Assessment Policy at the International School of Iceland

At the International School of Iceland (ISI), we strive to uphold our core values of respect, creativity, and self-efficacy. We encourage students to respect themselves, others, and the learning space by completing each task to the best of their ability. We utilize our resources to create opportunities for curiosity, originality, and academic risks. We plan and structure our classes so that students have what they need to confidently take on tasks.

We view assessment as integral to accomplishing these goals. Assessment guides our planning and instruction, creates opportunities for feedback between students, teachers, and families, and facilitates meaningful opportunities for students to apply their knowledge in a variety of contexts.

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Assessment Philosophy

At ISI assessment is used to gather information about student learning. Teachers use assessment to provide timely feedback to students and families about their performance and next steps. Assessment provides invaluable information to teachers about student understanding, informing curriculum development and reteaching. Through assessment, students are given meaningful opportunities to grow and develop skills, apply their knowledge, and deepen their understanding of content.

Our practices of assessment aim to guide students through essential elements of the learning process:

1. Learning and growing new knowledge and skills
2. Adapting and applying skills in a variety of contexts
3. Developing as critical and creative thinkers
4. Promoting a deeper understanding of the world by exploring questions in real-world contexts

Principles of Effective Assessment

Effective assessments:

- are used to gauge student understanding and support the learning process.
- provide evidence of student learning and opportunities for dialogue between students, families, and school staff.
- are planned, purposeful, and written into the curriculum, with transparent goals towards which both students and teachers work.
- are meaningful, and provide opportunities for synthesis and application of skills to real-world contexts.
- are numerous and encompass a range of formative and summative opportunities that account for different ways of learning and knowing.
- provide opportunities for individualized feedback on a range of skills.
- are a regular part of the learning process, and can occur at any point in a lesson or unit.
- utilize a scoring guide or rubric that reflects the most accurate demonstration of student performance.
- utilize standards, benchmarking, and backwards planning.
- are continuously reflected on and improved to best meet the needs of students.
- are administered in a caring and thoughtful environment that cultivates a positive attitude towards learning.

Formative and Summative Assessments

Formative and summative assessments are labels that describe how assessments function in classrooms. They can and should be designed to meet one of three purposes: assessment for learning, assessment of learning, and assessment as learning.

Formative assessments (assessment for learning) provide information about student progress. They can and should be numerous and incorporate a range of learning styles. They function as practice opportunities aligned to the final summative assessment.

Summative assessments (assessment of learning) determine a student's achievement level at the end of a unit. They show what students can do, provide evidence of student learning, demonstrate to what extent they have achieved the intended learning outcomes. They provide next steps for learning.

Assessment as learning can be part of a formative or summative assessment. Rather than being teacher-driven, these assessment opportunities allow for students to take ownership of their own process and progress towards a final product. Assessment as learning can include checklists, student-driven criteria, peer feedback, goal-setting, etc.

Sample Assessment Strategies and Tools

The assessment **strategies** below are examples of ways teachers can assess student learning.

The assessment **tools** that follow are the specific ways teachers record and report on student learning.

Sample Assessment Strategies:

- **Observation:** Students are observed frequently and regularly. Teachers can take a wide-angle view (for example, focusing on the whole class) or a close up view (for example, focusing on one student or one activity), a view as a non-participant (observing outside the task) or as a participant (observing when engaging in the task with the student).
- **Selected Response:** Intentional questioning designed to reveal student understanding or misunderstanding. Tests and quizzes are the most familiar examples of this form of assessment.

- **Open-Ended Tasks:** Situations in which students are presented with a stimulus and asked to create an original response. The answer might be a brief written response, a drawing, a diagram or a solution, a presentation, or an essay. Open-ended tasks can be paired with performance assessments.
- **Performance Assessments:** Assignments based on the understanding that knowledge is not something we have, but something we can do. These assignments are authentic and significant, and allow for real-world application of learning. In these assignments, there are usually many right answers or ways to solve the problem. Examples include compositions, research reports, presentations of proposed solutions, and audio and video narrative records.
- **Process Journals:** Opportunities for regular recorded reflection about important activities. In process journals students can reflect on their successes, challenges, and the impact of their work. Process journals could also involve self-assessment of Approaches to Learning (ATL).
- **Assessment Data:** Evidence of student learning (both formative and summative) that helps plan next steps in teaching and learning.

Sample Assessment Tools:

- **Anecdotal Records:** Brief written notes based on observations of students (whole class or individuals).
- **Continuums:** Visual representations of the developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement and identify where a student is in a process.
- **Examples:** Samples of students' work that serve as benchmarks for a particular task. Generally, there should be at least one benchmark for each achievement level in an assessment rubric.
- **Checklists:** Lists of information, data, or attributes that should be present. A mark scheme or rubric is a type of checklist.
- **Rubrics:** Established sets of criteria used for scoring student performance. The descriptors detail what characteristics to look for in student work at each level. Rubrics can be used by students as well as teachers.

Differentiation at ISI

Differentiation allows each student to pursue and achieve appropriate learning goals. Differentiation may be necessary for students who are English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners or for students with specific learning needs.

Teachers may differentiate teaching in the classroom by providing examples (work samples or other models to help clarify criteria), offering structured support (graphic organizers, sentence frames, intentional pairing or peer relationships) or flexible deadlines, and adjusting pacing.

Within the primary school, teachers use their best judgment in assessment design and differentiation based on individual student needs. Teachers also differentiate based on individual learning plans. Push-in and pull-out support is offered as needed.

All students within the IB program are assessed against the same criteria. However, assessments may be differentiated (that is, the format may be altered or specific supports may be provided) so that students fully understand and are able to meet the learning objectives. Teachers may also offer alternate modes of presentation for their performance of understanding (for example, oral presentation or writing).

For more information about differentiation, refer to the whole school inclusion policy and language policy.

Standardized Testing

Beginning at grade 3, students are assessed twice per year using the NWEA MAP testing platform. These tests have been developed to support schools in understanding students' developed abilities, identify aspects of content where further teaching is needed, and to showcase student growth over time. They also provide ISI with crucial information needed about grade placement when students are first admitted to the program. Results from MAP testing can reveal necessary interventions, allow for progress monitoring and goal setting, and increase student investment.

Reporting of Progress to Students and Families

Reporting at ISI is used to provide regular feedback to parents about students' progress. Reporting on assessment includes communicating about what students know, understand, and can do. Reporting should be accurate, comprehensive, and understandable to both students and families.

Report cards are mailed home to parents twice per year. They contain information about assessment and grading for each class as well as teacher comments on student performance. For MYP students, part of this written report is dedicated to the Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills. The ATL skills used by the IB form the basis for the Approaches to Learning feedback.

Student-led conferences provide the opportunity to share their achievements and challenges with their parents and teachers, as well as to set goals for future work. Students in the upper primary and MYP program also receive an effort report that enables teacher feedback on student success so far that year.

Teachers are encouraged to regularly communicate with parents about student progress and challenges in the classroom outside of these two more formal opportunities.

The timeline for reporting is communicated through the school calendar on the school website.

Reporting in the MYP Program

Reporting to students and families occurs at the following points in the year:

- Student-led conferences are held in October and March
- Report cards for semester one are emailed home in December, and report cards for semester two are sent home in June
- Midterm effort reports are shared in October and March

Parent -teacher conferences are offered at parent or teacher request. Teachers are encouraged to create open lines of communication between themselves and families.

The reporting timeline is published yearly on the school calendar on the website.

Assessment Practices in the MYP Program at ISI

Subject-Specific Criteria for Evaluating Students

At ISI teachers regularly report on students' progress towards MYP objectives using the prescribed subject-group assessment criteria. Each subject is divided into four assessment criteria where students can receive a maximum level of 8. Subject groups must assess all strands of all four assessment criteria at least twice in each year of the MYP.

The MYP subject specific assessment criteria are shown in the following table. More detailed descriptions of each can be found in their corresponding IB subject guide.

	A	B	C	D
Language and literature	Analyzing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
Language acquisition	Comprehending spoken and visual text	Comprehending written and visual text	Communicating	Using language
Individuals and societies	Knowing and understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking critically
Sciences	Knowing and understanding	Inquiring and designing	Processing and evaluating	Reflecting on the impacts of science
Mathematics	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics in the real world
Arts	Knowing and understanding	Developing skills	Thinking creatively	Responding
Physical and health education	Knowing and understanding	Planning for performance	Applying and performing	Reflecting and improving performance
Design	Inquiring and analyzing	Developing ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating

Use of Assessment Criteria Rubrics

The IB subject guides provide clear assessment criteria rubrics for MYP years 1, 3, and 5. At ISI the students in MYP year 3 (7th and 8th graders) are assessed based on the IB MYP 3 subject-criteria rubrics. In year 4 and 5 (9th and 10th grade) teachers use the subject rubrics provided for MYP year 5.

Each criterion is divided into various achievement levels (all numeric) that appear in bands. Each strand from the MYP has a corresponding strand within each band. Bands contain general statements about performance, called level descriptors. The levels 1 and 2 appear in the first band, levels 3 and 4 in the second band, etc. Level 0 is available for work that does not meet any of the level descriptors. MYP assessment criteria are equally weighted.

Example MYP Assessment Criteria Rubric (Language and Literature)

A. Analyzing

At the end of year 5, students should be able to:

i. analyze the content, context, language, structure, techniques and style of text (s) and the relationships among texts.

ii. Analyze the effects of creators's choices on an audience.
iii. justify opinions and ideas, using examples, explanations and terminology.
iv. Evaluate the similarities and differences by connecting features across and within genres and texts.

Achievement Level	Level Descriptor
0	The student **does not** reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1-2	The student: i. Provides **limited** analysis of content, context, language, structure, technique and style of text (s) and the relationships among texts. ii. provides **limited** analysis of the effects of the creator's choices on an audience. iii. **rarely** justifies opinions and ideas with examples or explanations; uses **little or no** terminology iv. evaluates **few** similarities and differences by making **minimal** connections in features across and within genres and texts.
3-4	The student: i. provides **adequate** analysis of the content, context, language, structure, technique, and style of the texts and relationships among texts. ii. provides **adequate** analysis of the effects of the creators's choices on an audience. iii. justifies opinions and ideas with **some** examples and explanations, though this may not be consistent; uses some terminology. iv. evaluates **some** similarities and differences by making **adequate** connections in features across and within genres and texts.
5-6	The student: i. **competently** analyzes the content, context, language, structure, technique, style of text (s), and the relationship among texts. ii. **competently** analyzes the effects of the creator's choices on an

	audience. iii. **sufficiently** justifies opinions and ideas with examples and explanations; uses accurate terminology. iv. evaluates similarities and differences by making **substantial** connections in features across and within genres and texts.
7-8	The student: i. provides **perceptive** analysis of content, language, structure, technique, style of text (s) and the relationships among texts. ii. **perceptively analyzes** the effects of the creator's choices on an audience. iii. gives **detailed justification of** opinions and ideas within a range of examples, and **thorough** explanation; uses accurate terminology. iv. **perceptively compares and contrasts** by making **extensive** connections in features across and within genres and texts.

Determining Overall Achievement Levels

Throughout any given unit, assignments will be scored using the MYP 8 point grading scale. This grade corresponds to an established local grade.

At the end of a unit, teachers must determine students' overall achievement level in the assessed subject group criterion. This final decision must be based on evidence gathered by the teacher throughout the unit. Evidence must be sourced from a range of tasks, both formative and summative.

When determining final achievement levels at the end of a larger period of learning (the end of the marking period or the end of the school year), teachers make professional judgments based on evidence from summative tasks. Teachers utilize backwards planning and year overviews to ensure that units and assessment tasks include all strands of MYP assessment criteria at different points in the year in order to provide opportunities for growth when reporting the final achievement level.

Best Fit Approach

For each criterion within each subject group the student earns a level of achievement. This achievement level is not judged against the work of others or an average of scores on various assignments. Rather, teachers take into account patterns of growth over time. The level of achievement students earn at the end of each term is based on the "best fit" approach. In order to

determine best fit, a teacher reviews all the work completed throughout the year for a given criterion and determines the overall level of achievement that most accurately represents the students' ability over time.

MYP Grade Descriptors

The MYP program uses a final grade scale of 1-7. To arrive at a final grade or criterion level for each student, the teacher adds together the students' final achievement levels in all criteria of the subject group. The following grade boundaries are used to determine the final grade in each year of the MYP. The overall achievement level per criterion adds up to an overall grade based on 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 contexts. 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.

Approaches to Learning

Student progress in developing Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills is documented on the report cards and emailed home to families, as well as in the effort reports shared during student-led conferences. ATL skills will be assessed in a variety of ways based on the course. Examples of assessment include homework diaries, reading quizzes or checks, reflection notebooks, etc.

Review of this Policy

This document will be reviewed yearly by the school leadership team in conjunction with the MYP coordinators.

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Bibliography

International Baccalaureate Organization. (2015). *MYP: From principles into practice.* International Baccalaureate Organization (UK) Ltd.

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