

# ASSESSMENT POLICY

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## **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, it should include all stakeholders.

At IST, we focus on taking action while balancing our lives as we become life-long learners. We give importance to the development of skills and attitudes that help us to be inquisitive, communicate, and reflect upon the world.

### **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 POLICY IN THE PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME (PYP)**

### **RATIONALE**

Assessments are considered to be an integral part of teaching and learning at the IST, ensuring the child's overall academic, social and cultural development in the programme. The Assessment policy at IST is aligned with IB assessment philosophy and informs the importance of assessment to all stakeholders involved. The main objective of assessment at IST is to provide students with feedback on their learning, in order to allow students to learn and improve further. At IST we believe that each child is unique and we apply a balanced approach to assess the child's capabilities to quantify the skill set attained by a child at the different stages of the learning cycle. Evaluation is done through varied parameters and is communicated to the stakeholders transparently in order to understand and enhance the learning outcome needed in the due course of time.

### **ASSESSMENT AIMS**

The Assessment Policy aims at enriching a student's knowledge through a journey of exploration, ensuring that the student acquires the required skill set and compiles it to reflect the learning outcome. Assessments should be integrated into the curriculum.

- Students are encouraged to reflect upon their learning through a variety of ongoing assessments.
- Assessments help to keep track of the progression of each student's learning outcomes.

## COMPONENTS OF ASSESSMENTS IN THE PYP

The assessment component in the school's curriculum is divided into four closely related areas.

- Monitoring – checks the progress of learning against a student's personal goals
- Documenting- the process of compiling the evidence of the learning
- Measuring – captures what a student has learned at a particular point in time, data is analysed to inform learning and teaching
- Reporting – Describes and communicates the progress and achievement of the student.

## FORMS OF ASSESSMENT - ASSESSMENT IS ONGOING

### Formative Assessment

Formative assessment provides information that is used to plan the next stage of learning. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked, and function purposefully together. Formatives aim to promote learning by giving regular and frequent feedback on a student's learning progression. Formative assessments help learners to recognise 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.

The IB learner profile is transparent in the classroom, and evident in the general language of the school. Students should reflect on their development on a regular basis through guided self-reflection. This self-reflection will vary according to age group and language ability.

Assessment should effectively guide students through the five components of the PYP framework: Learner Profile Attributes, acquisition of knowledge, mastering of ATL skills, development of key concepts, and demonstration of action as a result of learning.

## RECORDING

Teachers use a range of methods and approaches to gather information about a student's learning. They record this information using a variety of strategies and tools.

## ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES AND TOOLS FOR THE PYP

### 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. The demonstration of a student's understanding may take the form of compositions, research reports, presentations, role-playing, or proposed solutions to a problem.

#### Portfolio Assessment

Portfolios can be used to record learning achievement. Sample work is chosen to demonstrate a student's level of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes.

#### Process-Focused Assessment

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

#### The Exhibition

PYP 5 students participate in a culminating project. The PYP 5 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”.

## Process Journals

The use of process journals allows the teacher and student to engage in a meaningful and purposeful reflection on the learning process.

## 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 analysed later. These records need to be systematically compiled and organized.

### Continuum

These are visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement or identify a student’s progress in the 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 a student’s work and then how to rate that work.

## Reporting

Reporting on assessment is about communicating what students know, understand and can do. Reporting may take many forms including conferences and written reports.

Effective reporting should:

- Involve parents, students and teachers as partners.
- Reflect what the school community values.
- Be comprehensive, honest, fair and credible.
- Be clear and understandable to all the parties.

## Anecdotal Notes

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 the 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 provided.

### **Documenting Progress in the Units of Inquiry**

Student progress is recorded in each individual student's digital folder. Each Unit of Inquiry involves prior knowledge assessments, formative/summative assessments to ensure the understanding of the Central Idea. Many different tools such as checklists, rubrics, and thinking routines are used to document learning and progress. A student's reflections and self-assessments on attitudes and the Learner Profile will also be documented.

### **Documenting progress in single-subject areas**

Each single-subject area has developed appropriate assessment tools to be used to reflect a student's talent and progress in the PYP. Assessment in single-subject areas reflects the same principles as those in the Units of Inquiry.

### **Inclusive Assessment**

IST acknowledges the variety of abilities and the individuality that exists in the academic, personal, and social development of a student. Differentiation of instruction is considered exemplary practice in all circumstances, it is one manner of dealing with learning differences. Inclusive assessment techniques may be appropriate for students with identified and documented learning needs.

## Assessment and Report Format

Depending on the purpose and the type of assessment, the teacher will use the following grade descriptors. These can be used for both formative and summative assessment.

PYP Descriptors	Symbol Descriptors	Explanation of Descriptors
Mastering	M	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	The student achieves the learning intentions with good quality and independence during the process of learning.
Progressing	P	The student occasionally achieves the learning intentions and meets some of the expectations throughout the learning process.
Developing	D	The student often requires support and demonstrates limited comprehension while aiming to achieve the learning outcomes.
Beginning	B	The student struggles and needs significant support during the learning process. They are often unable to successfully complete the given task.

## The Written Report

Formal reporting will reflect a student's performance on formative and summative assessment tasks over a semester. Student progress descriptors will reflect their most consistent level of achievement, taking into account their most recent level of achievement at the time of reporting. Teachers will write personal and social comments on each student, making reference to the, ATL's, Learner Profile Attributes and Key Concepts.



### **Approaches to Learning**

- Thinking skills
- Social skills
- Communication skills
- Self-management skills
- Research skills

### **Learner Profile Attributes**

- Caring
- Balanced
- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable
- Principled
- Open-minded
- Risk-takers
- Reflective
- Thinkers
- Communicators

### **Key Concepts**

Form

Function

Causation

Change

Connection

Perspective

Responsibility

### **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. There are three conferences each year.

1st: Parent–Teacher conference

2nd: Parent–Teacher–Student Conference

3rd: Student–Led Conference

The student-led conference provides a student with the opportunity to take responsibility for and reflect on individual learning over the year. A student identifies strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement. Parent(s) and teacher(s), where needed, collaborate with the student in order to determine how they can best support future learning.

### Assessment periods in PYP

1st Semester	2nd Semester
Ongoing Formative and Summative Assessments	
Parent–Teacher Conference	Parent–Teacher– Child Conference  Student-led conference
Written Report	Written Report

### Student feedback

Daily ongoing feedback between a teacher and student encourages reflection and refinement of skills and understanding to support student learning and teacher planning.

### Parent feedback

Parents are encouraged to make appointments by email if issues need to be discussed. Teachers will email parents informally throughout each year to communicate progress or issues in a constructive manner.

## **ASSESSMENT POLICY IN THE MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME (MYP)**

### RATIONALE

The IST’s mission is to have an impact on education and build a reflective foundation for life. Learning at the IST is based on three pillars: the personal, social and emotional development of a child; developing critical thinking skills; and maintaining academic rigor to strive for excellence. We believe in fostering creativity that is vital in all spheres of life and critical in the middle years program and needs to be sustained with rigor and discipline. This is where assessments become pivotal in promoting lifelong education and learning for our global citizens in the making. Assessments are intended to provide information about a student’s performance in the areas of both strengths and challenges. An assessment should also provide information on the efficacy of the programme. Assessments will focus on the knowledge and cognitive understanding of students, their ability to analyse and assimilate information and instructions, and expression of opinions and feelings at different stages of the learning process.

## ASSESSMENT AIMS

- Support and encourage learning and progress towards meeting district, IB/MYP criteria and certificate, along with other state standard requirements for graduation and career readiness.
- Provide feedback to students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders on student progress in learning and effectiveness of curriculum and instruction.
- Promote critical and higher order thinking skills, deep and authentic understanding of content, inquiry into real world contexts, and positive attitudes towards lifelong learning.
- Reflect international mindedness of the program through Global contexts.
- Support a student's holistic development through learner profile and ATL.

## PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

- Stakeholders have a clear description of how student learning is being assessed.
- Students have a clear description of how student learning is being assessed.
- Students will be able to show their learning in a variety of ways.
- Assessments will be provided to facilitate teaching and learning based on IB rubrics and task specific clarifications.
- Timely feedback is given for future learning.

## COMPONENTS OF ASSESSMENTS IN MYP

There are three reasons to assess students in the MYP program

- Assessment for learning - formative assessment.
- Assessment as learning - feedback and reflection.
- Assessment of learning - summative assessment.

## ASSESSMENT FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment in MYP is an integral part of learning. Students engage in providing self- assessments and giving feedback on the thinking strategies, processes and their outcomes. In MYP, teachers 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)

### Formative Assessment

Formative assessments provide teachers and students with insights into the ongoing development of knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes according to International Baccalaureate expectations. Through effective formative assessment, teachers gather, analyse, interpret and use a variety of evidence to improve student learning and to help students to achieve their potential. Student peer and self-assessment can be important elements of formative assessments plans. As formative assessments are assessments for learning these have a strict 3 day late submission deadline.

This is to ensure that teachers can give timely feedback on these assessments to help students improve to complete the summative. No late submissions of formative assessments will be accepted.

## Summative assessment

Summative assessments provide evidence for evaluating student achievement using required MYP subject-group specific assessment criteria. These are “generally aimed at determining the level of achievement of a student at the end of a course of study” or a unit of study within a course according to International Baccalaureate (IB) expectations. Summative assessments may include timed writing, essays, creation of solutions or products in response to problems, projects, investigations, performances, research, and examinations.

MYP teachers will use summative assessments task sheets using a standard form. These task sheets explain the assessment and include subject-specific criteria that clearly identify what students need to do to reach the objectives of the task.

Late submission of summative assessments is subject to teachers discretion and can be negotiated on a case by case basis.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all work is authentic and that all sources are correctly acknowledged. The student shall sign a consent form stating that each internal assessment represents original work. The IST Academic Integrity policy is based upon the criteria set forth in the MLA (Modern Language Association) across all subjects and grade levels. Teachers will consistently teach how to cite using MLA latest versions (version 9). Violation of the academic integrity agreement has serious consequences. For more information, please see the IST Academic Integrity Policy document.

## DIFFERENTIATION FOR ASSESSMENTS

Being an inclusive learning environment, differential assessment tasks would be provided to learners with documented SEN needs. Students are provided with opportunities throughout the school program and progress is reported to relevant stakeholders. Teaching practices and learning opportunities provide students with diverse needs access to their mandated curriculum. Every student gets an opportunity to study at the IST at MYP level.

## ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES AND TOOLS FOR THE MYP

Formative and summative assessments may include, but are not limited to:

- Written assignments
- Oral presentations
- Experiments
- Projects
- Debates
- Exhibitions
- Essays
- Performances
- Tests
- Research papers

Assessments might be peer or self-assessed. The formative and summative assessments are both explained in class and recorded on the school's electronic learning platform.

## CRITERION BASED ASSESSMENTS

Each MYP subject has a list of objectives featuring the essential skills and knowledge that the students are expected to develop over the course of the program. Each subject-specific objective corresponds to the four equally weighted assessment criteria: A-D.

Each subject area has a unique definition of the aforementioned assessment criteria.

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>Language and Literature</b>	Analyzing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
<b>Language Acquisition</b>	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
<b>Individuals and Societies</b>	Knowing and understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking critically
<b>Sciences</b>	Knowing and understanding	Inquiring and designing	Processing and evaluating	Reflecting on the impacts of science

<b>Mathematics</b>	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics in real life contexts
<b>Arts</b>	Knowing and understanding	Developing skills	Thinking creatively	Responding
<b>Physical and Health Education</b>	Knowing and understanding	Planning for performance	Applying and performing	Reflecting and improving performance
<b>Design</b>	Inquiring and analyzing	Developing ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating
<b>MYP Projects</b>	Planning	Applying skills	Reflection	
<b>Interdisciplinary</b>	Evaluating	Synthesizing	Reflecting	

## MYP ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS AND GRADES

Achievement levels are associated with criterion A, B, C, D as set forth in MYP subject guides. Each criterion can be awarded a grade between achievement levels 1-8 spread across four bands.

Based on the achievement levels from the four assessment criteria, the holistic grade is determined as a number out of 32 from which a grade from 1-7 is derived, with 1 as the lowest and 7 being the highest possible grade.

Teachers adopt a ‘best-fit’ model when using the achievement level descriptors. If a student demonstrates sufficient characteristics from a given band, the student will be awarded an achievement level that reflects the collected evidence of learning. “To inform the final achievement level in each criterion, teachers must gather evidence from a range of assessment tasks to enable them to make a professional and informed judgment”. (From Principles to Practice, P92)

## RECORDING/REPORTING OF FORMATIVE/SUMMATIVE TASK & SUBMISSION OF FORMATIVES/SUMMATIVE ASSIGNMENT TASK

- If a student does not complete or submit formative/summative assignments on the due date, they will be required to complete the assignment in school before the established deadline, or as per the instructions of the teacher.
- Subject Teachers will use Toddle to report missing assignments to students, and the home room teacher.
- Subject teachers in coordination with the Homeroom teachers will update parents and students on the completion status through email /Toddle. Missing Formative Assessment will be recorded as NA until it is submitted and can no longer be submitted if the summative has already been completed.
- Should there be noncompliance in the completion of preparation for learning or formative/summative assessments, subject teachers will inform the parents and the homeroom teachers too.
- If a student fails to submit more than 3 consecutive formatives then the formal meeting can be organized between the parent, subject teacher and the MYP coordinator (HRT's informs parents through email). Students must complete all missing or incomplete assignments during school time or as per the instructions of the teacher, and no submissions after the end of trimester can be accepted.

## CONSEQUENCES FOR THE NON-SUBMISSION OF WORK

- On each occasion a deadline for a summative is not met, the subject teacher will inform the student and the home room teacher.
- The subject teacher will set a deadline for the student. This is up to the discretion of the subject teacher, but it should be up to a maximum of 7 days.

## STANDARDIZATION

Standardization aims to achieve a uniform understanding of the relationship between achievement levels and performance. Teachers standardize the application of criteria to a task before determining a final achievement level.

Standardization of MYP assessment is best achieved by:

- The use of common assessment tasks.
- Shared assessment between the teachers involved.
- Regular communication between the teachers.

## STANDARDIZATION PROCEDURES

- Internal collaborative department meetings will be held at least three times a year.
- Different grade level teachers teaching the same subject will mark student work to arrive at a common understanding of the assessment objectives.
- Consensus between two different viewpoints/perspectives with respect to task specific requirements must be reached before deciding on the final achievement levels.
- Programme Coordinator might also organize meetings among teachers for standardization validity.

## RECORDING AND REPORTING GRADES

During the academic year, students' performances on formatives and summatives will be reported on the schools electronic learning platform by the subject-area teachers. A written report will be generated through the school's electronic learning platform twice a year. This report will include the IB attitude and Approaches To Learning (ATL) skill and comments on each student. The criteria-based grades will be converted into IB grades on the scale of 1-7.

<b>MYP Grade Boundaries</b>	<b>Estonian grading equivalence</b>	<b>MYP descriptor</b>
1 (very poor)	1	Minimal achievement
2 (poor)	2	Very limited achievement
3 (mediocre)	2	Limited achievement
4 (satisfactory)	3	A good general understanding
5 (good)	3	Consistent and thorough understanding and occasionally demonstrating originality and insight
6 (very good)	4	Occasionally innovative work
7 (excellent)	5	Consistent and thorough understanding with frequently innovative work



## REPORTING AND GRADING SCHEDULE IN MYP

Mid term first interim report	Mid-semester achievement levels(0-8)	October
First Semester Report	Achievement levels (0-8); Semester grades (1-7); Student reflections; Homeroom and subject teachers Comments for MYP 5	January
Mid term second interim report	Mid-semester achievement levels(0-8)	April
Mid term second interim report	Mid-semester achievement levels(0-8)	May

## CONFERENCES

The purpose of conferences is to share valuable information about the student's progress. Parents, students and teachers are all valued partners in the reporting process. There are three conferences each year.

1st Parent–teacher conference

2nd Parent–teacher–child conference

3rd Student-led conference\*

The student-led conference is an opportunity for the child to take responsibility and reflect on their learning via teacher guidance. The student-led conference is held at the end of the last term. 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.

Conferences are used to communicate the learning and progress of students to their parents. In these meetings, teachers and parents discuss the child's individual strengths and weaknesses and any academic course adjustments. Formal and informal interactions will occur throughout the year and students will receive feedback on the performance on an ongoing basis. For informal meetings, parents are encouraged to schedule an appointment if significant issues need to be discussed. Refer to the Pupil's Progress Review document for further discussion on conferences.

## SCHEDULE OF CONFERENCES IN MYP

### MYP 1-3

1st Semester	2nd Semester
Minimum 2 formative assessments 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

### MYP 4-5

1st Semester	2nd Semester
Minimum 2 formative assessments throughout each unit	
One summative at the end of each unit	
Parent-Teacher Conference (All teachers available)	Student-led conference (All teachers available)
Written Report	Written Report

## ASSESSMENT POLICY IN THE DIPLOMA PROGRAM PROGRAMME (DP)

DP assessment procedures measure the extent to which students have mastered advanced academic skills in fulfilling these goals, for example:

- analyzing and presenting information
- evaluating and constructing arguments
- solving problems creatively.

Basic skills are also assessed, including:

- retaining knowledge
- understanding key concepts
- applying standard methods.

In addition to academic skills, DP assessment encourages an international outlook and intercultural skills, wherever appropriate.

For more information and details about DP assessment please visit the link below.

## NWEA MAP (MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS)

MAP testing is done for students from MYP 1 to MYP 5.. They are tested on their knowledge and skills in English and Mathematics. MAP is a norm-referenced measure of student growth over time. The teachers discuss the progress with the students, parents and teachers design the lesson catering to the needs of the learners. The MAP reports will provide teachers with additional knowledge of where a student's strengths are and if additional support is needed in any specific area

## ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER POLICIES

International School of Tallinn's assessment philosophy and policy align with our values and policies as outlined below. In all these policies and positions, the student is central.

### ...to our Academic Integrity Policy

Our Academic Integrity Policy is essentially about the process of acquiring and processing information. The Assessment Policy aligns with our Academic Integrity Policy because we set clear objectives for the process of acquiring and using information – objectives which we also assess in accordance with our Assessment Policy.

### ...to our SEN Education Policy

Our Assessment Policy aligns with our Special Education policy because our Assessment Policy applies to all our learners - regardless of their learning abilities. Differentiation is applied in designing the summative task. Our SEN Policy aligns with our Assessment Policy in that students are supported, where possible, in showing their learning

### ...to our Admissions Policy

If the students breach the academic honesty policy, further steps would be taken by the school. Please refer to the admission policy for further details.

### ...to our Language Policy

Our Assessment Policy aligns with our Language Policy in that we all assess and teach language throughout our various curricula. How a student uses academic language, for example, will have clear criteria and objectives that the student will be fully aware of and receive or generate feedback on throughout the course of their learning.

## References

International Baccalaureate Making the PYP Happen 2009

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

PYP: From principles into Practice

MYP: From Principles into 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
- International School of Helsinki
- Kunyung Primary School
- Mornington Primary school
- Scotch College WA
- Wade King International School
- The Woodlands Preparatory School
- ASI International School, India

## 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.

## POLICY REVIEW

Created April 2018

Previous Revision August 2019

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