year-round availability, it is unlikely that a school would consider disapplication on this basis. However, if a school does not have time to determine a learner's ability to access the personalised assessments before the end of the school year, e.g. because they have recently arrived from a different education system, the headteacher may determine that that learner need not take personalised assessments during that school year. This provision applies for that year's personalised assessments **only**.

Disapplication in relation to learners with English as an additional language or Welsh as an additional language (EAL/WAL)

Disapplication would be appropriate for relatively few EAL/WAL learners. Headteachers who take this option must be willing and able to explain their decision to their regional consortium and to the learner's parents/carers. When making a decision the headteacher must have:

- regard to this statutory guidance
- considered whether any of the access arrangements would support the learner to access the personalised assessments.

Learners who are new to the UK education system

Learners from a non-English-based or non-Welsh-based education system (NEWBES) may not be disapplied from the personalised assessments solely for this reason. The personalised assessments are for formative use and therefore all learners must take them unless they cannot access them, or the school cannot assess their ability to do so.

To consider a learner as NEWBES, the following criteria must be satisfied:

- the pupil's first language is not English or Welsh
- the pupil has arrived from a non-English- or non-Welsh-based education system
- the pupil entered a United Kingdom (UK) education system on or after the start of the 2019/20 school year, i.e. on or after 1 September 2019.