

Policy document

Assessment policy

XXXX School

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1-Introduction

1a-Monitoring and revision of the policy

This policy was first developed during the school year 2007/08 by the PYP coordinator and XXX's teaching staff. The draft was written by the PYP coordinator in 2007/08. Following this, the assessment policy has been further updated and developed by the PYP, MYP and DP coordinators in 2011/12. The school staff has reviewed the policy in the academic year of 2011/12. In February 2014 this policy was reviewed by the coordinators and heads of school. The assessment policy will be reviewed and updated in consultation with the whole staff on a bi-annual basis. Prior to the update feedback will be sought from all stakeholders of the school community. The *Programme standards and practices*, as well as the guide *MYP: From principles into practice*, were taken into account in developing the policy.

1b-Mission statement:

XXXX School provides a high quality, academically challenging international education aligned with the International Baccalaureate. We foster within each student, staff member and community member an enduring passion for learning and empowering each individual to become a caring global citizen.

2-Philosophy and principles of assessment in XXXX School

2a-Goals of assessment: School context

Assessment is a practice that drives instruction and involves teachers, students and parents. Assessment measures student learning and informs stakeholders about an individual's areas of strength and areas that are in development. Information from assessment is used to identify learning targets and plan curriculum. XXXX School strives to develop assessment tasks that are authentic, that is, they are summative, specific, criterion-related, varied, use of a range of measurement tools, and have real-world applications wherever possible. All participants in the process have opportunities to assess collaboratively through self-assessment, peer-assessment, and teacher assessment. Teachers standardize for consistency across the school. These practices develop a shared understanding of school-based expectations and the development of learning. Authentic assessment allows students to be active participants in their learning and allows teachers to account for the learning opportunities they provide for students.

2b-General assessment philosophy:

- Assessment is on-going.
- Assessment is consciously designed to measure and improve student learning.
- Reflection is an essential and integral part of assessment.
- Assessment tasks must be authentic whenever possible.
- Feedback is central to the assessment process.
- Students and teachers can use feedback to revise and improve performance.
- Assessment provides a direction for teachers, the learners (students), the parents, the administration and the larger school community.
- Assessment should be sensitive to cultural, linguistic, racial, learning, physical and gender differences.
- Criteria for assessment is shared or developed with the students prior to assessment where appropriate.

- Assessment is objective; all judgments are based on evidence from student work.

2c- Aims of assessment at XXXX School:

- Provide valid and reliable measurements of what students have learned.
- Reflect student growth, development and learning.
- Identify areas of strengths and areas to be further developed.
- Provide direction for future planning and instruction.
- Develop a common language for discussing and evaluating.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the curriculum.
- Inform academic target setting.
- Empower students to be active participants in their own learning.
- Develop shared year level and school-wide expectations and set standards.
- Create shared academic understanding in departments.
- Provide structured, focused and relevant feedback to students and parents.
- Provide information to school management to inform budgets, resources, curriculum development, appraisal and professional development.

2d-General assessment practices in XXXX School:

1. **Pre-assessment** – All teachers will assess student's prior knowledge and experience before embarking on new learning experiences.
2. **Formative assessment** – On-going and regular assessment will be used during the teaching and learning process to inform teachers and students about how the learning is developing. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked. A variety of methods will be used. Teachers are expected to keep records of their formative assessments.
3. **Summative assessment** – Summative assessment happens at the end of the teaching and learning process and is planned in advance. The assessment is designed so that students can show their understanding of concepts, knowledge and skills in authentic contexts.
4. **Internal assessment standardization** – Teams of educators are expected to standardize assessment tasks. This process involves multiple teachers making autonomous judgments against the same samples and then coming together to establish a consensus level of achievement. This practice is designed to create agreed-upon standards between professionals across the school.
5. Assessments will be carried out in the following forms: peer-assessment, self-assessment and teacher-assessment. Feedback should be provided within an appropriate amount of time, and never longer than one week.
6. A balance of strategies will be used at developmentally appropriate levels and should be outlined in planning documentation.
7. A balance of assessment tools should be used with the strategies. Assessment tools should be saved and a copy stored in the handover folders/portfolios.

8. Assessment data should provide evidence of developing the attributes of the IB learner profile. The assessment process at XXXX School involves the active participation of students, teachers and parents. They work together to keep each other informed about student progress. The student is at the centre of the process and is actively involved in and takes appropriate responsibility for his/her own assessment. Teachers, students and parents support each other in the on-going assessment process.

3-Overview of the IB programmes and their philosophy and practices for assessment

3a-. Special features of assessment in the Primary Years Programme (PYP): KG 1 – Grade 5

Assessment is integral to all teaching and learning. It is central to the PYP goal of thoughtfully and effectively guiding students through the five essential elements of learning: the acquisition of knowledge, the understanding of concepts, the mastery of skills, the development of attitudes and the decision to take responsible action.

Assessment involves the gathering and analysis of information about student performance and is designed to inform practice. It identifies what students know, understand, can do and feel at different stages in the learning process.

(Source: *Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education* (2009), page 44,)

3b- Special features of assessment in the Middle Years Programme (MYP): Grade 6 – Grade 10

Authentic assessment tasks in the MYP are generated by teachers and, where appropriate, students. Objectives for each subject group are identified by the MYP subject group guides and are aligned with the assessment criteria. Assessments are measured by criterion-related rubrics that are also found in the MYP subject group guides; these are modified with task-specific clarifications where appropriate. The rubrics describe eight levels of competency against the objectives. Judgments are made by consulting the levels of achievement and assigning the level that best describes the quality of work submitted.

Assessment in the MYP is on-going, using both formative assessments (which inform teaching and learning) and summative (which measure the amount of learning that has taken place). This school expects level descriptors for summative tasks to be distributed at least one week in advance of student deadlines. Where appropriate, students are expected to submit the work with a self-assessed judgment based on the level descriptors. Teachers are expected to return student work with written feedback within one week of receipt. After a series of judgments are made, the rubrics, along with formative assessment data and summative assessment data are used to make a final judgment using the “best-fit” approach (see pages 78 and 83 of *MYP: From principles into practice*, 2014). The final grade is based on the total of the four criteria along the following grade boundaries:

| Grade | Boundary guidelines | Descriptor |
|-------|---------------------|--|
| 1 | 1–5 | Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and skills. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills. |
| 2 | 6–9 | Produces work of limited quality. Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills. |

| | | |
|---|-------|--|
| 3 | 10–14 | Produces work of an acceptable quality. Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally significant misunderstandings or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking. Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations. |
| 4 | 15–18 | Produces good-quality work. Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations. |
| 5 | 19–23 | Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations, and, with support, some unfamiliar real-world situations. |
| 6 | 24–27 | Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence. |
| 7 | 28–32 | Produces high-quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations. |

(Source: *MYP: From principles into practice*, 2014, page 93)

Internal standardization in MYP – in the cases where more than one teacher are teaching the same subject group in a given year level, instances of internal standardization will take place to ensure a common understanding of criteria and application of levels of achievement. Supervisors of the personal project will also standardize. According to the guide *MYP: From principles into practice* (2014): “Standardization throughout the school year promotes consistency and builds common understandings about student achievement with respect to MYP objectives.” (page 83).

3c- Special features of assessment in the Diploma Programme (DP): Grade 11 – Grade 12

In grades 11 and 12 assessment procedures measure the extent to which students have mastered advanced academic skills in fulfilling the goals of the programme, for example: analysing and presenting information, evaluating and constructing arguments and solving problems creatively. As with the MYP, teachers are expected to give clearly articulated assessment instructions with appropriate assessment criteria at least one week in advance of deadlines, returning them within a week of submission with detailed, written feedback on the quality of work. Where appropriate, teachers apply the assessment criteria as articulated in the Diploma Programme subject guides. Final internal judgments are made in accordance with practices and markschemes outlined in the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*.

“Formal **summative** assessment is defined as assessment directly contributing to the final diploma qualification. **Most of these assessments are externally assessed**, and include examinations or work completed during the course and then sent to an external examiner. Some formal **summative** assessments are **internally assessed**, requiring the teacher to mark the **work to the accepted IB standard**. **Their standard is then confirmed or moderated by an external moderator**. The principles, practices and challenges involved in

formal diploma assessment are considered in detail in *Diploma Programme assessment: Principles and practice* (2005).” (*The Diploma Programme: From principles into practice*, 2009, page 79).

“Internal timelines—teachers should work with the Diploma Programme coordinator each year to develop a calendar of internal deadlines for IB assessments, the extended essay, and completion of CAS requirements”. (*The Diploma Programme: From principles into practice*, 2015, page 50)

Students with special educational needs: “The Diploma Programme (DP) has well-established support mechanisms for assessment access requirements, as outlined in the publication *Candidates with assessment access requirements* (2014).” (*The Diploma Programme: From principles into practice*, 2015, page. 29). In cases of students with special educational needs, the DP coordinator will make the necessary arrangements to ensure access of these students to the programme assessment.

External exams in the DP

In May of their grade 12 year, students write a series of academically rigorous exams that are sent off to be externally marked by IB examiners. This is the culminating experience of the Diploma Programme and predicted results are adjusted based on the IB examiner’s judgment.

3d- Special features of assessment the Career-related Programme (CP)

The CP uses a wide range of assessment procedures and tools to measure academic attainment, as well as, providing a reflective process for students to improve the overall grade or mark. The focus is on achieving potential through self-evaluation aligned to measurable feedback from teachers. The CP has two components: a minimum of two Diploma Programme courses, and the CP core, consisting of language development, personal and professional skills, service learning and a reflective project. The DP courses are assessed using procedures as explained above and the CP core is assessed in accordance with procedures outlined in the guides for the core components.

4- Relationship of IB assessment principles and practices with required systems for grading and reporting

ACER - International School Assessment (ISA) testing

As a means of cross-referencing our internal assessment data with international standards, students in Grade 3 through 10 take the ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research) ISA test. This test assesses literacy and numeracy for students in over 80 countries and gives valuable information on student ability. Parents receive a personalized report that indicates how their child is performing against age-appropriate criteria (criterion-referenced) and where they stand relative to all other students who wrote the test (norm-referenced).

5-Documentation used for the purpose of on-going assessment (formative assessment):

Portfolios

Rationale:

“A portfolio is a record of students’ involvement in learning which is designed to demonstrate success, growth, high-order thinking, creativity, assessment strategies and reflection. A portfolio is a celebration of an active mind at work”. (*Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education* 2007, page 50)

What should a portfolio look like?

- The portfolio from K1-G5 is in A4 binder.

- All entries to be dated.
- The portfolio for G6-10 is digital.

What does a portfolio include?

As a holistic assessment tool, the portfolio must include contributions from all areas of a student's school life. The minimum agreements are detailed in the Essential Agreement relating to Portfolios and include all areas of the curriculum that are evident in the student's report. Teachers are responsible for monitoring the student portfolio content, for both the teacher-selected and student-selected entries.

What will accompany the selected pieces of work?

- All the work in a student portfolio should be annotated with either a teacher or student reflection stating what the work shows and why/how it was chosen.
- Both the teacher and the student (according to age/stage of development) are responsible for regular additions to and revision of the portfolio. Portfolio work must be an integral part of the weekly timetable/work programme so that the value of the portfolio is recognized by all concerned.
- The student portfolio should include self-, peer- and teacher assessments. The work samples should include both draft and final copy, student reflections and samples that show growth/progress/development over time.
- Teacher considers incorporating the IB learner profile and essential elements into the student's portfolio.

How do we select the entries?

- Portfolio selection can take place in a variety of ways. The student can, at any time, ask to add a piece of work to his/ her portfolio. Likewise the teacher can, at any time, ask the student to add a piece of work to his/ her portfolio.
- It is important to ensure that draft pieces and final pieces that demonstrate the process of learning are included.
- The most appropriate way in which work will initially be collected and later be presented in the portfolios will vary from one classroom to another. Students at each year level should use the same format for their portfolios to give some consistency across the year levels.

How do we reflect?

- Student/teacher reflection needs to accompany each work sample. There should be a balance between student/teacher reflections about the samples in the portfolio.
- It is important to encourage student ownership of the portfolio. The more the student can discuss his/her progress in the portfolio, the richer their reflections.
- Peer assessment may be used but needs to be helpful and purposeful.
- Parent reflections may be added in student-led conferences.

When do we (students, parents and teachers) use the portfolio?

Portfolios will be used in student-led conference. There will be scheduled time for portfolio consideration to ensure that portfolios become an integral and important part of the classroom routine. There should be a time for the students to reflect and share their chosen work with the teacher(s) and their peers.

Who has access to the portfolio?

Students, teachers and parents have access to the portfolio. If parts of or whole portfolios are to be shown to other people a student's agreement is sought.

Where should the portfolio be kept?

Portfolios should be stored in a visible, easily accessible and central place in the homeroom. They should be part of the display of the room. Students and parents should be able to access their portfolio independently. Each portfolio is kept for two years.

Other formative assessment tools and strategies

The following is a list of some assessment tools and strategies which teacher and students may choose from, to include in the portfolio, to assist in demonstrating student learning and development:

| Strategies | Tools |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Observations | Rubrics |
| Performance assessments | Exemplars |
| Process-focused assessments | Checklists |
| Selected responses | Anecdotal records |
| Open-ended tasks | Continuums |

6-Documentation used for the purpose of summative assessment

Summative assessment task

Any assessment task that can make valid and reliable judgments on student learning can and will be used. Such assessment tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Formal essays
- Photo essays
- Academic investigations
- Scientific experiments
- Presentations
- Projects
- Website development
- Speeches

- Performances
- Problem-solving
- Design
- Planning
- Organization
- Debates
- Journals
- Competitions
- Proposals

Curriculum-referenced tests

What are ‘curriculum-referenced tests’?

Curriculum-referenced tests are criterion-based tests, designed to measure the extent to which an individual student has achieved a particular skill or body of knowledge. The criteria are drawn directly from subject-specific scope and sequence documents of IB.

Why use curriculum-referenced tests?

- To provide data on individual students and/or groups of students
- To measure specific skill development of an individual student against the school-based expectations (curriculum)
- To identify patterns of strengths and weaknesses (for an individual student, group, class or the whole school)
- To inform teacher planning and future directions for teachers and students as they continue to improve student learning
- To help evaluate curriculum
- To moderate standards across the school
- To promote standardization (assessments are designed by grade-level teams for all students in that year group).

How do we use curriculum-referenced tests?

Curriculum-referenced tests provide us with a form of measurement which allows an evaluative judgment to be placed on student performance. This is possible because an individual student’s performance in a certain area of the curriculum is compared to a set of school-based expectations.

This provides teachers, students and parents with a point of reference from which to view student performance.

- Results may be discussed to assist with goal setting for individuals, groups or classes
- Results of individual students provide points for discussion during student-led conferences
- Results provide information about student learning in comparison with the expected level of skill development and competence.
- Results may be discussed between teachers to identify how their students perform in relation to other groups/classes/levels.
- Reviewing results can provide important information for the school about how realistic the curriculum is and how well the students are prepared for attaining certain skills and performing well at certain levels, as they move through the school.

7-Reporting – How do we report student learning?

There are a variety of methods employed at XXXX School for reporting. These include:

7a-Interim/Semester reports

One interim report is given after attending school for six weeks. It includes checklists about class routines and work habits in subjects.

A Semester One and Two report shows the progress in all areas of the curriculum: IB learner profile, unit of inquiry/unit of work, language, mathematics, Foreign language, Arabic, physical (and health) education (including swimming), music and Islamic studies. A grade is given on the learner's progress and effort.

7b-Student-led conferences

What are 'student-led conferences'?

The ability to 'lead' the conference depends in the student's age, ability and past experience, however the goal is to increasingly develop each student's ability to confidently discuss themselves and their work in an honest and open manner.

Why use student-led conferences?

'Conferencing' as an assessment and reporting tool is an expression of a fundamental belief that students can and should reflect upon and share responsibility for their own learning. It also communicates to the whole school community that we value the students in the assessment process by placing them at the very centre of their own learning and assessment.

- Conferences help develop constructive and open relationships and communication between students, parents and teachers.
- Conferences offer students, teacher and parents the opportunity to reach mutual understanding of the nature of the work completed and the progress it indicates.
- Conferences validate student learning and allow for discussion and explanation of individual achievements in a personal setting.
- Through focusing on student work and analysing what it demonstrates about the student as a learner, students, teachers and parents are provided with an opportunity to address specific issues.

- Honest and open discussion, focusing on evidence of student learning, allows opportunities for students, teachers and parents to collaborate in making plans for the future and to provide encouragement for the student as he/she continues to learn.

How do we use student-led conferences?

The portfolio and any other significant and relevant student work provide the focus for the student-led conference.

- The student-led conference is scheduled to take place over a 45-minute period.
- The teacher welcomes the student and his/her parents to the classroom as they arrive and provides the student with the opportunity to talk with their parents.
- The student initiates the conference, walking their parents around the classroom to look at and discuss the work displayed.
- The student takes the parent on a learning journey around the classroom highlighting specific learning opportunities that has occurred in the classroom.
- The student and parents sit at a desk and take time to look through the portfolio and discuss the work included there and the formal teacher assessments and evaluations.
- Parents are encouraged to ask questions which will assist them in gaining information about the extent to which their child understands the purpose of the learning.
- Teacher's role is to assist the student with planning the conference. Then to assist the student as needed.

7c-Parent-teacher interviews

Parent-teacher interviews may occur at any time during the academic year as XXXX School has an open door policy. The teacher, parent or senior management team may initiate the interview. There is a scheduled parent/teacher interview time in Term 1 to review the start of the year. This is an opportunity to address goals and concerns for the upcoming academic year. In Term 3 another scheduled parent-teacher interview will take place to review the academic year.

8-Evidence of application of the assessment policy in teachers, students and parents

This will be evident when teachers:

- Plan with assessment as the focus of the teaching and learning in their classroom.
- Value and promote assessment as an integral part of the learning process in the classroom with their students.
- Allow their students time to reflect on their own learning as part of the teaching and learning process.
- Model the habit of reflection with their students.
- Provide students with the skills and tools to evaluate their own learning and provide time and support for this in the classroom.
- Adapt their teaching and the learning environment to cater for all student learning styles.
- Provide students with the learning expectations or assessment criteria prior to a particular task.

- Identify the extent to which the learning expectations or assessment criteria are met by an individual student.
- Select from a wide range of assessment tools, reflecting student needs and skills.
- Provide students with regular opportunities to share the outcomes of their learning experiences with others, including peers, teachers and parents.
- Communicate clearly and openly with students and parents about, achievements, on-going progress and future goals.

This will be evident when students: (as appropriate and applicable)

- Participate meaningfully in assessing and evaluating their own learning.
- Become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses.
- Become aware of their own learning style.
- Contribute actively to the setting of goals designed to focus on developing their performance in areas of both strength and weakness.
- Are aware of, use and develop a range of assessment tools.
- Share the outcomes of their learning with peers, teachers and parents.
- Contribute to the assessment process through managing their own portfolios.
- Select and reflect on the work put into their portfolios.
- Know what the expectations are for their work and behaviour at school.
- Recognize and increasingly use the common assessment vocabulary used throughout the school.
- Prepare for and lead their conferences with parents and teachers, describing their own learning and explaining the purpose behind the activities they have been engaged in.

This will be evident when parents:

- Are informed about the school-based expectations.
- Understand the assessment vocabulary used in the school.
- Are involved in setting goals for and with their children.
- Recognize that their child is at the centre of the assessment process.
- Value that their child is aware of his/her own strengths, weaknesses, learning styles and preferences.
- Are invited to provide information to the teacher regarding their child's on-going learning.