

Best Start Year 7

Information for schools

What is Best Start Year 7?

Best Start Year 7 is an online literacy and numeracy assessment for students on entry to Year 7. It is optional and was first made available to NSW secondary schools in 2019.

Best Start Year 7 is designed to:

- provide teachers with a snapshot of literacy and numeracy skills students demonstrate on entry to Year 7
- help teachers identify students who may require additional support with the development of key literacy and numeracy skills useful in accessing learning across the curriculum
- help inform teacher planning and programming to meet the learning needs of all students.

Best Start Year 7 addresses a key element in the NSW Government's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017-2020.

Secondary schools may choose to use Best Start Year 7 to supplement existing literacy and numeracy assessment and transition practices.

The Best Start Year 7 assessment

The Best Start Year 7 assessment includes two online assessments:

- literacy assessment
- numeracy assessment.

Each assessment has 30 multiple choice questions and can be administered by any secondary teacher. Each assessment is designed to be completed within a usual school period. There is no prescribed time for each assessment – students may work at their own pace.

Schools have the flexibility to schedule and complete each assessment anytime during the assessment window to suit school and timetabling needs. The scheduling of assessments may be staggered and students do not need to sit all the assessments at the same time.

Best Start Year 7 assessments will be available to participating schools from **10 February to 13 March 2020**.

The Best Start Year 7 administration platform will be available to participating schools for assessment preparation activities from Friday 31 January 2020.

Assessment window
10 February to 13 March 2020

2019 assessment summary

In 2019, more than 37,000 students completed the assessments.

Schools reported the Best Start Year 7 assessment:

- was easy to administer
- provided timely and useful information
- 98% of teachers observed students were "very engaged" or "engaged" with the online assessment

Feedback from the assessment

Student assessment feedback is available to teachers through Scout shortly after each assessment is completed.

The feedback from the Best Start Year 7 assessment is linked to NSW syllabus outcomes and the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions. This will help teachers to identify cohort and individual student literacy and numeracy learning needs and target their teaching accordingly.

Student assessment feedback is also mapped to the learning progressions in PLAN2.

For details on how to access the Scout application please contact your school principal or email litnum@csnsw.catholic.edu.au

Professional learning

Professional learning sessions are designed to support schools participating in Best Start Year 7. Professional learning is tailored for new and continuing schools.

New schools:

- eLearning and 1 full day workshop focussing on accessing, analysing and actioning assessment feedback (Term 1)

Continuing schools:

- eLearning refresher focussing on preparation and administration (Term 4); and
- full day workshop focussing on strengthening practice in literacy and numeracy support for students. (Term 1).

Full details of all professional learning workshops will be available during Term 4 via CSNSW's weekly bulletin Scholaris and sent directly to diocesan representatives early Term 4, 2019.

Support during the assessment

During the assessment window, schools have access to resources including the 'Best Start Year 7 Coordinator Handbook' and 'Best Start Year 7 Assessment Supervisor Handbook' which will be emailed directly to the school principal and Best Start Year 7 Coordinator.

For any additional support needs schools may contact litnum@csnsw.catholic.edu.au

Technical requirements

The Best Start Year 7 assessment is accessed via a URL. There is no need to download additional software or a locked down browser to administer the assessment. Students access each assessment by using a system generated unique student code. These unique student codes will be preloaded into the assessment platform for teachers to distribute to students prior to each assessment.

The Best Start Year 7 assessment can be completed on a laptop, desktop PC, Chromebook, Android tablet and iPad (not iPad mini). Students may use their own devices, though devices need to meet the Best Start Year 7 technology requirements.

Headphones or earphones are required as audio is used in some parts of the assessment.

Full technical requirements are available on the Best Start Year 7 website: education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/best-start-year-7/resources

Frequently Asked Questions

How can schools opt in?

Schools can opt in online by 1 November 2019 at <https://www.surveymzmo.com/s3/5201386/Best-Start-Year-7-Opt-in-for-2020>

Why isn't the assessment administered at the end of Year 6?

Best Start Year 7 provides teachers with a snapshot of the key literacy and numeracy skills their students demonstrate on entry to Year 7. It is designed as an assessment for secondary teachers to target their teaching to students' needs.

What aspects of literacy and numeracy does Best Start Year 7 assess?

The literacy assessment covers the literacy progression sub-element: Understanding Texts.

The numeracy assessment covers multiple sub-elements of the numeracy progression with a focus on those in the Number Sense and Algebra element.

Will there be a follow-up assessment to measure student growth?

The Best Start Year 7 assessment is completed only once by students within the assessment window. It is designed to help secondary teachers identify students that may require additional support. Schools are able to decide what other school-based assessments they may use to monitor student growth. Schools may also choose to use PLAN2 to record student literacy and numeracy growth.

Is the assessment accessible for students with a disability?

Test items cover content from Stages 2, 3 and 4 and students may receive the same level of support during the assessment that they would normally receive in the classroom. Individual schools are able to determine the suitability of the assessment for their students. There is no need to apply for special provisions.

Can students that enrol after the assessment window closes complete the assessment?

Students enrolling after the assessment window closes may undertake other forms of assessment as decided by the school.

Is the assessment adaptive?

The assessments are not adaptive. They target key literacy and numeracy skills foundational to a student's success across all subjects.

What is Scout?

Scout is the NSW Department of Education's education data and analysis platform, developed to provide better information about our schools in one central place.

More information about Scout is available on the Scout webpage: education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/educational-data/scout

What is PLAN2?

PLAN2 is a software tool to capture observations on students' literacy and numeracy development using the progressions.

PLAN2 is designed to help teachers make informed decisions about teaching and learning priorities for their students.

Student assessment feedback is mapped to the learning progressions in PLAN2. Schools working with Best Start Year 7 may use PLAN2 for ongoing monitoring of student growth.

Will Best Start Year 7 data travel with students if they change schools?

The assessment information available in Scout and PLAN2 will travel with students if they move to another school in NSW

What information is available for parents?

Parent and carer information is available to participating schools to distribute. This can be found on the Best Start Year 7 resources webpage:

education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/best-start-year-7/resources

Will there be reports for parents on their child's performance?

Feedback from the assessment is designed for secondary teachers to analyse individual student needs and target their teaching accordingly. Schools may choose to use the information from this and other assessments to facilitate discussions with parents.

What is the cost?

\$2 per student for the use of PLAN2.

More information

For further information about the Best Start Year 7 assessment visit the Best Start Year 7 webpage:

education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/best-start-year-7

or email litnum@csnsw.catholic.edu.au