

Assessment Policy - Operating Philosophy

The Canadian International School System (CISS) is committed to providing all students with the opportunity to reach their potential and to succeed. Since every student is unique, each student must have opportunities to achieve success according to his or her own interests, abilities, and goals. The Ministry of Education has set certain expectations that students must meet in order to graduate. While attempting to meet these expectations, CISS is committed to providing a range of assessments that allow students to demonstrate the full extent of their knowledge and understanding in ways that suit them best and enable them to earn their diplomas.

The overriding purpose of assessment is to drive instruction. The teachers of the Canadian International School System are trained and certified as Ontario Certified Teachers or eligible to be certified. Many of the guiding principles these professionals use in the assessment implementation process is documented in “Growing Success” as published by the Ontario, Canada Ministry of Education, in 2012. Portions of this document are from this guideline:

<https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growSuccess.pdf>

Successful implementation of an assessment policy depends on the professional judgment of educators at all levels. It also depends on the continuing efforts of strong and energized professional learning communities who clarify and share their understanding of the policy while developing and sharing effective implementation practices. This assessment policy also recognizes the vital role that collaboration between educators, parents and students plays in improving student performance. As the student is the main focus, creative and judicious differentiation in instruction and assessment is used by educators to address the learning styles of all students. These actions are supported by a strong and committed leadership team of principals and professionals who coordinate, support, and guide the work of teachers.

Fundamental Principles

To ensure that assessment, evaluation, and reporting are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of learning for all students, teachers use practices and procedures that follow nine fundamental principles that lay the foundation for rich and challenging practice.

When these principles are fully understood and observed by all teachers, they will allow for the collection of meaningful information that will guide instructional decisions, promote student engagement, and improve student learning. As such, teachers use practices and procedures that:

1. Support the teaching and learning of the aims and objectives of each subject and the Diploma Programme Core;
2. Are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals and, as much as possible, to the interests, learning styles and preferences, needs, and experiences of all students;
3. Are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students;
4. Support all students, including those with identified needs and those who are learning the primary language of instruction, English;
5. Are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course. This communication emphasizes that the “most recent, most consistent” level of work by the student will form the primary basis of the assessment.
6. Are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
7. Provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement;
8. Develop students’ self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning.
9. Provide a reliable metric by which to measure the suitability of students for post-secondary education institutions

Education directly influences a student’s life. Today’s global, knowledge-based economy makes the ongoing work in our schools critical to our students’ success in life and to an economic future for all participants. As an agent of change and social cohesion, our education commitment supports and reflects the democratic values of fairness, equity, and respect for all. The schools we create today will shape the society that we and our children share tomorrow.

Categories of Assessment

Purpose of Classroom Assessment	Nature of Assessment	Use of Information
<p>Assessment for Learning</p> <p>Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there.</p>	<p>Diagnostic Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> occurs before instruction begins so teachers can determine students’ readiness to learn new knowledge and skills, as well as obtain information about their interests and learning preferences. 	<p>The information gathered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is used by teachers and students to determine what students already know and can do with respect to the knowledge and skills identified in the overall and specific expectations, so teachers can plan differentiated and personalized instruction and assessment and work with students to set appropriate learning goals.

	<p>Formative Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> occurs frequently and in an ongoing manner during instruction, while students are still gaining knowledge and practising skills. 	<p>The information gathered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is used by teachers to monitor students' progress towards achieving the overall and specific expectations, so that teachers can provide timely and specific descriptive feedback to students, scaffold next steps, and differentiate instruction and assessment in response to student needs.
<p>Assessment as learning</p> <p>Assessment as learning focuses on the explicit fostering of students' capacity over time to be their own best assessors, but teachers need to start by presenting and modelling external, structured opportunities for student to assess themselves.</p>	<p>Formative assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> occurs frequently and in an ongoing manner during instruction, with support, modelling, and guidance from the teacher. 	<p>The information gathered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is used by student to provide feedback to other students (peer assessment), monitor their own progress towards achieving their learning goals (self-assessment), make adjustments in their learning approaches,

		reflect on their learning, and set individual goals for learning.
<p>Assessment of learning</p> <p>Assessment of learning is the assessment that becomes public and results in statements or symbols about how well students are learning. It often contributes to pivotal decisions that will affect students' futures.</p>	<p>Summative assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> occurs at or near the end of a period of learning, and may be used to inform further instruction. 	<p>The information gathered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is used by the teacher to summarize learning at a given point in time. This summary is used to make judgments about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria, to assign a value to represent that quality, and to support the communication of information about achievement to students, parents, teachers and others.

Since assessment *for*, *of* and *as* are a regular part of helping students learn, it is expected that teachers should obtain assessment information through a variety of means. Strategies that teachers use to obtain information and assess students may include, but are not limited to, formal and informal observations along with:

- Discussions and conversations
- Questioning and conferences
- Homework or tasks done in groups
- Projects and portfolios
- Developmental continua

- Performances or presentations
- Peer assessments, self-assessments and self-reflections
- Essays or writing tasks
- Tests and quizzes

Through these continuous diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, teachers will gain an understanding of their students' strengths and weaknesses and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly.

The International Baccalaureate Influence on this Philosophy

Mirroring the International Baccalaureate (IB) model of multi-tiered moderated marking, CISS teachers are guided to work with each other to determine common assessment benchmarks for different subjects and different grades. This improves the consistency with which students' work is assessed and evaluated by different teachers.

Assessment in IB subjects and prerequisite courses for IB Courses will incorporate aspects of IB, so that students begin to understand IB evaluation criteria and requirements. For example, past papers and sample problems will be used or modified for grade 9 and grade 10 classes. Assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, could all model actual IB internal and external assessments. In our experience, familiarity with IB assessments is an excellent way to prepare for these assessments.

It is recognized and understood that IB assessments are weighted and only a few assessments count for a large portion of student marks in the second year. This is different from the Ontario model where 70% of the grade comes from course work submitted throughout the semester and 30% from summative tasks. Despite the difference in the way assessments are weighted between the two programs, each IB DP course also provides many assessment components that are designed for students to practice and demonstrate their achievement. These assessment components are different across the different Groups of the DP and the Core. Taken as a whole, across

the whole IB Diploma Programme, these different components represent a broad range of tasks for all students.

In the event that multiple teachers teach the same course, there will be an internal moderation process to ensure consistency. Throughout the course, teachers will collaborate on moderated marking of certain components to ensure consistency across the classes.

There are 3 main types of assessment in IB (as outlined in the document “*Diploma Programme, Assessment Principles and Practice, IBO, 2004*”):

1. Analytic Markschemes

Analytic markschemes are prepared for those examination questions that expect a particular kind of response and/or a given final answer from the candidates. These markschemes give specific instruction to examiners regarding how to break down the total mark available for a question for different parts of the response, to enable examiners to award credit for partial success. Candidates may get different parts of a question right or wrong and lengthy structured questions are designed so that if a candidate makes a mistake in the early part of the question, they are still able to obtain credit for the later portions of the question.

Examination papers will always contain at least some questions where examiners will need to use their professional judgment in allocating marks to unexpected responses or alternative valid answers, but markschemes must provide as much guidance as possible in how to exercise that judgment. To reduce variable examiner judgment a senior marker for each examination paper ensures consistency across examiners.

2. Assessment Criteria

Where an assessment task is so open-ended that the prospective variety of valid responses is too great to permit analytical markschemes to be written, then assessment criteria are applied instead. Assessment criteria do not refer to the specific content of a candidate’s answer, although some may refer to the need for candidates to demonstrate specific content knowledge. The criteria concentrate more on the generic skills that

candidates are expected to demonstrate, regardless of the individual responses. Each criterion comprises a set of related skills that candidates are expected to demonstrate at a range of levels of accomplishment. Because of their highly variable nature, internal assessments and externally assessed non-examination tasks are also marked using assessment criteria.

There is a close relationship between these criteria and the course objectives, supporting high construct validity. In all cases where assessment criteria are applied, differences in candidate achievement that lead to the award of different marks are defined by achievement level descriptors for each criterion, which describe the typical ways in which a candidate's response can be measured against the criterion. The total possible mark for a piece of work is arrived at by summing the maximum achievement level for each criterion. Greater weighting is given to criteria considered to be more important, by giving them a greater number of achievement levels.

The approach used in DP assessment in the application of criterion achievement levels is a "best fit" model. The examiner or teacher applying an assessment criterion must choose the achievement level that overall best matches the piece of work being marked. It is not necessary for every detailed aspect of an achievement level to be satisfied for that level to be awarded, and it is worth noting that the highest level of any given criterion does not represent perfection, in a way that the maximum mark on an analytic markscheme probably would.

3. Mark Bands

Markbands are necessary where the work to be assessed is so variable that a set of criteria, each of which is readily applicable to all responses, cannot be derived. The markbands represent a single holistic criterion applied to the piece of work, which is judged as a whole. Because of the requirement for a reasonable mark range along which to differentiate candidate performance, each markband level descriptor will correspond to a number of marks. The descriptors themselves tend to be fairly lengthy, covering a range of potential qualities evident in candidates' work, and will again relate directly to the course objectives. As with assessment criteria, a "best fit" approach is used. Each markband level may covers a range of marks. The examiner will give a mark from a

range of possible scores according to how well the candidate's work fits the relevant level descriptor from the markband scale.

Vietnamese Language Requirement

In Vietnam, all students who hold Vietnamese passports must attend Vietnamese classes for 40 minutes per day in each grade through grade 11. Vietnamese IB students, can satisfy this requirement by choosing to study IB Vietnamese A: Literature SL or HL. Vietnamese students who choose not to study IB Vietnamese A: Literature will instead study Vietnamese national curriculum on Saturdays during Gr11. They must demonstrate that they have met national requirements even though the Vietnamese portion may not contribute to their overall IB score. Vietnamese students studying the Ontario curriculum must have the Vietnamese classes worked into their timetable to meet the required hours.

Assessment and Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is a major part of secondary education. CIS believes it is important to teach students how to research properly, so they do not plagiarize. We have access to turnitin.com and implement it across the whole Intermediate (grades 7-8) and Secondary (grades 9-12) divisions, so students will be familiar with its use. When students commit malpractice, they must be penalized, because they must learn it is unacceptable in the academic world. IB assessments that are plagiarised will not be submitted for evaluation. If there is sufficient time for the student to reproduce a different body of work, then they may do so and submit it for evaluation by IB. If not, the student will receive a mark of N for the IB course, indicating failure to complete all

necessary requirements and will not be eligible for a mark, disqualifying them from an IB Diploma. Please see the Academic Honesty policy for more information.

Expectations of the School in Regard to Assessment

Homework

Homework serves many purposes for students and contributes to the overall development of students' learning. While homework does not directly get assessed and evaluated for grading purposes, it is used to reinforce concepts learned in class and to develop understanding of course material. Completion of homework is the responsibility of the student, and parents should be aware of students' changing workload. If students discover difficulties while completing their homework, teachers are available, during school hours, to guide students through their issues. The types or style of work that will constitute homework are subject specific but could include test review, written tasks, practice questions, etc.

The volume and time commitment of homework that students should expect will vary by student, depending on the course of study and on understanding of content and concepts. Time spent on homework will vary depending on the quality of work produced and can be expected to increase as students progress to higher grades. Students in IB should expect an average of 2-3 hours of homework per evening, and more time should be spent if difficulties arise within a subject.

Late policy

Late work reflects a learning skill and not an ability that can be counted in criterion-based assessment. As such, late marks cannot be accounted for when assessing IB work produced by students. A teacher's prediction of a student's grade will be influenced by knowledge of what the student is capable of producing according to the timelines set out by IB. This means that a student who regularly hands in work late may be

predicted a lower grade than a student of equal ability who always submits work on time. The recommendation to continue in the IB Programme will also be informed by a collection of teachers' opinions regarding the student's ability, as late work could affect predicted grades.

For official IB assessments and other major assessments, such as culminating activities, measures will be taken by teachers prior to the deadline to ensure that assignments are not late. Such measures include:

- Checking in with each student about the progress of their work
- Students handing in draft copies prior to the due date
- Consultation with students, parents, IB Coordinator, Assessment Policy Committee upon uncovering lack of progress towards the deadline

Recording and Reporting

Student evaluation results are recorded internally by each teacher in the respective subjects based on the assessments. A suitable marking software program is used by teachers to record marks and achievement according to the criteria set out by IB. Reports cards will have a projected IB grade from 1-7, along with statements about general learning skills following the Ontario curriculum guidelines. These projected IB grades will be based on the most recent and most consistent work of the student. The final April IB predicted grade will also include results from IB Mock Exams and IB required assessment components. Reports may also include an equivalent Ontario grade out of 100% to show the comparison between IB and Ontario courses.

Reporting schedule:

Year 1: October (progress report), November, January (1 comment instead of 3), April, June (1 comment instead of 3)

Year 2: October (progress report), January, April (IB Predicted Grades, 1 comment instead of 3), July (no CIS report, just official IB results)

Communication with Parents

It is expected that parents participate in their child's education and are aware of their child's progress. Any concerns by parents should be forwarded to teachers when

they become aware of a particular issue. Similarly, any concerns from teachers will be immediately forwarded to parents. As such, parents are expected to have up-to-date contact information on file with the school to enable positive and proactive communication between school and parents. To remain proactive, teachers, parents, guidance counsellors, and administration will work together in a collaborative manner to ensure that students are progressing towards success.

Parent-Teacher Interviews are scheduled two times each school year, however parents are not limited to those dates, and appointments can be arranged directly with the teacher.

This policy will continue to be reviewed throughout our delivery of the IB Diploma Programme. The Assessment Policy Committee will meet monthly to evaluate effectiveness of the policy. Further meetings may be held, according to needs based on feedback from stakeholders and changes in programming.