International School Rheintal

# Assessment Policy

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International School Rheintal

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# ISR Guiding Statements

## International School Rheintal Vision

ISR is the school of choice in the Alpen Rheintal region providing a high quality international education in English for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12, inspiring international-mindedness, academic and personal excellence and responsible engagement.

**Reviewed June 2023**

## International School Rheintal Mission

ISR is a supportive, challenging and student-centred environment. We encourage each student to reach their potential whilst promoting international-mindedness, empathy and life-long learning. Through teamwork and individual endeavours, members of the school community should:

- Respect and take responsibility for themselves, others and the environment
- Appreciate and respect diversity
- Think critically
- Reflect thoughtfully
- Communicate effectively
- Celebrate success

**Reviewed June 2023**

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# ISR Assessment Philosophy

ISR's assessment practices reflect the school's and the IB's philosophies. Assessment adds to the development of a supportive, challenging environment where each student can reach their potential. It is integral to all teaching and learning. It provides a reliable measure of, and feedback on, knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes at different levels of student learning. This feedback fosters lifelong learning, open-mindedness and resilience. It encourages critical thinking, thoughtful reflection, effective communication and celebration of success. Given its substantial role in student development, ISR supports continuous assessment that seamlessly integrates into the learning journey and adheres to clear criteria.

# Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to promote, inform and improve student learning, thus fostering academic excellence. It aims to communicate student progress and accomplishments to students themselves, and to educators, parents, school leaders and other relevant stakeholders, facilitating informed decision-making and continual refinement in learning outcomes. Assessment is a continuous and ongoing process, not limited to certain times in the year.

## Assessment As Learning

In assessment *as* learning, students are active agents in their own learning. They develop and implement metacognitive strategies for planning, monitoring, collaborating over, and reflecting on, their learning journey. Conducted throughout the learning process, assessment as learning supports students on their journey to become independent, lifelong learners.

## Assessment For Learning

The goal of assessment *for* learning is to inform teaching and promote learning. It is conducted throughout the learning process and takes a wide variety of forms, from those that model summative assessment tasks, to others of a more informal nature such as dialogues and discussions.

## Assessment Of Learning

Assessment *of* learning is the kind of standardised, norm- or criterion-referenced assessment whose goal is to certify and report on learning and progress. It is the type of assessment often conducted at the end of a course, developmental stage or programme, such as formal exams, external standardised tests, and unit assessments.

## Effective assessment includes:

- Clear expectations and success criteria that are available to all stakeholders
- Rubrics detailing achievement levels
- Varied and balanced assessment types that allow students a number of ways to demonstrate and reflect upon their learning
- Challenging but achievable goals
- Differentiation to allow all students the opportunity to be successful
- A best-fit approach to evaluating achievement against descriptors (rather than a numerical approach based on percentages or averages)
- Direct, specific, appropriate and timely feedback (written, digital, or verbal)

# ISR Assessment Practices

Assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process, and provides evidence to inform both learner and teacher. It encompassess monitoring, measuring and documenting of learning, and reporting on it. Teachers recognise the value of providing effective feedback to students, and ensure it is given promptly.

Teachers use their professional judgement to gauge a student's attainment against the relevant achievement descriptors. Recognising that assessments for, as and of learning are inherently linked, teachers create formative opportunities for students to practise and improve their summative skills.

## Pre-Assessment and Ongoing Assessment

In preparation for beginning new learning experiences, teachers assess students' prior knowledge, skills and experience in order to plan effectively, while during the learning process students are given various opportunities to peer-assess, self-assess, and receive teacher feedback. Emphasis is placed on metacognition and reflection, in order for students to understand themselves and how to do their best work.

## Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is the ongoing, regular process of gathering and interpreting the evidence that tells teachers and students how learning is developing. It can be relatively formal or very informal, and can range from an activity modelling an upcoming summative assessment, to the kinds of activities used in pre- and ongoing assessment. Formative assessment enables teachers to provide feedback, and informs teaching practice, thus helping students achieve their potential. Formative assessment is assessment for learning.

- Formative assessment tasks include, but are not limited to: pre-assessment tasks, self assessment, peer assessment, group work, reflections, discussions, quizzes, worksheets, homework activities.

## Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is assessment of learning. It is the standardised measuring of student performance that happens at the end of a teaching and learning process or experience, where levels of attainment are judged against norms or criteria. These can take a variety of formats, such as written exams, oral exams or online tests. Ideally it is designed so that students can demonstrate their learning in authentic contexts.

- Summative assessment tasks include, but are not limited to: tests and exams, presentations, speeches, performances, argumentative and creative writing, compositions, portfolios, products, investigations, research, reports.
- External assessments include, but are not limited to: International Schools Assessments, the MYP Personal Project, and the IB Diploma exams and coursework.

### Standardised Testing

In addition to the IB programme assessments, each year the school participates in the standardised International Schools Assessments, for students in Grades 3-10. Results are analysed and compared with internal assessments. Individual results are used internally for curriculum and student development, and shared with students and parents. Overall school results are shared with the community via channels such as the newsletter or website.

## Deadlines

There are summative assessment elements in the MYP and DP that require student work to be submitted to the IB by a certain date for marking or moderation, so meeting deadlines is an essential skill for students to master. If students fail to submit their work within one day of a deadline, an email is sent to parents. The school may require students to stay behind after school, usually until 18:00, until the work is submitted. In addition, work submitted late impacts other areas and may therefore receive less teacher feedback.

# Documenting Learning and Recording Assessment

Evidence of student learning can be physical or digital, and can be evaluated and documented as described above, but could take other forms such as displays, entries in the school newsletter, and even social media posts.

At ISR, assessments are recorded on the relevant online platform for the programme (such as SeeSaw, ManageBac or SchoolBase). Via these platforms, summative and formative assessments, grades, feedback, and teacher comments, are visible to students and parents,

meaning that in addition to formal report cards each semester, parents have a live view of student progress and achievement.

## Grading in the PYP, MYP and DP

Student progress is informed by the body of work produced and assessments that have taken place throughout the semester. In the PYP, student attainment is indicated via grade-level expectations, while in the MYP and DP, student attainment is indicated with an IB grade of 1 to 7. See the programme-specific sections below for further details.

## Reporting on Learning

At ISR, student achievement is formally communicated via written reports and online or in-person conferences, as well as less formally via exhibitions and portfolios.

### Written Reports

At the end of each semester, report cards are issued to communicate student progress to parents. These formal reports document areas of student growth and identify areas for further development, in line with the assessment philosophy of the programme. Along with this teacher-comment, students receive an indication of attainment and effort.

### Student-Parent-Teacher Conferences

Twice a year, mid semester, the school holds conferences to give parents and students information about progress, development and needs. The student, parents and teacher meet to discuss the student's strengths and areas for growth. The conferences are an opportunity to celebrate learning, gather information, address questions and concerns, and define the parental role in the learning process.

# Early Years (EY) & Primary Years Programme (PYP)

## Kindergarten Assessment Practices

In Early Years, the Development Matters framework is used. It is beneficial for monitoring the all-round development of children, and is an essential way of assessing and tracking children's progress from birth to age five, through Early Years (Kindergarten). This age is a crucial time for children's development, as they are growing and developing at a fast pace. The children are monitored and assessed in seven areas of development. These are:

- Communication and Language Development (CLD)
- Physical Development (PD)

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Literacy (L)
- Mathematics (M)
- Understanding the World (UtW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Development Matters encompasses all aspects of what children should ideally experience, learn and be able to do. EY teachers also understand that each child is unique and will develop at their own rate, gaining skills at different times.

# PYP Assessment Practices

PYP assessment takes a holistic approach, consisting of both formative and summative assessments. It focuses on providing feedback on the learning process itself, emphasising growth and development. It caters to stakeholders including students, teachers, and parents, offering insights into progress and guiding ongoing teaching and planning efforts. It encourages reflection by both students and teachers, enriching the learning experience and promoting a deeper understanding of progress and achievement within ISR's IB setting.

Diversity of assessment contributes to its authenticity, continuity and effectiveness. Authenticity, closely aligned with the learning journey, ensures relevance for students. Continuity is maintained through ongoing evaluation and is not restricted to specific timeframes. Effective assessment embraces diversity, employing various strategies and tools such as rubrics, anecdotal records, checklists, benchmarks, continuums and portfolios of work facilitated by platforms like Seesaw.

## PYP Internal Standardisation of Assessment

During meetings, teachers collaborate on student work samples from throughout the curriculum, to establish agreements on and understandings of the age-level expectations throughout the PYP. In addition, within the specific domain of mathematics all teachers utilise standardised end-of-unit assessments because they comprehensively address age-related expectations, and a 70% pass rate has been agreed upon as the benchmark for mastery.

# PYP Assessment Types

### Pre-Assessment and Baseline Assessments

Before a new unit of learning begins, students are assessed on their existing understanding. This pre-assessment might target subject-specific knowledge, or grasp of concepts. Teachers then tailor subsequent learning experiences accordingly.

In addition to pre-assessment, baseline assessments are conducted from Kindergarten through to Grade 5:

- Kindergarten students complete a baseline assessment based on the seven Areas of Development at the start of each year.
- Kindergarten and Grade 1 students are assessed every six weeks in phonics via Read Write Inc, and groups changed accordingly.
- Students in Grades 1-5 have their reading assessed via the New Group Reading Test.
- Students in Grades 1-5 have a piece of unaided writing assessed against the grade-level writing descriptors developed by PYP teachers.
- Students in Kindergarten through to Grade 5 all complete the Progress Test in Maths.
- Students in Grades 1-5 conduct individual target setting on Seesaw.

The results of baseline reading and mathematics assessments are shared with parents, with the opportunity to discuss them further during the student-parent-teacher conferences.

### Formative Assessment

Formative assessment intertwines with daily learning, helping PYP teachers and students to monitor development in order to plan subsequent learning stages, and enabling teachers to provide additional targeted support and extension as required. It should enable practice with and feedback on skills anticipated in summative assessments, thus directly connecting assessment and teaching.

### Summative assessment

Summative assessment takes place at the end of teaching and learning processes and allows students to demonstrate what has been learned. Students should have opportunities to create expectation rubrics, exemplars, checklists, anecdotal comments and continua when possible. Clear expectations for these assessments are communicated, either co-constructed or given to the students prior to beginning the task.

Teacher feedback on assessments should emphasise areas of growth and ongoing development for students. Reflection on learning is an important part of the learning process for students, and should consistently happen throughout formative and summative assessments.

## PYP Portfolios

These collections of students' work aim to demonstrate growth, critical thinking, creativity, and self-reflection. They serve as a celebration of learning, and a means of assessing progress and setting individual goals, recording a student's progress and development over a period of time both as an individual and group learner. Within the portfolio, evidence of reflection on and development of the learner profile, approaches to learning, action, and subject knowledge are highlighted, as essential elements of the PYP.

## Grade 5 Exhibition

In the penultimate unit of Grade 5, students engage in an intensive eight-week study that encompasses all essential elements of the Primary Years Programme. This project marks the culmination of a student's primary school education. Students undergo formal assessment on each programme element, and their progress is reported and showcased to the entire school community during the Exhibition celebration.

## PYP Grading

In the PYP, student attainment is indicated by using the following criteria:

| Grade Level Expectations | |
|---|---|
| EE | Exceeding Expectations |
| ME | Meeting Expectations |
| PE | Partially Meeting Expectations |
| DE | Developing Expectations |

| Effort Grades | |
|---|---|
| E | Excellent |
| G | Good |
| N | Needs Improvement |

# Middle Years Programme (MYP)

## MYP Assessment Practices

Assessment in the MYP follows established criteria set by the IB. Teachers assess the student not just on knowledge and understanding, but all aspects of subject requirements. Subject content includes aspects of global and digital citizenship, as well as the development of skills needed to become a lifelong learner.

MYP teachers are responsible for structuring varied and valid assessment tasks, including tests and examinations, that will allow students to demonstrate achievement according to the objectives for each subject group.

Students are provided with feedback on an assessment in a timely manner, within two weeks of the date it was submitted, and summative assessment tasks are graded and returned within this timescale. This ensures students are able to understand feedback and implement improvements while it is still fresh in their minds.

## MYP Internal Standardisation of Assessment

MYP teachers meet regularly throughout the year, in subject groups as well as year groups, to collaborate on developing the curriculum and on standardising grading. They look at scope

and sequence, write and grade assessments, and reflect on best practice, thus ensuring consistent and effective teaching and learning.

## MYP Assessment Types

### Pre-Assessment

Students' prior knowledge, skills and experience are assessed in an appropriate way before new learning experiences are embarked upon. This baselining could take many forms, and be via teacher-, peer- or self-assessment.

### Formative Assessment

Through a variety of methods, ongoing and regular assessment will be used during the teaching and learning process to inform teachers and students about how the learning is developing. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked, and provide feedback that is responsive to student needs and informs teaching practice.

### Summative Assessment

Summative assessment happens at the end of a teaching and learning process or experience and is planned in advance. The assessment is designed so that students can demonstrate their learning in authentic contexts and apply it in new ways. Summative assessment may take a variety of formats including examinations, lab reports, essays, presentations and projects, and is normally assigned as classwork but could sometimes be assigned as homework.

## MYP Personal Project

During Grade 10 (MYP year 5), students take part in the Personal Project, an exploration of an individual passion or interest over the course of several months. The project consists of a learning goal as well as a product goal, both of which are created by the student, with help from a supervisor who is a member of staff. The end result is a report that details the process of planning, applying skills, and reflecting on the results. This report is assessed and then moderated by all supervisors to formulate a predicted grade, and then submitted to the IB for external moderation. For further information on MYP assessment, please see ISR's *Middle Years Programme Guide* and *Personal Project Guide*.

## MYP Grading

The IB provides subject-specific assessment criteria for MYP years 1, 3 and 5, to be used for Grade 6, Grades 7-8, and Grades 9-10 respectively. In line with IB requirements, teachers make decisions about student achievement using their professional judgement, guided by the assessment criteria and achievement descriptors. These criteria and descriptors provide focus

on specific learning and teaching targets. They are communicated to students at the start of the year, and are included on the documents for each assessment. Teachers also include task-specific clarification in these rubrics.

Each subject has four assessment criteria. At the minimum, three of these should be summatively assessed twice, and the fourth once, by the end of semester one. All four should be assessed four times by the end of the academic year. Additionally, each strand within a criterion must be assessed at least once during the year.

Teachers employ diverse assessment tasks throughout the academic year, drawing on this evidence to form a comprehensive, data-informed basis for awarding IB grades (1-7). These grades are determined not by averaging criteria scores, but by applying MYP-provided grade boundaries. Student achievement levels and teacher feedback are recorded on the online platform, for individual students and their parents to view.

# Diploma Programme (DP)

## DP Assessment Practices

Assessment in the DP supports curricular goals and encourages appropriate student learning. There is a direct link between the course aims and objectives, and assessment, so students must understand the assessment expectations in order to be measured fairly.

Assessment is criterion-referenced, meaning each student's work is judged in relation to defined levels of attainment, rather than in relation to the work of other students. Teachers introduce these subject-specific assessment criteria at the beginning of the two-year course. Throughout the course, students practise interpreting them, and teachers apply them to students' work to give positive and constructive feedback for each task, allowing students to learn from and improve upon their work.

Teachers provide a wide variety of formative and summative assessment tasks on a regular basis, and ensure feedback is given within two weeks of when a student submits a piece of work. Student progress is recorded on the online platform, meaning it is continuously available to individual students and parents.

## DP Internal Standardisation of Assessment

An essential part of the assessment process is teacher collaboration to develop shared understandings. During meetings, teachers collaborate within and across subject-groups on areas that include schemes of work, and grading assessments against the IB criteria. Formal IB coursework is standardised via such collaboration, to ensure work fulfils the criteria

defined by the IB. Extended Essays are discussed and graded by several different supervisors during the internal moderation process. Teachers from the same subject-group discuss and grade each other's internal assessments and coursework, and moderate samples from across a range of marks, to ensure accuracy and consistency. Even if there is only one teacher in a particular area, collaboration can be through an external network, or via translation to allow other teachers to access work produced in a different language.

# DP Assessment Types

## Formative Assessment in the DP

In addition to informing about the learning taking place, ongoing formative assessment is a key component in helping students learn how to learn and develop. In one form or another it takes place in every lesson, and enables students to become better judges of their own performance. Systematic practice with and use of the assessment criteria, along with self-assessment, peer-assessment and teacher feedback, develops students' ability to decode and apply the assessment criteria.

## Summative Assessment in the DP

In the DP, summative assessment contributes directly to semester grades, predicted grades, internal-assessment grades, and final course grades. It measures student performance against DP assessment criteria to gauge attainment.

It generally takes the shape of the formal assessments that teachers set on at least two occasions each semester (in-class test, essay writeup for homework, etc.), and the school exams (one per semester in Grade 11; mock exams in Grade 12).

It also takes the shape of final assessments that directly contribute to the final Diploma qualification:

- final examinations, externally assessed by an IB examiner
- coursework sent direct to an IB examiner for external assessment
- coursework assessed internally by the teacher to the accepted IB standard (then confirmed or moderated by an external examiner).

### IB Diploma Coursework

All DP subjects have an element of coursework, which could be in the form of an essay, a report, an individual oral, a laboratory experiment, or something else. This coursework contributes to around 30% of a student's final grade in that subject.

At the beginning of the two-year course the teacher makes clear to the students what the coursework requirements and assessment criteria are for the particular subject.

The IB requires that schools formulate a timetable of internal deadlines for coursework, to spread the load in a realistic way for students, and allow teachers to give advice, provide feedback, and monitor the work's development so they can verify the work's authenticity; for further guidance, see the school's Academic Integrity Policy.

ISR's stages for each piece of coursework are as shown below, with the deadlines published to students and parents:

- Introduction: teacher gives students a detailed overview of the process)
- First Interim Deadline: students produce a proposal for their work
- Second Interim Deadline: students produce an outline for their work
- Draft Deadline: students submit a full draft of their work, ready for teacher feedback
- Final Deadline: students incorporate Draft feedback and submit a final version.

Late submission of any coursework is serious. It has an impact on other classes and subjects, and also impedes preparation for the final exams. Teachers inform the DP Coordinator straight away if a student misses a deadline. Further guidance and procedures for late or missing coursework can be found in the *Diploma Programme Handbook*.

Students must ensure their work is finished to the very best of their ability before submitting a draft, since in line with IB policy, teachers may give feedback on only one full draft. This feedback will be in the form of questions.

Once a final piece of work has been submitted, the student may ask the teacher for an indication of the grade. Teacher collaboration and standardisation ensures this will be as true a reflection as possible of the final score, but students must always be made aware that this is a 'predicted grade' and could change following IB marking or moderation.

### IB Diploma Exams

The final IB Diploma exams are held at the end of the course, during a three-week period in May. These exams contribute to around 70% of a student's final grade in each subject.

In preparation for these final exams, students practise with past exams and markschemes, and also sit mock exams to serve as a full rehearsal for the actual IB exams. This allows students and teachers to gauge progress and determine what needs to be consolidated and strengthened. The grade for the mock exam contributes significantly to the final predicted grade for the course, but should never be used as the only piece of evidence.

Whether for a school exam or an actual IB exam, DP students at ISR are not permitted to depart early, that is, before the official end-time. They should instead spend all available time proofing and checking their work, in order to maximise their score. Students whose inclusive access arrangements include extra time are strongly encouraged to make the most of it, but are not obliged to use it.

# DP Grading

In line with IB requirements, teachers use their professional judgement to gauge a student's attainment against the relevant assessment criteria, using the achievement descriptors. Overall grades are informed by a range of assessment tasks, not based on numerical values such as percentages or averages. Throughout the course, grades are adjusted in line with a student's expected progress by the end of Grade 12. Teachers are required to produce such projected grades in semester reports, for students' university applications, and as official predicted grades for the IB towards the end of the course.

## IB grades and descriptors

Students are awarded an IB grade from 1 to 7 for their assessed work, and for the course. General descriptors for these grades are as follows:

**Grade 7**

Excellent: consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, applied very effectively in a wide variety of contexts; consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation shown where appropriate; originality and insight; consistently high quality work.

**Grade 6**

Very good: consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, applied in a wide variety of contexts; evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation shown where appropriate; often demonstrates originality and insight.

**Grade 5**

Good: consistent and secure understanding of the required knowledge and skills, applied in a variety of contexts; evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation generally shown where appropriate; occasionally demonstrates originality and insight.

**Grade 4**

Adequate: solid general understanding of the required knowledge and skills, applied effectively in standard contexts; some evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation; limited insight.

**Grade 3**

Unsatisfactory: inconsistent or limited understanding and application of the required knowledge and skills; clear difficulties in some areas; analysis, synthesis and evaluation are often not evident.

**Grade 2**
Limited: understanding of the required knowledge and skills is superficial and application is very limited, even with support; little or no analysis, synthesis or evaluation.

**Grade 1**
Weak: minimal achievement against the objectives.

## Awarding of the IB Diploma

To gain the IB Diploma all candidates must fulfil the IB's passing criteria:

- A total-points score of 24 or more
  (i.e. the combined total of the IB grade 1-7 for each of six subjects)
- 9 or more points across three SL subjects
- 12 or more points across three HL subjects
- Grade 3 awarded for no more than three subjects
- Grade 2 awarded for no more than two subjects
- No Grade 1 awarded for any subject
- EE and TOK both at grade D or above
- All CAS requirements met

Students access their Diploma results via the IB's online portal in the July following their final exams. The IB sends the hard-copy diploma certificates to schools in September. Students collect their certificates from the school, or can make arrangements to have them posted.

# Links with other policies

This implementation of this policy is supported by wider ISR policies and specifically the following documents:

- *ISR Teaching and Learning Policy*
- *ISR Academic Integrity Policy*
- *ISR Inclusion Policy*
- *ISR Homework Policy*
- *ISR Language Policy*
- *ISR Staff Handbook*
- ISR's PYP, MYP and DP programme-specific handbooks

*NB - Last policy review led in 2024 by Rheannon Elliott, PYP Coordinator, Andrew Shawcroft, MYP Coordinator, Vicki Hayward, DP Coordinator*