



International School of Tallinn Assessment Policy

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International School of Tallinn Assessment Policy

Why Do We Assess?

Philosophy

At International School of Tallinn (IST), we believe assessment is one of the most important tools we use to inform planning and practice, guide instruction, and lead to improved student learning. Assessment is the key component that allows us to effectively differentiate the curriculum, personalize learning, and deliver the curriculum to a student's zone of proximal development. We believe that the best assessment is ongoing, relevant, and authentic and should include all stakeholders.

Definition of Assessment

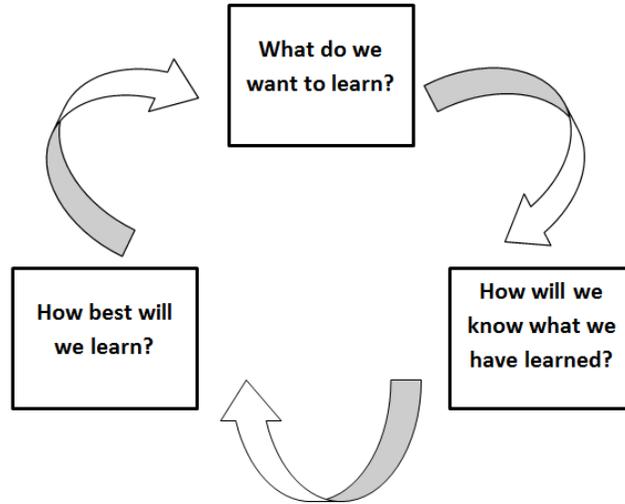
Assessment involves the gathering and analysis of information about student performance and is designed to inform practice. It identifies what students know, understand, can do, and feel at different stages in the learning process. (*Making the PYP Happen*, 2009)

Assessment in the MYP is an integral part of learning, involving students in self- assessment and providing feedback on the thinking strategies and processes as well as the outcome. The MYP requires teachers to organize **continuous assessment**, over the course of the program, according to specified criteria that correspond to the objectives of each subject group. (*MYP Principles and Practice*)

Purposes of Assessment

Assessment for improved student learning and deep understanding requires a range of assessment practices to be used with three overarching purposes:

The prime objective of assessment in the Primary Years Program (PYP) is to provide feedback on the learning process. (IBPYP *The Primary Years Program – A Basis for Practice*, pg. 13)



Assessment in the MYP aims to:

- support and encourage student learning by providing feedback on the learning process
- inform, enhance and improve the teaching process
- provide opportunity for students to exhibit transfer of skills across disciplines, such as in the personal project and interdisciplinary unit assessments
- promote positive student attitudes towards learning
- promote a deep understanding of subject content by supporting students in their inquiries set in real- world contexts
- promote the development of critical- and creative-thinking skills
- reflect the international-mindedness of the programme by allowing assessments to be set in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts
- support the holistic nature of the programme by including in its model principles that take account of the development of the whole student. (*MYP Principles and Practice*)

What Do We Assess?

Forms of Assessment

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment provides information that is used in order to plan the next stage of learning. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked and function purposefully together, while aiming to promote learning by giving regular and frequent feedback. This helps learners to recognize the criteria for success, to foster enthusiasm for learning, to develop the capacity for self-assessment, to engage in thoughtful reflection, and to deepen knowledge and understanding.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment aims to give students and teachers a clear insight into each student's understanding. Summative assessment is the culmination of the teaching and learning process and gives the students opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned. It measures understanding of the Central Idea and promotes students toward action.

Assessment should effectively guide students through the five essential elements of the PYP curriculum: understanding concepts, acquisition of knowledge, the mastering of skills, the development of attitudes, and the demonstration of action as a result of learning.

MYP approach to assessment recognizes the importance of assessing not only the products, but also the process, of learning.

Assessment Strategies

Observation

All students are observed regularly, ranging from group to individual observation. Observations will be particularly useful when assessing some attitudes and/or skills.

Open-Ended Task

This strategy allows teachers to present students with a stimulus and ask them to communicate an individual, creative response.

Performance Assessments

This form of assessment meets the individual learning styles of each student and requires the use of many skills. Performances of understanding may take the form of a composition, a research report, a presentation, role-play, or a proposed solution.

Portfolio Assessment

Portfolios can be used to record learning achievements. Pieces of work are chosen that show level of knowledge and understanding, and that demonstrate skills and attitudes.

Process-Focused Assessment

Through observation, a system of note-taking and record keeping is created that minimizes writing and recording time: checklists, inventories, and narrative descriptions.

Process Journals

The use of process journals allows the teacher and student to communicate about the processes of learning and can be used for meaningful and purposeful reflection.

Selected Responses

Tests and quizzes are the most familiar examples of this form of assessment. The answer might be a brief written answer, a drawing, a diagram, or a solution.

Tools

Exemplars

These are samples of student work that serve as a benchmark for each achievement level in a scoring rubric.

Checklists

These are lists of information, data, attributes, or elements that should be present in student work. A mark scheme is a type of checklist.

Anecdotal Records

Anecdotal records are brief written notes based on observations of students. “Learning stories” are focused, extended observations that can be analyzed later. These records need to be systematically compiled and organized.

Continuums

These are visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement or identify where a student is in a learning process.

Rubrics

Rubrics provide an established set of criteria for rating students in all areas. The descriptors inform the assessor of the characteristics or signs to look for in students’ work and then how to rate that work on a predetermined scale.

The Exhibition

As a candidate school, IST PYP students have only trialed the Exhibition. In Grade 6, students will participate in a culminating project. The exhibition requires that each student demonstrates engagement with the five essential elements of the PYP program—knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, and action. It is also an opportunity for the students to exhibit the developed attributes of the Learner Profile. The exhibition takes place under any of the six transdisciplinary themes, at the discretion of the school. For further details of the PYP exhibition, see pages 53 and 54 of *Making the PYP Happen*.

How Do We Assess?

Documenting Progress, Grading, and Reporting

The processes of documenting progress, grading, and reporting at IST are unique to each program. Each of these processes are outlined below.

Primary Years Program (Grades 1–5)

PYP teachers are expected to keep anecdotal notes on every student and record their observations. Accurate observations help meet the needs of individual students and facilitate curriculum planning. These observations are ongoing, focused, and varied.

Assessments that indicate level of prior knowledge, as well as formative and summative assessments, are used to inform the teacher and student of the next stages of learning. Opportunities for self-assessment and peer assessment will be given.

Documenting progress in the Units of Inquiry

Each Unit of Inquiry involves prior knowledge assessments, other formative assessments, and a summative assessment to ensure understanding of the Central Idea. Many different tools such as checklists, rubrics, and thinking routines are used to document learning and progress. Students are also expected to engage in reflection and self-assessment in relation to attitudes and the Learner Profile, which will be kept in the student's assessment folder.

Documenting progress in single-subject areas

Each single-subject area has developed appropriate assessment tools to be used with students in the PYP, reflecting both talent and progress. Assessment in single-subject areas reflects the same principles as those in the Units of Inquiry.

Inclusive assessment

International School of Tallinn acknowledges the variety of abilities and the individuality that exists in the academic, personal, and social aspects of development. Differentiation of instruction, considered exemplary practice in all circumstances, is one manner of dealing with learning exceptionalities. Inclusive assessment techniques may be appropriate in some instances for students with identified and documented learning needs.

Middle Years Program (Grades 6–10)

Criterion-related assessment

The Middle Years Program (MYP) identifies a set of objectives for each subject group. These, in turn, are directly related to the assessment criteria of that particular subject group. The level of student success in reaching the objectives of each subject group is measured in terms of levels of achievement described in each assessment criterion.

Determining a grade during the program

The teacher must communicate to students achievement levels in each of the criteria. The overall subject grades must be based on the levels achieved in all of the criteria in that particular subject.

To support the development and use of a transparent grading systems, IST requires that:

- the IB 1–7 grading scale is used in conjunction with modified general grade descriptors that provide written descriptions of each grade
- teachers validate the reliability of the grading process by standardizing their understanding and application of the criteria before deciding on achievement levels

Recording assessment in the MYP

MYP teachers at IST are required to document assessment data on all their students. This data will be used when determining a level of achievement for a student in each criterion.

How Do We Report?

Assessment and Report Format

PYP

PYP Descriptors	Studium Descriptors	Estonian Grading Equivalence	Explanation of Descriptors
Mastering	M	5	The student achieves the learning intentions independently and consistently, with high-quality and mastery, during the process of learning in a variety of different contexts.
Expanding	E	4	The student achieves the learning intentions with good quality and independence during the process of learning.
Progressing	P	3	The student occasionally achieves the learning intentions and meets some of the expectations throughout the learning process.
Developing	D	2	The student often requires support and demonstrates limited comprehension while aiming to achieve the learning outcomes.
Beginning	B	1	The student struggles and needs significant support during the learning process. They are often unable to successfully complete the given task.

MYP

MYP Number	%	Estonian Grading Equivalence	Explanation of Descriptors
1	0-19	1	Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.
2	20-34	2	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	35-49		Produces work of inconsistent 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	50-62	3	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	63-74		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	75-89	4	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	90-100	5	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.

The Written Report

Determination of grading levels for formal reporting purposes will reflect student performances on formative and summative assessment tasks. Student grades will reflect their most consistent level of achievement, usually their most recent level of achievement at the time of reporting. Teachers will write personal/social comments about each student, making reference to the PYP Attitudes and the Transdisciplinary Skills.

PYP Attitudes:

- Appreciation
- Commitment
- Confidence
- Cooperation
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Enthusiasm
- Independence
- Integrity
- Respect
- Tolerance

Transdisciplinary Skills:

- Thinking Skills
- Research Skills
- Social Skills
- Communication Skills
- Self-Management Skills

Conferences

Conferences are designed to provide an overview of the child's learning and progress, to discuss learning targets, and to highlight areas of success.

- Parent–teacher: occurs at the end of the first trimester
- Parent–teacher–child: occurs at the end of the second trimester
- Student-led: occurs at the end of the third trimester

* The student-led conference is an opportunity for the child to take responsibility and reflect on their learning via teacher guidance. The student identifies strengths and areas for improvement. Parent(s) and teacher(s), where needed, collaborate with the student in order to determine how they can best support their learning

** Please refer to the Pupil's Progress Review document for complete explanation on conferences

Student informal

Daily, ongoing feedback from teacher to student and student to teacher. This enables reflection and further refinement of skills and understandings, thereby, supporting student learning and teacher planning.

Parent informal

These opportunities occur informally throughout each year. They are designed to be constructive and as needed. Parents are encouraged to make appointment times if significant issues need to be discussed

Trimester 1		Trimester 2		Trimester 3	
Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
Ongoing formative throughout each unit					
One summative at the end of each unit					
	Parent–Teacher Conference		Parent–Teacher–Child Conference (all teachers available)		Student-led Conference
	Written Report		Written Report		Written Report

Reporting will be conducted in line with the Estonian and IB requirements. Formal documentation will also be recorded in Studium using the grading system listed on pages 7 and 8.

References

International Baccalaureate *Making the PYP Happen*

International Baccalaureate *The Primary Years Program – A Basis for Practice*

We also gathered information from the following IB PYP school assessment policies:

Frank C. Martin International K-8 Centre

Hills International College

International School at Dundee

International School of Amsterdam

Kunyang Primary School

Mornington Primary school

Scotch College WA

Wade King International School

The Woodlands Preparatory School

A note on the process of this document:

This policy was developed through a collaborative process which included IST teachers and administration.

IST's Assessment Policy is understood to be a working document that will evolve over time to suit the needs of our students, our school, and our development.

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