



مدارس الظهران الأهلية  
Dhahran Ahliyya Schools

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## Assessment Policy

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### Assessment Policy Committee Members

Directors

Supervisors

Teachers

Students

Parents

## **DAS Mission**

Inspired by the principles of Islam, the mission of Dhahran Ahliyya Schools is to empower each student to be a compassionate, thinking, lifelong bi-lingual learner who makes a positive difference, locally and globally.

## **DAS Vision**

Our vision is to provide a world-class education with an Arab and Islamic identity through a pioneering learning community that is sustainable and socially responsible.

## **The International Baccalaureate's Mission Statement**

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

## **The IB Learner Profile**

**Inquirers:** We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

**Knowledgeable:** We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

**Thinkers:** We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

**Communicators:** We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

**Principled:** We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

**Open-minded:** We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

**Caring:** We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

**Risk-takers:** We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

**Balanced:** We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, (spiritual) and emotional— to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

**Reflective:** We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

## **Philosophy**

In keeping with the school's mission and the spirit of the IB Programs, assessment is geared towards improving, rather than simply documenting student performance. The use of assessment to judge the effectiveness of both teaching and learning processes is essential in allowing teachers and students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and the effectiveness of the program. The objectives and processes of any assessment should be clearly explained to the students. Reflection is a common and regular practice that aims at improving both teaching and learning. In fact, the whole assessment model at DAS intends to support student's learning.

## **Purpose and Process of Assessment**

### **The Purpose**

As a pioneering professional learning community, we are aware that our collaborative efforts and collective inquiry need to be assessed on the basis of results. We need to assess our initiatives on the basis of ongoing assessments as well as monitor the effectiveness of our practices and their effect on student learning. In our school we use assessments as an essential tool, which supports and promotes student learning. Assessment aims to achieve this by:

- ❖ Providing feedback on the learning process.
- ❖ Informing and improving the planning and teaching processes.
- ❖ Making the learning process and expectations transparent for students, parents, and teachers.
- ❖ Promoting a deep understanding of subject content by supporting students in their inquiries.
- ❖ Providing tools for the learner for self-reflection and goal setting.
- ❖ Promoting the development of higher-order cognitive skills by providing rigorous final objectives.
- ❖ Supporting the holistic nature of learning by assessing a range of knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes.

### **The Process**

- ❖ What do we expect our students to learn?
- ❖ How will we know they are learning?
- ❖ How will we respond when they don't learn?
- ❖ How will we respond if they already know it?

## **Essential Agreements for Assessment**

As a team, we value our learner outcomes the most, so we will...

- ❖ **Design** formative and summative assessments that align with our MYP assessment criteria.
- ❖ **Report** the student performance data on PowerSchool within 72 hours.
- ❖ **Analyze** the formative and summative assessments within 72 hours of the assessment.
- ❖ **Reflect** on learner performances and summarize specific strategies and interventions to support learner needs.
- ❖ **Determine and act** on specific support strategies to differentiate for all our learners
- ❖ **Share** the analysis of test data with all the stakeholders – students, SSU team members, and parents.
- ❖ **Reflect** on the analysis in our PLCs with our collaborators.

## **Types of Assessment**

### **Pre-Assessment**

Pre-assessment takes place at the beginning of instruction to find out what students already know in order to plan the next stage of learning.

### **Formative Assessment**

Formative assessments are interwoven with the daily learning and provides both teachers and students with useful timely feedback on how well students understand and apply the new concepts, skills, and knowledge. It is also intended to inform teachers regarding the effectiveness of their practices. Formative assessments provide us with essential information regarding which students have learned each skill and which have not. They help us decide which students need additional support.

### **Common Formative Assessment**

Common formative assessments play a vital role in the learning process for all PLC teams. They not only provide the team with timely information about how the students are performing but also provide them with a common ground to compare the results of their students with each other. It is an assessment created collaboratively by the team on common standards. This practice allows the team to discuss the results in light of how each teacher approached the standards and what strategies were the most effective. This discussion leads to intrinsic professional development and is connected directly to what the students and teachers need to move forward. Common formative assessments also facilitate a systematic response for the students who need additional support and modified instruction.

### **Summative Assessments**

Summative assessments take place at the end and/or middle of every unit of learning across disciplines. It gives the students opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned according to intended standards. Summative assessments may include any combination of the following: acquisition of data, synthesis of information, application of knowledge and processes which address multiple learning styles.

### **Standardized Assessments**

These assessments are used as a means to evaluate teaching and monitor student progress. They are the basis for SMART goals in several subjects. They are part of the school's ongoing plan to improve teaching and learning. Standardized assessments are used for the following reasons:

- ❖ Inform teaching
- ❖ Collect data to check for growth over time
- ❖ Set SMART goals
- ❖ Provide opportunity of comparison with the global community

The following standardized assessments are regularly administered at DAS in the PYP and/or MYP:

- ❖ MAP–Measure of Academic Progress (English and Math)
- ❖ TALA-Arabic proficiency assessment
- ❖ Pre-SAT

### **School Approved Internal Assessments:**

In addition to the standardized assessments, Dhahran Ahliyya Schools also use some school approved assessments that serve a similar purpose as the standardized assessments. These assessments are done internally either by the teachers or the school's Research Unit. The following are school approved assessments:

- ❖ Arabic Developmental Reading Assessment (Gr.6)
- ❖ Alquist Test (Math Gr.6,7)

### **Peer and Self-Assessment**

Peer and self-assessment is interwoven throughout daily learning to engage students in reflection and assessment of their own learning and the learning of others. The students are given adequate time to reflect on their own and their peers' progress in all subject areas, including the attributes expressed in the IB Learner Profile.

### **Community and Personal Projects in MYP**

The mission of Dhahran Ahliyya Schools is rooted in all stakeholders of the school making a positive difference both locally and globally. While the vision of the school is driven by sustainability and social responsibility, the IB mission and vision beautifully confluences with our school's vision and mission. In light of this natural synergy, Community Projects and Personal Projects will be important drivers for our students to reach out to the community with their personal expressions of service that will contribute to the daily lives of the members in their community. We view them as unique opportunities to evaluate student's holistic learning in a coherent and organic manner.

### **Portfolios: "e-portfolios"/ student lead conferences**

A student portfolio is one method of collecting information, which is used to assess student progress. It is a way to keep a record of the student's performance in academic skills, development of knowledge, conceptual understanding, transdisciplinary skills, attitudes, and the attributes of the IB Learner Profile. It reflects the progress made in critical thinking and creativity and includes the student's reflection on his/her own work. The student uses it to identify their own areas of strength and improvement. It is also used to communicate a student's performance to his or her parents and help them become participants in their own learning. It becomes the student's evidence of learning, includes a range of curriculums, and is a useful tool for assessment and reporting purposes.

### **Criterion-Referenced Assessment in the MYP:**

MYP assessments are done internally using the MYP objectives and aligned assessment criteria for each subject. Teachers create tasks and assignments in light of the IB criteria to help their students reach the objectives.

In the MYP, each student's performance is measured against predetermined criteria for each subject. The MYP's goal is to increase the depth of knowledge in all the subject areas for each student by having both teachers and students actively engage in assessing the learning process.

As the MYP assessments are criterion based, our assessment practices during PLC teams play a vital role in

order to create a common understanding about the criteria and how it is applied. This process builds a common understanding and provides the teachers with the support they need throughout the implementation process.

		Criteria			
MYP Subjects	Assessment of	A	B	C	D
	Language and Literature (Arabic)	Analyzing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
	Language and Literature (English)	Analyzing	Organizing	Producing text	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 impact of Science
	Mathematics	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics to real-world contexts
	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
	MYP Projects	Investigating	Planning	Taking action	Reflecting
	Interdisciplinary Unit	Disciplinary grounding	Synthesizing and applying	Communicating	Reflecting

The MYP assessment model is described as a criterion-referenced model which has predetermined criteria which the students are familiar with. MYP identifies a set of objectives for each subject group, which already has assessment criteria related to it. The level of student success in reaching the objectives of each subject group is measured in terms of levels of achievement described in each assessment criteria.

**Assessment Agreements:**

1. Work is assessed according to the MYP assessment criteria prescribed for each subject.
2. Work assessed outside of the final grade serves as a check for students and teachers to inform further learning.
3. Students must be knowledgeable of the criteria and how they are applied.
4. Feedback is given by describing the achievement level on the task-specific rubric.
5. Assessed work is returned with the rubric for clear communication of achievement results.
6. In all subject groups, the MYP published assessment criteria of years 3 and 5 will be used in the assessment in years 2 and 4, respectively.
7. Each subject criterion group is assessed at least twice during the year.
8. At the end of a marking period (semester), the teacher, through her/his professional judgment, determines the level that best describes the student's achievement. The sum of these achievement levels is converted to a numerical grade using the grade boundaries published by the MYP coordinator.
9. Both the numerical grade and the levels for each criterion are communicated in the report at the end of each semester.

### **IB MYP General Grade Descriptors:**

Students are graded using the following criteria based on different subjects:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Boundary guidelines</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
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.

### **Assessment strategies**

The purpose of an assessment is to provide the educator with an in-depth view of the students' abilities. They help teachers understand the learner and modify their practices accordingly. In order for any assessment to be considered effective, it should align with the following components that are applicable to both summative and formative assessments.

- ❖ **Valid:** Happen in authentic contexts and assess identified objectives
- ❖ **Differentiated:** Provide students with a wide range of opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, conceptual understanding, and skills. Students and teachers should learn from the experience.
- ❖ **Explicit:** Criteria are stated clearly, so that students can understand them. They are shared in advance to allow for a quality product or performance.
- ❖ **Fair:** Students should be able to demonstrate their ability.
- ❖ **Comprehensive:** A range of information is gathered over time

Effective assessments not only provide the students with an opportunity to show their abilities but also allow teachers to:

- ❖ Use and reflect on the teaching and learning process effectively.
- ❖ Plan in response to student needs
- ❖ Gather evidence to reflect on practices and modify their instruction
- ❖ Collaboratively review the students' work to check for progress

Teachers use a range of assessment strategies to document the evidence of student learning. The strategies selected to assess student learning may not only assess the process of inquiry but also the product created through the process. Teachers rely on several assessment strategies to collect necessary information to create a balanced view of the student.

Assessment Strategy	Description
Observation	Students are observed often and regularly. May be wide-angle (whole class) or close up (one student). Observation is particularly valuable when assessing attitudes or skills.
Open-ended tasks	Students are asked to communicate an original response. The response could take many forms, such as a presentation, an essay, a diagram or a solution to a problem.
Performance assessments	Performance assessments can allow students to perform the learned skills and show their understanding in real-world contexts.
Process journals	Regular written personal statements by the students about key issues or important activities can lead to enhanced understanding of the concepts. This strategy is especially used in personal and community projects.
Student self-evaluation	Students are given the opportunity to reflect upon their learning and To assess progress against criteria.
Peer assessment	Students who assess their peers can clarify their own thinking and understanding of the assessment criteria. The student being assessed can use this process to learn from peer feedback.
Written tests	Periodical examinations which check understanding.

### **Assessment tools**

- ❖ **Rubrics:** An established set of criteria for rating students in all areas. The descriptors tell the assessor what characteristics or signs to look for in students' work and then how to rate that work on a predetermined scale. Rubrics can be developed by students as well as by teachers.
- ❖ **Checklists:** a list of criteria against which students are assessed (e.g. information, data, attributes or elements that should be present)
- ❖ **Exemplars:** Samples of students' work that serve as concrete standards against which other student work is judged. Generally, there is one benchmark for each achievement level in a scoring rubric. Each school is encouraged to set benchmarks that are appropriate and usable within their particular school context. The exemplars should be reviewed by teachers and updated regularly based on changes.
- ❖ **Anecdotal records:** Anecdotal records are brief written notes based on observations of students. "Learning stories" are focused, extended observations that can be analyzed later. These records need to be systematically compiled and organized.

### **Collaboratively Developed Assessment Tasks:**

Teachers in PLC teams create assessments together to ensure that all students have access to the same essential curriculum and assess the quality of student work according to the same standards.

Teacher teams will collaborate and share openly with others about their successes and failures in order to provide mutual support toward agreed-upon goals.

The teachers also calibrate their scoring on all common assessments by grading the same piece separately using the same rubric and comparing the different scores. This is done with several papers until full understanding of the rubric is reached.

### **Result Orientation:**

Data plays a vital role in helping the teams identify their areas of need and then set SMART goals based off them. To make our goals SMART it needs to conform to the following criteria:

- ❖ Specific
- ❖ Measurable
- ❖ Attainable
- ❖ Result-oriented
- ❖ Time bound

The PLC teams follow a simple collaborative inquiry cycle to positively impact student learning.

- ❖ Plan their assessments and data gathering tools **(Plan)**
- ❖ Implement what they planned and gather data by using the tools they identified in the planning stage**(Do)**
- ❖ Study the data together to identify gaps, reflect on own practices and make necessary changes to the plan. **(Study)**
- ❖ Review the plan and make necessary changes based on analyzed data. Prepare to go through the cycle again starting from D (do). **(Act)**

Each PLC team goes through a long inquiry cycle, which is yearlong and related to the team's SMART goal while the short cycle is done within every unit.

### **MYP Recording and Reporting**

In MYP, DAS reports on student achievement will,

- ❖ Reflect performance of students specific to MYP objectives and criterion of that grade level.
- ❖ show all instructions and categories in both Arabic and English on the same page;
- ❖ include two kinds of information on the same page which describe achievement results and work

Reporting to parents and students occurs through:

- ❖ Conferences (Teacher/Student) (Student Led)(Teacher/Parent)
- ❖ Mid-semester progress reports
- ❖ End-of-semester reports

### **Teacher/Parent Conferences:**

Parent conferences are formal reporting sessions between the parent and the teacher which take place twice in an academic year. They are used to discuss the student's progress and sample work they have done. The agreements between the parent and the teacher are recorded. If needed follow up meetings are requested either from the parents or the teachers.

### **Student-Led Conferences:**

These are conferences between the parent and the student. Students are involved in choosing what is shared with the parent. Students address all five components of the IB program. Teachers greet the parents and go around the room throughout the conference.

### **Teacher/Student Conferences:**

These take place formally or informally in the classroom during the lessons. They take place to provide specific feedback to the students based on their needs.

The portfolio is an integral part of the student's journey through the MYP program. It provides a record of student effort and an all of the school's curriculum. Each student has his/her own portfolio which is to be shared with the parents during all forms of conferences.



**Mid-Semester and End of Semester Progress Reports:**

Every 8-10 weeks, Dhahran Ahliyya Schools has a reporting period. A progress report card reflecting the learning that occurred during the quarter and the student's performance in light of the skills is sent home to parents in paper format. A similar report card consolidating a student performance for the entire semester will be sent to the parents by the end-of-the semester.

**References Used in the Development of this Policy:**

MYP: From Principles into Practice (IBO, 2014)

