

# Test Administrator FAQs (Scotland)

**TIMSS 2027 Field Trial, March 2026.**

**PIRLS 2026 Main Study, May–June 2026.**

## What does a Test Administrator do?

A Test Administrator delivers the study or studies within participating schools, ensuring that the international procedures are adhered to in full. They liaise with schools ahead of test day to ensure schools are ready to deliver efficiently on the day. The studies consist of online assessments and an online questionnaire that are administered to the selected class/classes of pupils. In addition, schools are sent questionnaires for completion by the headteacher, teachers and parents/carers in advance, which the Test Administrator will be required to check have been completed.

## What is the difference between the TIMSS and PIRLS studies?

As a Test Administrator your role is broadly the same on either study. With PIRLS you will deal exclusively with primary schools and test P5 pupils (approximately age 10). On TIMSS you will deal with either primary or secondary schools as you will test either P5 or S2 pupils (approximately age 10 and 14). You do not need subject specialism to conduct the tests. On either study in most cases you should expect to spend all morning (approx 08:00 to 13:00) from arrival at to departure from the school. The test timing for pupils across the studies is summarised as follows:

- PIRLS P5: two 40 minute assessments + 30 minute questionnaire
- TIMSS P5: two 35 minute assessments + 30 minute questionnaire
- TIMSS S2: two 45 minute assessments + 30 minute questionnaire

Set up and finishing time should be considered, as well as breaks between the sessions which are agreed between the TAs and schools prior to the day. A full breakdown of test day timing is provided to you at training.

## **How much do I get paid?**

For completion of all training activities, including reading materials sent to you, completing pre-training quizzes, and attendance at a live training event (c.5-6 hours), you will be paid £130.

For school visits you will be paid a set rate of £195 for each visit, plus associated expenses. The visit payment also covers travel time to and from the school, and administrative tasks, such as talking to the school ahead of the visit, filling paperwork on the day and posting that paperwork afterwards. These tasks need to be completed before and after the visit day to ensure the test day runs smoothly and is considered complete afterwards.

The same fees are applicable to both the TIMSS and PIRLS studies, and whether or not you are the “Lead TA”.

## **When will I be paid?**

Payment will be processed by the Pearson team within a week of completion of the activity, with processing time to your account within four weeks of that. It is recommended that you submit claims for expenses incurred as you go through each test week.

## **Where will the role be based?**

This is a mobile role for which travel is an integral and essential part of the job description. All your travel expenses are reimbursed. We aim to offer allocations of schools across Scotland within a 50-mile radius of your home base. However, in your Expression of Interest response we ask if you can travel further than that, as there will be some more remote schools that need Test Administrator coverage.

## What will my time commitment be?

The time commitment for both studies is similar. Assessments in schools will be held Monday to Friday during the test windows:

- TIMSS: 2 March to 2 April 2026
- PIRLS: 6 May to 19 June 2026

The day in school will last from approximately 08:00 – 13:00. Most visits occur in the morning but occasionally schools opt for an afternoon test session, for example when a school has limited computers and needs to sit the test in two sessions. The complete schedule of the day will be outlined during training. In addition to time in school you will need to consider travel time to and from the school, and time spent on pre and post administrative activities. We ask that TAs are available three full days per week throughout the period.

## How many schools will I be allocated to visit?

The number of schools you are allocated will depend on a number of factors, including your exact availability compared to schools in your region, and in relation to other available TAs. Factors such as schools changing their test date and other TAs withdrawing also impact on your number of visits. Indicating availability every day does not mean you will be allocated a school to visit each day, but it will increase the likelihood that you are matched with schools in your area, as their test dates will align with your availability.

## How will you know which days I am available to visit schools?

Before each test window we collect a detailed calendar of days you are and are not available to visit schools. This informs the allocation exercise so it is important that it is as accurate as possible. If you have a regular commitment on a certain day or days this information is captured during this exercise.

## Will I visit schools alone?

For schools with just one class being tested you will be the sole TA. If two classes are being tested two TAs will be assigned and in this case one TA will be nominated as the Lead TA. The Lead TA will complete preliminary communications with the school and distribute this information to the other TA. All other responsibilities remain the same. In schools where there is just one TA, you are in effect the Lead TA.

## For how many schools will I be the Lead TA?

For schools with two classes being tested we aim to distribute the Lead role so that all TAs evenly share this task. As you will be likely to have a mix of schools visited solo or visited with another TA, you will have more Lead TA schools as you naturally adopt this role for your solo schools.

## Can I change my allocation of schools?

Following the training a draft allocation is provided to you, at which point you have the opportunity to comment on its suitability. If your circumstances change during the test window we ask that you let us know as soon as possible. Throughout the test window we will aim to let you know as soon as possible if there are changes (eg, a school withdrawing or asking to change test date).

During the test window schools change their date, other TAs have circumstances changed and some schools need to be revisited. For these reasons we are quite likely to contact you to offer additional visits to add to your allocation of schools after you receive your initial list.

## What training will I be given?

Completion of training is a pre-requisite of the role, and will take approximately 5–6 hours in total (for each study).

Training will take place remotely and will be a mixture of self-study and attendance at a live/Q&A session:

- Read Test Administrator manual and associated appendices.
- Complete online training modules and accompanying quizzes (completion and accuracy will be monitored)
- Attend a live online training session of approximately 2.5 hours. Training dates are TBC but indicative as follows:
  - TIMSS. Online training event mid February 2026
  - PIRLS. Online training event mid April 2026.

## Is Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) certification (working with children) required?

Yes. Test Administrators must hold a current, valid PVG certificate for working with children. If you don't hold a current certificate, certification will be carried out as part of the recruitment process. All PVG certification, along with appropriate ID will be checked during a short online video call with a member of the TIMSS/PIRLS Support Team.

## Will I get a contract for TIMSS and PIRLS?

You may be offered a contract for either TIMSS or PIRLS, or both, depending on a few factors like your availability and demand in your geographic region. A separate contract will be needed to participate in each study. You must receive and return the contract/s, and have successfully completed training, before you will be allocated school visits.

The contract contains important information about your role, including practical information about payments and expenses, and indicates your agreement to maintain the confidentiality of all materials.

### **Will there be any marking taking place?**

Marking/scoring is not part of the Test Administrator role. Scoring of student open responses will take place after each testing window. We recruit scorers with subject experience and/or experience of marking the topic areas. If you are successfully recruited as a Test Administrator and would like to express an interest in being a scorer, if you have the relevant experience, please let us know by emailing either [PIRLSSupport@pearson.com](mailto:PIRLSSupport@pearson.com) or [TIMSSSupport@pearson.com](mailto:TIMSSSupport@pearson.com) depending on the subject area you would like to score.

### **If I need more information who should I contact?**

Please direct further questions on the TA role (for either TIMSS, PIRLS or both) to [PIRLSSupport@pearson.com](mailto:PIRLSSupport@pearson.com).

You may also phone 020 7010 2101 (Mon – Fri, 9am – 4pm).