

Assessment Platform Technical Bulletin

Winter 2023

Contents

Contents

1. Welcome	3
2. Release schedule	3
3. Platform updates	3
3.1. Password visibility toggle – delivered in November release	3
3.2. MATs Assessment enhancement – targeted for the December 2023 release	3
3.3. Update to the minimum hardware and software requirements	4
3.4. Secure Browser update – targeted for Q1 2024	4
3.5. .NET Framework version 4 support – targeted for Q1 2024	4
4. Top tips	4
4.1. Retention of Secure Browser files	4
4.2. Web filtering and SSL Decryption	5
4.3. Migrating to Windows 11 – please note	6
4.4. Scheduling Windows Updates	6
5. Did you know?	7
5.1. Secure Browser Logs	7
5.2. Locally stored results	8

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1. Welcome

Welcome to the winter edition of the Assessment platform technical news bulletin. Following on from the autumn edition, we have seen continued improvements in the stability of the platform, thanks to the collaborative efforts with our valued training providers and assessment venues. Your engagement and feedback have been vital in identifying and addressing the issues previously experienced.

Whilst our current position is much improved, our commitment to delivering a rich and seamless assessment experience continues as we seek to assist training providers still experiencing issues, resolve remaining issues, and deliver value enhancements.

We encourage you to read the updates in this bulletin as well as future editions as we bring you the latest platform updates and developments.

2. Release schedule

Month	Provisional Release Dates
December 2023	14–17 December
January 2024	21–25 January
March 2024	3–7 March
April 2024	14–18 April
May 2024	19–23 May
June/July 2024	30 June – 4 July
August 2024	11–15 August
September 2024	22–26 September
November 2024	3 – 7 November
December 2024	15 – 19 December

3. Platform updates

3.1. Password visibility toggle – delivered in November release

In direct response to feedback and reported queries around access, we added a password visibility toggle for all users. Our insight so far shows this enhancement to have had a positive impact in reducing the number of access-related issues and queries.

3.2. MATs Assessment enhancement – targeted for the December 2023 release

We will be delivering an enhancement to address issues we have observed and had reported to us around the In-App questions at tasks 5 and 6 of the MATs assessment, whereby Excel dialogue boxes, such as privacy agreements and “what’s new” cause loading and navigation issues.

The enhancement will prompt Excel and related dialogue boxes to open during the initial assessment system requirement checks. This will allow students to close these dialogue boxes before the assessment begins, effectively resolving associated issues.

This enhancement will remove the current workaround to manually open Excel in advance of each MATs assessment sitting.

3.3. Update to the minimum hardware and software requirements

Considering the changing technology landscape and the future roadmap of the assessment platform, we, along with our software provider are currently reviewing the hardware and software requirements for the delivery of AAT assessments. Whilst we expect any changes to be incremental, we will communicate any changes to requirements in the coming months. One area which we do foresee changing is RAM requirements – the current requirement is 4GB but we expect this to change to 8GB.

All changes will be communicated in advance to allow training providers and venues to make the necessary provisions, should they be needed.

3.4. Secure Browser update – targeted for Q1 2024

We plan to deploy an update to the Secure Browser used for the delivery of assessments in early 2024. The update will be rolled out and taken automatically and we will provide further details including exact dates closer to the time.

3.5. .NET Framework version 4 support – targeted for Q1 2024

In line with the version update to the Secure Browser and given that Windows 11 does not come with .NET Framework version 3.5 pre-installed or enabled by default, we will be introducing support for .NET Framework version 4. This is required specifically for the delivery of the MATS assessment. We will communicate exact dates closer to the time so that you can plan the download/enabling of this version and mitigate against disruption to your MATs assessment delivery schedule.

4. Top tips

4.1. Retention of Secure Browser files

In the event of an assessment submission or technical issue, you may be asked to retrieve and send specific Secure Browser files from the machines used to deliver the assessments. This is crucial for assisting with the upload of assessment responses and investigations into the technical issues.

Files created within the Secure Browser directories listed below must be retained for up to two weeks from the assessment date, should they be required. Failure to do so will prevent AAT and our software provider from investigating technical issues and increase the risk of them reoccurring. It will also increase the chances of data loss occurring against any assessment submission issues.

AAT's Centre Compliance team will follow up and investigate any instances where the requested files are not provided.

If you run deepfreeze software, remove profiles at log off by group policy / Intune or have data deletion policies in place on the assessment machines, please ensure the Secure Browser directories are added as exclusions.

Secure Browser directories

- C:\Users\[EXAM USER]\AppData\Roaming\com.psiexams.psi-bridge-secure-browser\logs
- C:\Users\[EXAM USER]\AppData\Roaming\PSI Bridge Secure Browser

4.2. Web filtering and SSL Decryption

Following on from the previous edition, we have had reports of submission issues from some training providers, which after investigation have largely revolved around web filtering and decryption.

If you are experiencing issues, please ensure you follow the latest guidance, which is below.

The following URLs must be whitelisted on the machine and added to the 'safe list' of any firewalls and anti-virus software (note the wildcard within the URLs for the first three bullet points):

- s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/aat.nirvana-upload.apec.psiexams.com/* (wildcard to allow all paths after*)
- *psiexams.com (wildcard to allow all paths before *)
- *psionline.com (wildcard to allow all paths before *)
- aat.psionline.com
- sb-ssl.google.com
- prod-rpaas-exam-pdiddy-content.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com
- www.googletagmanager.com
- www.google-analytics.com
- ocsp.sca1b.amazontrust.com
- e8asamb9w4.execute-api.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com
- ocsp.sectigo.com
- jExcel.net
- jspreadsheet.com
- clientservices.googleapis.com
- optimizationguide-pa.googleapis.com

All URLs and IP addresses on the following two links:

- <https://www.twilio.com/docs/video/ip-addresses>
- <https://faqs.ably.com/if-i-need-to-whitelist-ably-servers-from-a-firewall-which-ports-ips-and/or-domains-should-i-add>

Please ensure all of these URLs are excluded from SSL decryption, if in use.

If proxy servers are used and/or for web filtering, the above URLs should also be added as exceptions. Proxies should also be configured to allow ASMX, ASPX, and ZIP file types.

If you are using web filtering, please ensure these URLs are not sandboxed by your web filtering solutions.

You must not use IP addresses to add exceptions, as these can change from time to time with no prior notice.

4.3. Migrating to Windows 11 – please note

If you have moved to Windows 11 on your end user's machines or have plans to before support for .NET Framework version 4 is added, we have fully tested this but we found that you need to install version 3.5 of .NET framework.

Here is a link to 3.5 service pack 1 - <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/mem/intune/protect/windows-update-settings#user-experience-settings>

4.4. Scheduling Windows Updates

If you have pending updates on your machines, this will affect the system requirements check process. To help with this process, you can set active hours on each machine, so no updates are applied during your working hours.

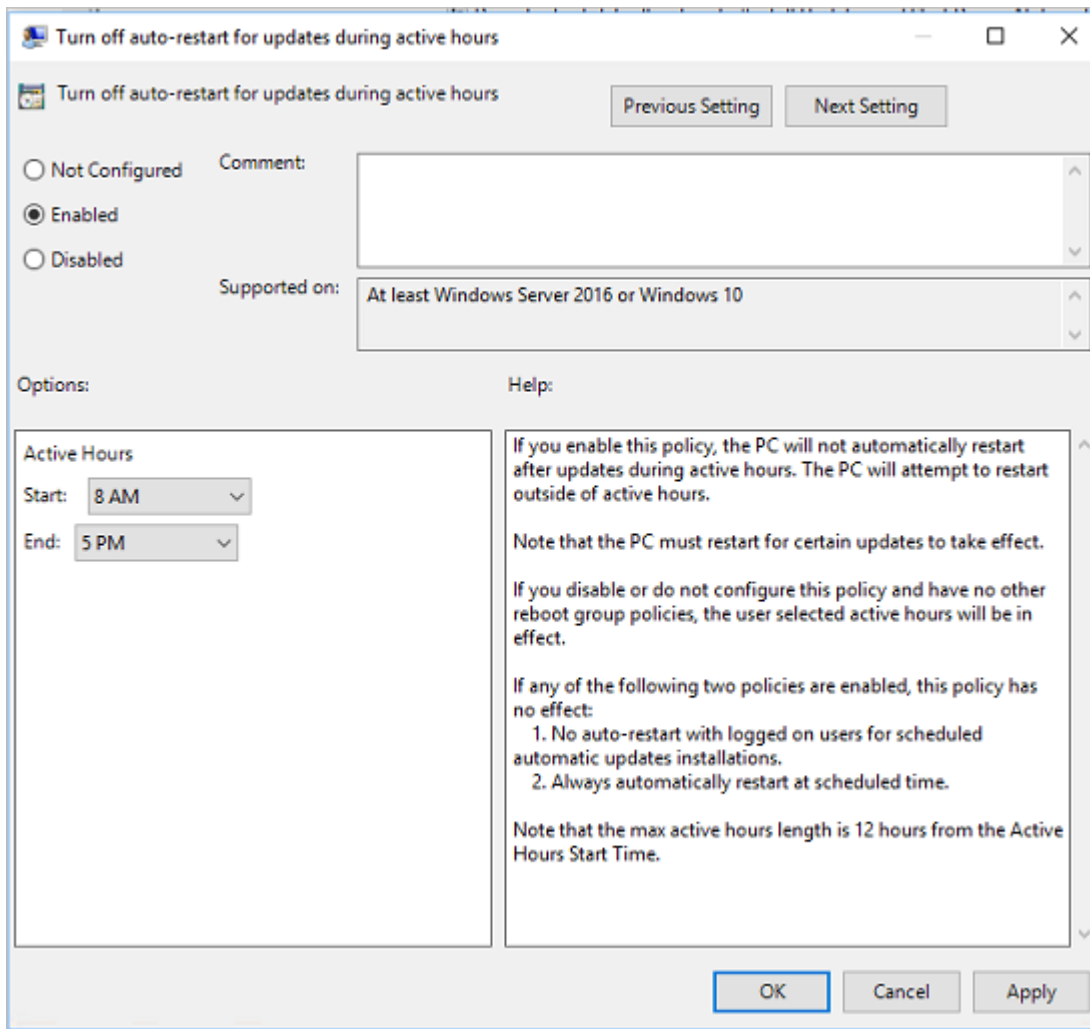
GPO Method

To configure active hours using Group Policy:

1. Go to **Computer Configuration\Administrative Templates\Windows Components\Windows Update**

2. Open the **Turn off auto-restart for updates during active hours** policy setting.

When the policy is enabled, you can set the start and end times for active hours.



Intune Method

You can set the active hours within the Windows Update CSP settings on your endpoint manager settings.

Below is a link to the relevant section on the instructions to set up on Intune:

<https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/mem/intune/protect/windows-update-settings#user-experience-settings>

5. Did you know?

5.1. Secure Browser Logs

The platform stores locally a number of logs files which can be used by the platform provider to troubleshoot any issues experienced with the platform on your local environment.

If you are requested by AAT to provide logs they are stored in the following location -
 C:\Users\Exam Username\AppData\Roaming\com.psiexams.psi-bridge-secure-browser\logs.

Please extract the zip folder for the date of the assessment, keep this as a zip folder and rename it as the AAT ID for the affected student (where only one sitting was affected) or as your centre name/code.

5.2. Locally stored results

When troubleshooting, please refrain from uninstalling the browser, especially if you have had submission issues. The platform stores results locally within several folders and can be used to submit results offline if an issue has occurred during submission.

The location of the top root folder for the IndexedDB is located here - C:\Users\Exam User\AppData\Roaming\PSI Bridge Secure Browser.

If you are asked by AAT to provide the IndexedDB please zip up the folder called IndexedDB within the location above – do not individually retrieve and send the files within this folder.