

All of the UK curricula define multiple categories of mathematical proficiency that require students to be able to use and apply mathematics, beyond simple recall of facts and standard procedures. While the intentions are very similar, the terminology varies between regions. *Progress Test in Maths (PTM)* categories are based on the Aims in the KS1, KS2 and KS3 *National Curriculum for England*, and are also comparable with the GCSE Assessment Objectives, adopting some language from both. The main change has been to divide 'Fluency' into two strands.

FF: Fluency in facts and procedures

Students can, for example:

- recall mathematical facts, terminology and definitions (such as the properties of shapes);
- recall number bonds and multiplication tables;
- perform straightforward calculations.

FC: Fluency in conceptual understanding

Students can, for example:

- demonstrate understanding of a mathematical concept in the context of a routine problem (e.g. calculate with or compare decimal numbers, identify odd numbers, prime numbers, multiples);
- extract information from common representations, such as charts, graphs, tables and diagrams;
- identify and apply the appropriate mathematical procedure or operation in a straightforward word problem (for example, knowing when to add, multiply or divide).

MR: Mathematical reasoning

Students can, for example:

- make deductions, inferences and draw conclusions from mathematical information;
- construct chains of reasoning to achieve a given result;
- interpret and communicate information accurately.

PS: Problem solving

Students can, for example:

- translate problems in mathematical or non-mathematical contexts into a process or a series of mathematical processes;
- make and use connections between different parts of mathematics;
- interpret results in the context of the given problem;

- evaluate methods used and results obtained;
- evaluate solutions to identify how they may have been affected by assumptions made.

There is a limit to how thoroughly MR and PS can be assessed in a short, whole-curriculum test such as *PTM*. Teachers are urged to ensure that their curriculum includes a balanced diet of extended tasks, investigations, problem solving and collaborative activities.

This table shows how the questions in *PTM14* map onto these process categories.

Process category	Mental Maths	Applying and Understanding Maths
FF: Fluency in facts and procedures	1, 2, 3, 9, 11, 12, 15	1
FC: Fluency in conceptual understanding	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20	2, 3, 4, 5, 14, 16, 18, 19
MR: Mathematical reasoning		6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22
PS: Problem solving		21, 23, 24

Mathematics process categories in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

The process categories are based on the National Curriculum and GCSE syllabuses for England. The curricula for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have similar requirements, although there is wide variation in the way they are defined.

Wales	Closest <i>PTM</i> process categories			
Key Stage 3 Skills	FF	FC	MR	PS
1. Solve Mathematical Problems				•
2. Communicate Mathematically		•	•	
3. Reason Mathematically		•	•	
Key Stage 3 Range	•			

Northern Ireland	Closest PTM process categories			
Key Stage 3 Using Mathematics	FF	FC	MR	PS
Communicate		•	•	
Manage Information			•	
Think Critically		•	•	
Solve Problems and Make Decisions				•
Individual mathematical topics	•			

Scotland	Closest PTM process categories			
Experiences and outcomes	FF	FC	MR	PS
develop a secure understanding of the concepts, principles and processes of mathematics and apply these in different contexts, including the world of work			•	•
engage with more abstract mathematical concepts and develop important new kinds of thinking			•	
understand the application of mathematics, its impact on our society past and present, and its potential for the future				
develop essential numeracy skills which will allow me to participate fully in society	•			
establish firm foundations for further specialist learning	•	•		
understand that successful independent living requires financial awareness, effective money management, using schedules and other related skills			•	•
interpret numerical information appropriately and use it to draw conclusions, assess risk, and make reasoned evaluations and informed decisions				•
apply skills and understanding creatively and logically to solve problems, within a variety of contexts			•	•
appreciate how the imaginative and effective use of technologies can enhance the development of skills and concepts				

Education Scotland: "Curriculum for Excellence: Numeracy and Mathematics" 14 May 2009.

Feedback to parents and carers

A report on the individual student is available to support feedback to parents or carers. This *Individual report for parents* strips away much of the technical detail that is included in the *Group report for teachers*. A series of statements, tailored for parents, is included to explain what the results mean and how learning may be affected. Recommendations focus on how the parent or carer can work with the school to support the student at home.

In addition to the *Individual report for parents*, you may wish to provide supporting information, either orally or in writing, explaining the process and outcomes. The following list provides you with guidelines to assist with this communication.

- Stress the school's commitment to identifying and addressing the needs of each individual student in order to understand and maximise their potential.
- Explain that testing with *PTM14* is part of the school's regular assessment regime and that all students in the year group(s) have been tested.
- As part of the test, students were tested on their mental maths ability as well as their ability to apply and understand mathematics in a written context.
- You may wish to summarise the specific outcomes and recommendations from the test for that individual student (which are also shown on the *Individual report for parents*).
- Parents or carers should be reassured that if they have any questions or concerns or would like any further advice on how best to support their child, then they should contact the school.

A sample letter (Figure 1) is provided to support your communications with parents/carers after testing with *PTM14*.

Figure 1: Sample parent/carer feedback letter

Dear Parent or Carer,

In school, we wish to assess all our students to see what their needs are and how we can best help them learn and achieve.

As part of this process, your child has completed the Progress Test in Maths 14, which assesses key aspects of maths, such as shape, number and mathematical concepts (like money, place value and time).

A copy of the Individual report for parents is included*. This shows your child's results and describes what these mean in terms of the ways in which he/she will learn best and how you can support him/her at home.

[If the report is not included a relevant short extract can be included instead.]

If you have any queries or concerns please contact us.

Yours faithfully,

[School/Establishment name]

* If possible, it is helpful to parents to discuss the report with them on a suitable occasion before sending it out.