



International Baccalaureate Diploma Program

Assessment Policy



Diploma
Programme

Contents at a Glance

I. Purpose	3
II. Reasons for Assessment and Evaluation in NIS	3
III. Key Areas of Focus	4
IV. Homework	4
V. Assessment Practices	5
i. Formative assessment	5
ii. Summative Assessment	7
iii. Exams	7
VI. Grade Scale & Weighting of Assessments	8
VII. Recording of Assessment Data	9
VIII. Reporting of Assessment Data	9
IX. Review of Assessment Data	9
X. Timelines and deadlines	10
XI. Bibliography	11



Purpose:

The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation at NIS is to support and improve student learning, and to align NIS assessment practices with the philosophy of the IBO.

The single most important aim of Diploma Program assessment (consistent with the Primary Years Program and the Middle Years Program) is to support curricular goals and encourage appropriate student learning. Assessments are based upon evaluating course aims and objectives and, therefore, effective teaching to the course requirements also ensures effective teaching to the examination and other formal assessment requirements.

As all students have different learning styles, experiences and abilities, so the assessment and evaluation of their learning must be fair to all students, be varied in nature and allow students to demonstrate the full range of their learning.

Assessment, learning and teaching are intertwined and interdependent and should be focused on critical thinking skills, 21st century skills, knowledge and attitudes that will provide for success within the IB diploma program, in university, and also encourage lifelong learning.

Reasons for Assessment and Evaluation in NIS:

1. To provide feedback to students about their own learning and how they are performing against the criteria outlined by the school/IBO.
2. To provide feedback to teachers about students' knowledge, understanding and/or skill development.
3. To provide a grade for reporting students' progress to parents.
4. To provide information for college admission and placement in college courses.
5. To provide a quality assurance mechanism (both for internal and external reasons)
6. To prepare students mentally for assessments by the IBO, colleges and other organizations

Key Areas of Focus

- ✓ Assessment reflects learning and is a process involving diagnostic assessment at the beginning of each learning cycle, formative assessment throughout and summative assessment at the end.
- ✓ Teachers are responsible for designing and providing formative assessment structures and practices that help students to improve their understanding of what constitutes excellence and where their own work stands in relation to this.



- ✓ Formative assessment should provide detailed feedback on the nature of the students' strengths and limitations. The emphasis here—a key component of learning how to learn—is on making the student a better judge of their own performance and then helping them to develop strategies to improve.
- ✓ Assessment supports the development of classroom learning cultures which are learning oriented rather than performance oriented. Assessment does not promote fear of failure, but encourages risk taking, mistake-making and self-evaluation.
- ✓ Assessment plays a vital role in the educational decision making loop; Assessment is used to establish where students are in their learning and a descriptive and timely feedback is built in to make sure students are learning from practice.
- ✓ Students are involved in the assessment process by learning how to self-assess their own work, assess their peers and set goals for improvement, and then by completing self and peer assessments during formative assessment.
- ✓ The use of multiple intelligence assessments and student portfolios to demonstrate growth over time is encouraged if applicable.
- ✓ Teachers work with IBO materials and resources and collaboratively to determine appropriate criteria, achievement levels and to establish examples and models of achievement, and professional development about assessment is provided, and is sought.
- ✓ Assessment and evaluation practices are fair and equitable to all students, including ESL students, whose mastery of language should not necessarily affect the evaluation of, for example their ability to think critically.
- ✓ Determination of grades for formal reporting purposes primarily reflect student performance on summative tasks and reflect their most accurate performance, rather than averaging attainment grades over a grading period.
- ✓ Communication about assessment is regular and clear. Informal reporting of student achievement occurs throughout the academic year; formal reporting of student achievement occurs at regular intervals.

Homework

Homework is an extension of the regular daily school work and is given in all courses. The functions of homework are to help students prepare for classes, and develop the skills of organization, time management, independent responsibility, self-direction and self-discipline.

It may consist of reading, studying material, watching documentaries, as well as formative and summative assessments.



There is no expected amount of homework, but an anticipated maximum amount of homework for HL courses is four hours per week and for SL classes two hours per week, which is usually split equally between studying material and producing assessments.

Assessment Practices

a. Formative assessment

Formative assessment represents the process of gathering, analyzing, interpreting and using evidence to improve student learning. It is integrated into the curriculum and woven into the daily learning process and is an integral part of instruction. It provides teachers and students with information about how learning is progressing. It helps the teacher to plan the next stage of learning.

Formative assessment occurs continuously and includes structured and spur-of-the-moment observations that are recorded and filed; formal and informal interviews; collections of work samples; use of extended projects, performances, and exhibitions; performance exams; various forms of short-answer testing, etc. This evidence of learning can be kept in grade books, files or portfolios, which in turn can be used by students and teachers to reflect on, summarize, and evaluate student progress.

Formative assessment promotes deep understanding of knowledge and development of skills by careful consideration of the types of assignment given.

Students are involved in the formative assessment of their own learning and that of their peers through feedback forms and formal and informal conferences and discussions. Peer assessment requires a very safe and collaborative learning environment and should only be attempted sparingly and after a period of training and discussion with the class.

Formative assessment involves providing students with descriptive feedback as they learn.

Descriptive feedback provides students with an understanding of what they are doing well, links to classroom learning, and gives specific input on how to reach the next step in the learning progression. Teachers will provide students with frequent and descriptive feedback on formative tasks that aims to improve performance. The feedback given should provide incentives for improvement and should be positive in tone, providing encouragement, positive feedback as well as constructive critique. Generally this feedback will not include a grade, though occasionally a level or mark will be given as a diagnostic tool and as an incentive for improvement.

Formative assessments usually do not support the determination of a grade level, though they may in situations when summative assessment data is lacking. It is far more important that formative assessment correctly identifies the knowledge, skills and understanding that students should develop, rather than accurately measuring the level of each student's achievement.



In criterion-referenced formative assessment, good communication of the assessment expectations (i.e. the knowledge, understanding and skills required of the students) is key. Assessment and evaluation practices and expectations are discussed with students at the beginning of instruction and are included either in the course syllabus at the beginning of the year or in documents distributed to students well in advance of any assessment or evaluation. In addition rubrics and exemplars are made available and discussed to illustrate different levels of achievement against stated criteria in advance of submission dates. If appropriate, students are involved in the development and wording of criteria, checklists, rubrics and scoring guides.

b. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment occurs at the end of a teaching and learning cycle when students are given the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned by applying their knowledge in new and authentic contexts. Summative assessments are a means to gauge, at a particular point in time, student learning relative to the pre-defined criteria communicated to students prior to and during formative assessment. Although the information gleaned from this type of assessment is important, it can only help in evaluating certain aspects of the learning process.

Summative Assessments are given periodically to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know. Summative assessment is generally used as part of the grading process. Examples of summative assessments include, but are not limited to, chapter tests, quarter exams, final draft lab reports and research papers.

The timing, type, scope and format of each summative task should be clearly communicated to the students ahead of time, and if possible, rubrics, examples and practice assessments should be distributed and discussed.

Portfolios can sometimes be used as a summative assessment to demonstrate learning against particular criteria, for example improvement in the ability to analyze data could be demonstrated with a series of lab conclusions and data-response questions rather than in one final lab report.

C. Exams

The purpose of an exam is to assess understanding of the material covered during the grading period, to give the students experience in preparing for and taking a large summative and/or formal assessments, and help teachers calculate an accurate semester grade. All classes (except some art classes) give an exam that is comprehensive in scope, covering all knowledge and skills learned over the grading period. Each exam session is usually 2 hours long. All students should be able to finish within 2 hours and it should take the average student at last an hour to finish. Art classes may choose to give a final assessment other than an exam and this assessment should be completed before exam week commences.

All other work (research papers, book reports, labs, etc.) must be turned in by the Friday one week before exam week - students should have no other home work from that Friday onwards other than to prepare for their exams. The exam should be based on IB external assessments. It is recommended that Quarter exams should compromise around 60% of the overall semester grade.



d. Internal Verification

In the case of the school's externally-assessed programs such as the IBDP, the IBCP and the BTEC Diploma, the school will ensure that assessments conducted at the school receive appropriate moderation, verification and validation. All assessment evidence provided by candidates will be verified by multiple assessors that it is the candidates' own work using the Assessment Verification Tool.

e. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Noblesse International recognizes all learners' prior learning credits and experiences based on the Centre's established entry requirements described in the programme specifications. Exemptions and advanced standing in subjects and units can be given to learners who have completed qualifications or examinations covering similar learning outcomes, or with prior professional working experience. Noblesse International School will make all reasonable efforts in order for students to demonstrate their prior learning, including submission of an RPL portfolio, or an examination.

f. Special Considerations and Reasonable Adjustments

Noblesse International School fully believes that assessment should be a fair test of learner's knowledge and what they know or are able to do. We also realize, however that for some learners, the usual format of assessment may not be suitable, and may place them at a disadvantage compared to other students. Noblesse International School seeks to ensure that its assessment practices for all qualifications issued take into account this fact, and as such the school will seek to make provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration to ensure learners receive recognition of their achievement and have the opportunity to demonstrate their content mastery in a way that does not disadvantage them, while still maintaining the validity and integrity of the assessment.

A Reasonable Adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation.

A Special Consideration can be applied after an assessment if there is a reason that then learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment. Reasons for special consideration could be temporary illness, injury, or adverse circumstances at the time of the assessment.



Grade Scale & Weighting of Assessments

For the 2016-17 school year, the school follows the grade scales & weighting scales outlined below.

NIS GRADING SCALE 1ST & 2ND		
Outstanding	85-100	Above Level
Satisfactory	70-84	At Level
Needs Improvement	Below 70	Below Level
NIS GRADING SCALE 3-12TH (Not applicable to IB)		
Grade	Percent	GPA
A+	97-100	4.0
A	93-96	
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	63-66	1.0
D-	60-62	0.7
F	BELOW 60	0.0

Note: The breakdown of the other assessments is up to the discretion of the teacher due to the differences in the assessment requirements of each subject group in IB. Because of that, each teacher should clearly communicate the constitution of the 40 % (the weight of each of the selected formative assessment instruments) to both the students and IB coordinator.



Class Weighting for Grades 1 to 10

Assignment Type	Percentage of Total Grade
Tests and Quizzes	30%
Semester Exam	20%
Homework and Classwork	20%
Projects	20%
Class Participation	10%

Class Weighting for Grades 11 to 12

Assignment Type	Percentage of Total Grade
Tests and Quizzes	30%
Semester Exam	20%
Homework and Classwork	20%
Projects	30%

Promotion Policy for Grades 3 through 12

Students who fail a core subject (end-of-year average) must attend a parent/student/teacher consultation at the end of the year to determine the best course of action. These actions may include retaking the class (usually the case of math courses), employing a tutor or attending an afterschool/summer program

Students who fail 2 core subjects must complete the following before being permitted to move onto the next grade level.

- sit for and pass make-up exams in August for both classes
- attend and pass with a grade of C or better a pre approved summer school program. Attendance at a non-NIS Summer Program must be approved in advance by the headmaster or his designee.

Students who fail 3 or more core subjects will need to repeat the entire grade level.



Recording of Assessment Data

For the 2016-17 academic year, all teachers in grades 1-12th maintain student scores using *Engrade*, a web-based application. Scores are reviewed continually by the appropriate administrator to ensure prompt and accurate recording of scores.

Reporting of Assessment Data

Students and parents are able to access their scores through a web portal, as part of *Engrade*. Additionally, all students receive a quarterly Report Card (hard and soft copy) which states their average in each subject; their overall average; and their GPA (for grades 6-12th).

Student Identification

During all internal and external assessments, teachers will verify the identity of all students, and ensure correct identity information is written on the assessment documents. All students undertaking external exams **MUST** wear their official school ID.

Retention of Student Assessment records

The school will keep securely each student's assessment records and assessment evidence for a period of three to five years after graduation.

Review of Assessment Data

Assessment data is compiled by the appropriate administrator following the issuance of quarterly Report Cards. This data is used to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment of the curriculum and to develop individualized programs for remedial and enrichment students. Subject-level meetings are continually held to ensure such programs remain updated and relevant to student learning needs. At the conclusion of each academic year, an Academic Advisory Council is convened to review the annualized assessment data and formulate recommendations for curricular improvements. The recommendations are then submitted to the Headmaster and School Board for final consideration.

Timelines and deadlines

Summative tasks, due to their importance and infrequency, will be calendared by the IBDP Coordinator at the beginning of each academic year with a range of due dates given to afford flexibility and negotiation within each class. This calendar will be communicated to the students and faculty. The number of large summative tasks will generally increase through the grades especially as final submission of IB internal assessment approaches.



However, the number of smaller summative assessments will likely decrease as students learn to become more independent and less reliant on grades for motivation.

Just as in the real world students will be given deadlines for all formative and summative tasks, and just as in the real world some of these deadlines are more flexible than others, and the consequences of missing the deadlines vary. Extensions for submission of assignments are based on individual circumstances and should be worked out with the teacher.

Students are required to submit both formative and summative tasks on or before the due date, Lateness, plagiarism and non-submission of assessments will have consequences. Consequences for plagiarism will be spelt out in the academic honesty policy

If a student fails to submit formative assessment work or **minor** summative tasks by the due date, there will be escalating consequences depending on the assessment: no feedback may be given, which ultimately may affect learning and performance on summative assessments; the student may be placed on supervised study hall; the student may be withdrawn from co-curricular commitments or have to make up the work during free time until the assignment is complete.

Major summative assessments must be submitted by the due date unless an extension is arranged. These dates are considered non-negotiable 'firm' dates. Students who miss a firm due date for a major summative task will be required to immediately meet with the teacher, IBDP Coordinator and/or Deputy Head and/or Head of School and a contract of completion will be drawn up including a timeline and plan to get the assignment completed. The student may have to work under the supervision of a teacher or administrator and this could entail missing classes, sports, free time and weekends to complete the work.

If work is still not submitted by these contracted due dates, the consequences continue to escalate. The student could be considered to be breaking the school rule of behaving sensibly and responsibly. The report card may indicate "work not submitted" to reflect the fact that insufficient assessment data exists to make a fair evaluation of student performance of major expectations. In this case, no credit may be granted and students may fail a course based on insufficient assessment evidence.

Appeals

A student may appeal any assessment decision by either the school or an external body (IB, BTECT) by first applying in writing to the DP Coordinator and/or Headmaster. The student will be notified of the result as soon as possible.

Conflict of Interest

A Conflict of Interest is defined as "A situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of a clash between the person's self-interest and professional interest or public interest" (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/conflict-of-interest.html>). Any conflict of interest which affects a teacher's impartiality, such as a family member in class, must be declared to management



Assessment Policy Steering Committee

Mr. Ben Parsons – IBDP Coordinator
Mr. Felix McGarry – MS/HS Coordinator
Mr. Marcos Ferreira – Elementary Coordinator
Mr. Dwayne Lehman – Headmaster

Bibliography:

Black P. and D. Wiliam (1998), “Assessment and Classroom Learning”, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, CARFAX, Oxfordshire, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 7-74.

OECD (2008), “Assessment for learning- The case for formative assessment” OECD/CERI International Conference . “Learning in the 21st Century: Research, Innovation and Policy”

IBO publications:

Diploma Program assessment Principles and practice (Jan 2010)

Guidelines for developing a school assessment policy (April 2008)

IB Position Paper: Academic honesty in the IB (July 2012)

Language and Learning in the IB programs (September 2011)

The Diploma Program: A basis for practice (Jan 2009)

The Diploma Program: From principles into Practice (August 2008)

Towards a continuum of international education (September 2008)

