

ST ANDREW'S COLLEGE



SECONDARY SCHOOL ASSESSMENT POLICY

September 2019

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How this policy relates to the College's Mission, Philosophy and Objectives

As our College mission is to “ offer a high-quality, wide-ranging, modern and challenging educational experience to all our students in an environment, conducive to the development of their academic, social, sporting, civic and spiritual potential” it is important therefore to reflect on all our activities, practices, procedures, facilities and attitudes with a view to continuous improvement. Assessment in its widest sense includes all evaluations of student achievements in curricular and co-curricular activities in order to improve learning and teaching.

Rationale

Assessment in St. Andrew's College is an integral part of the teaching and learning process as it provides valuable information to the student, the teacher and the parent. Learning at St. Andrew's College is very well supported: students are aware of what they are trying to achieve and through effective assessment they can gain a clearer insight into what they have achieved and where they can improve. The College acknowledges that all forms of assessment should have a positive impact on students' attitudes, motivation and self esteem and that students should have the opportunity to respond to guidance they have received.

Teachers use assessment to set tasks which are well matched to the abilities of their students. Students are involved in the process of assessment by taking responsibility for their own learning, developing their ability to be self critical and setting targets for their subsequent work.

Each student is assessed as part of an ongoing process based upon their homework, tests, assignments, projects and other forms of school work.

A record of these results is kept by the teacher.

Objectives

1. To use formative assessment in the planning and practice of teachers in the classroom.
2. To use summative assessment to provide information to students, parents and teachers of what progress has been made in the learning process.
3. To provide consistency in procedures for setting, marking and supplying feedback to students.
4. To inform the teachers how students learn best.
5. To inform the students of how best to learn and to set individual goals.

Summative Assessments

Year	Reports	Reports	Reports
1 st 2 nd	Autumn (short report) Christmas (full report)	Spring (short report)	Summer (full report)
3	Autumn (short report) Christmas (full report)	Trial (marks)	Letter from Year Team
4 th 5 th /5IB	Autumn (marks) Christmas (full report)	February (marks) Spring (marks)	Summer (full report)
6 th /6IB	Autumn (marks) Christmas (full report) Trial (IB–full report)	Trial (marks) Predicted Grades (IB)	

Formative Assessment

According to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, assessment in education is about gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning.

Formative Assessment is promoted by:

- Setting out clearly aims and objectives for each lesson
- Asking a question which will be answered in the course of the class
- Sharing the learning intention and development of the class
- Revision of the previous day's work is carried out by means of questions, discussion, use of resources or by mini-tests
- Giving homework and the ways in which we correct homework
- Students and teachers correct homework orally
- Answering questions from past examination papers
- Using document based questions and mini projects
- Writing of essays
- Students self-assessment which allows them to assess how they understand the material from the previous class and what areas they need to work at
- Peer assessment
- Giving written and verbal feedback to students with guidance for improvement

Formative assessment also takes place through teachers helping students to develop skills in note taking. Methods include giving headings, the use of diagrams, brainstorming, mind-mapping, etc.

Differentiated learning is promoted by using a mixture of lower order and higher order questions directed towards individuals and towards the whole class. Teachers can direct the level of the question to each individual to match that student's ability. This helps to develop a student's confidence.

Teachers

- Assessment is used to inform teachers how students learn best in terms of
 - determining what the students know and understand,
 - ascertaining the skills that students have acquired,
 - diagnosing learning problems and student needs,
 - monitoring standards of achievement,
 - planning how the subject material is taught
 - checking teaching objectives against learning outcomes
 - providing clear feedback to students on how they can improve their level of achievement
 - motivating teachers and learners through success in achievement
- Each teacher keeps a record of homework, test and examination results.
- Each teacher reviews the achievement of students in their classes regularly and takes appropriate follow up action including modifying their planning and presentation.
- Common examinations are set at all levels and in all years.
- Teachers work together to ensure consistency in assessment, recording and reporting procedures.
- Serious underachievement, persistent failure or continuous presentation of sub-standard work, taking the student's abilities into consideration, is brought to the attention of the Year Team and the parents.
- Appropriate action is then taken by the various interested parties.

Parents

- Support the policies of St Andrew's College
- Participate in the learning of their children
- Are encouraged to provide a home environment which is conducive to study
- Should have knowledge of and support their child in their goal setting targets

- Support student adherence to set deadlines for work
- Help motivate their children
- Have an active role in the review of their child's performance

Board

- The Board of Management, working with the Headmistress, reviews the State and International Baccalaureate Examination results
- Results are compared with those from previous years and with national averages

Students

- Have a clear idea of knowledge and/or skills that are being assessed
- Are involved in assessing themselves and are encouraged to identify personal targets
- Receive clear feedback regarding a mark or grade that has been awarded
- Identify their individual difficulties and develop strategies to overcome these
- Are able to see each graded assignment
- Have access to all criteria being used in the assessment
- Are encouraged to recognise the value of all forms of assessment
- Will be given advance warning of any assessment for which preparation is necessary and be clear about the date of the assessment

Effective Use of Assessment

- Teachers may use the findings provided by the various forms of assessment to plan or modify their lessons and teaching methodologies
- Year Teams use assessment results when reviewing the progress made by each student
- Year Teams decide to take follow up action where deemed appropriate

- Overall results are discussed at Subject Department meetings
- Examination results in House Examinations and, where appropriate, State Examinations are used to compile prize winner lists.

Assessment on Entry to St Andrew's College

Initial student assessment takes place in April/May prior to entry of students into First Year in September. Assessment takes place only **after** a student has been offered a place.

At this time the assessment carried out is the CAT 4 Test (Cognitive Abilities Test: Fourth edition). The CAT 4 test measures the four principal areas of reasoning. These are verbal, non-verbal, quantitative and spatial tests and are key to supporting educational development and academic attainment. The CAT 4 will provide important information that can assist students in achieving their potential.

In August as part of the first three days of student induction, two additional assessments are undertaken by incoming Year 1 students. These are the New Group Reading Test (NGRT) for reading and comprehension and the Progress Test in Maths (PTM) for mathematical knowledge and mathematical reasoning and problem solving. These tests together with the CAT4 help to identify strengths and weaknesses for individuals and groups of students as well as students who need additional support. They are a means to inform and evaluate teaching and learning strategies.

In addition we use this information to facilitate the formation of mixed ability form groups.

New students arriving in St Andrew's College in Years 2 - 6 will sit the CAT4 assessment on entry to the College.

Assessment in Transition Year

The core subject areas (Irish, English, Maths and Modern Foreign Language) and extended core subjects in Transition Year are continually assessed. There are four assessment weeks spread throughout the year and a report is issued to parents following each assessment week.

Half term reports (October and February) consist of a percentage mark only.

End of term reports (December and May) consist of a percentage mark and a teacher comment.

Core subjects are assessed through both continuous assessment and end of term exams.

4 ASSESSMENT WEEKS (Core and Extended Core Subject Areas ONLY)

1st Assessment Week – Second week of October

2nd Assessment Week – First week of December

3rd Assessment Week – First week of February

4th Assessment Week - Second week of May

There are two portfolio assessment days during the year. The first takes place in December and students are required to submit a collection of their work from the first term. The second portfolio assessment takes place in May. Assessment of the portfolio is by interview and gives students an opportunity to show and talk about their best work from the year. The assessment is of the process

and the content of the work.

In May, Fourth Year students are presented with Transition Year Certificates which recognise the successful completion of the year. To qualify for this award, students must satisfy the basic requirements of the College Transition Year Programme.

Three levels will be awarded: Distinction, Merit and Satisfactory.

The SAC Alumni award prizes to students adjudged to have excelled in all aspects of the Transition Year Programme.

Junior Cycle Assessment

New Junior Cycle

The assessment of the New Junior Cycle Programme ensures that a range of skills are assessed, placing students at the center of the learning process. Students will complete Classroom Based Assessments (CBA) during class time in both 2nd and 3rd year, which will be reported on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). Students can achieve one of 4 grade descriptors (listed below) once teachers have conducted a Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting in which students' work is moderated.

E – Exceptional

AE – Above Expectations

I – In Line with Expectations

Y – Yet to Meet Expectations

Where a descriptor for a Classroom Based Assessment has not been given to a student, the term 'Not Reported' is used. There is no appeal to the allocation of a student's grade descriptor.

In addition, students in 3rd year complete an Assessment Task (in most subject areas) which accounts for 10% of their final exam result. There will also be opportunities for students to contribute towards their JCPA by participating in 'Other Areas of Learning'. These are activities which must be school based and are also recorded on their JCPA. Finally, when the students receive their JCPA, their final grades consist of the following language:

Distinction	≥ 90 – 100
Higher Merit	≥ 75 - < 90
Merit	≥ 55 - < 75
Achieved	≥ 40 - < 55
Partially Achieved	≥ 20 - < 40
Not Graded	≥ 0 - < 20

Assessment in the International Baccalaureate

The purpose of assessment in the IB is to support curricular goals and to encourage appropriate student learning. Students are assessed in all aspects of the programme with the form of assessment different in each subject group and Theory of Knowledge and the Extended Essay. The specifics of assessment for each of these areas is in their subject guides on the IB website but in general each subject group will have an internal assessment coursework component to be completed throughout the two years and then a written examination in May of 6IB. The weighting May examinations varies from subject to subject in general 60% - 80% of the final mark will be awarded through the May examination.

Grade Descriptors and Grade Boundaries

Grades are awarded for each subject group on a scale of 1 to 7 with 7 being the highest grade in each subject. The boundaries for each grade is set for each subject and level in the marking conference of the paper. Assessment in the International Baccalaureate is criterion referenced (as opposed to norm referenced) and each subject group has its own grade descriptors (see *Grade Descriptors* on the IB section of the website). The mechanism for setting the grade boundaries is explained in the IB publication *Assessment principles and practices—Quality assessments in a digital age* (available under *Assessment* in the IB section of the website).

For the calculation of grades in the reporting of school based assessments there should be a greater emphasis on the grade descriptors than on previous grade boundaries.

Internal assessments

Every subject as well as Theory of Knowledge has internal assessment coursework. The specific grading criteria are in each subject guide. The internal assessments are practiced and done in line with the published subject specific guidelines and criteria. Further information on deadlines and other aspects of assessment are in the Academic Honesty policy.

The grading process for Internal Assessments is:

- The class teacher marks the work for their class. Where there is more than one teacher for a subject, this marking of the internal assessments will be done collaboratively.
- The teacher submits the marks on IBIS (the IB portal). From these, the IB will randomly select a sample of generally five students' pieces of work for each subject which the teacher submits on IBIS.
- A system of dynamic sampling system is then used. The moderator will mark three of the pieces of work. If the mark awarded by the teacher is within a tolerance of the mark awarded by the moderator then the teacher's marks for the entire class are ratified. If the marking is not within a tolerance the moderator will remark all five samples of work and look for a moderating factor that will be applied to either the whole or a section of the sample. If due to a lack of consistency in marking, the moderator cannot calculate a moderating factor then they will request that the work from the entire class is submitted to the IB for marking.

All internal assessment work for every class should be kept in the College until 15 September.

Predicted Grades

There are two types of predicted grades. The first set are the predicted grades submitted to universities as part of an application process at the beginning of 6IB. In general, these should not be more than one grade away from the grade of the summer examination. The second type of predicted grade are those submitted to the IB for each student on IBIS. These predicted grades will appear on the student results in July. In general, these predicted grades should not be more than one grade away from the Trial Examination results.

IB Diploma vs IB Courses

The intention of the school is that students enter the IB with the intention of attaining a full IB Diploma. The criteria to be awarded an IB Diploma are in the IB section of the website. In some cases students may elect not to present for the IB Diploma but rather to sit only some sections of the IB. An example would be a Leaving Certificate Art student enrolling in the IB Visual Arts class. In this case the student can be awarded an IB certificate in a single subject.

IB Diploma and IB Bilingual Diploma

A student will be awarded an IB bilingual diploma if they meet the general criteria for the IB Diploma and in addition have either sat for two subjects in Group 1 (studies in Language and Literature) or have taken their Group 3 and Group 4 subjects in language different to their Language 1. For example a student who studies French in Group 1 in St. Andrew's College and fulfils the other criteria for an IB Diploma would be awarded a Bilingual Diploma.

Conduct of IB examinations and Security of IB examination material

The IB examinations will be conducted in accordance with the regulations published by the IB. Students and parents will be informed of these regulations in advance of the examinations. The College Trial Examinations will duplicate these procedures where possible.

All IB examination material will be stored and used in accordance with the 2020 guidelines.

IB Results and Appeals

The IB results are available for students to view on IBIS at 2.15pm on July 6 after their exams. At that time, they will have access to their IB grade in each subject and whether they have been awarded an IB Diploma. They will also receive another document that has the mark for each subject with the boundary marks for that grade and how many marks they are away from the next grade boundary. Some days later the College will receive a breakdown of the marks for each component of the grade.

There are four different categories of Enquiry Upon Result (EUR) or appeals or that can be made.

EUR Category 1: This is a remark of all externally assessed component of a subject. It is requested in writing by the student (or their parent/guardian if they are not 18 years old). The grade can stay the same, go up or go down. The current cost for this €88, which will be refunded in the event of a change in the grade. The outcome of a EUR Cat1 can take up to 18 days and the result of the appeal will be returned to the school who will forward it to the candidate. Grade changes will also be indicated on the results section of IBIS.

EUR Category 2a: This is a request by a school to have externally assessed components of a subject returned. This can be useful for teachers to see how the class answered the paper. The cost of this is €39 per subject/level/component. The relevant component mark scheme will be returned for examination papers but not for the Extended Essay or TOK.

EUR Category 2b: This is a request by the student to have the externally assessed components of a subject returned. In many cases this has little benefit as examiners do not have to give reasons for their marks and they do not return a marking scheme for Cat2b. The cost of this is €12 per candidate/subject/level

Prior written permission must be obtained from any candidates concerned where teachers intend to use their scripts as examples for other candidates. This permission must be sought only after the candidates have received their results. Candidates who grant their permission have the right

to ensure their work is anonymous before it is used. (Teachers must guard against possible plagiarism in such circumstances.). It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that any returned assessment material likely to be provided/used outside of the school (by any party) should have all personal examiner details (be that a name, signature or examiner number) redacted. Candidates have the right to instruct their Diploma Programme coordinator not to request their assessment material for any purposes.

EUR Category 3: This is a request by the school that the Internal Assessment sample is remarked. This can only happen where the mean of the candidates' moderated internal assessment marks differs from the mean of their raw marks (the marks awarded by the teacher) by 15% or more of the maximum mark for the component. Because students do not have to consent to a EURCat3, the grades cannot go down. The cost of this is €211 and it is not refunded.

To be reviewed September 2021