

ISR Assessment Policy (Modified for Parents)



Inspiring international-mindedness, academic and personal excellence and responsible engagement



Reviewed March 2017

(Abbreviated version for parents – full version is available from the office.)

International School Rheintal Assessment Philosophy

The school's assessment practices reflect the school and IB philosophies. Assessment adds to the development of a supportive, challenging environment where each student may reach his or her potential. It is integral to all teaching and learning. It identifies what students know, understand, can do and feel at different stages in the learning process. It provides a reliable measure of, and feedback on knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes at different levels of student learning. This feedback promotes life-long learning, open-mindedness, tolerance, and respect and responsibility for themselves, others, the environment and encourages students to think critically, reflect thoughtfully, communicate effectively, appreciate and respect diversity and to celebrate their successes.

Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to promote student learning, promote student self-awareness, to provide information about student learning, and to contribute to the development of the program.

This can be done through:

- Assessing the student's prior knowledge and skills
- Assessing the students ongoing development and learning
- Differentiated learning experiences
- Communication of student understanding through varied learning styles
- Formative and summative assessments
- Engaging students in reflection on their learning
- Records of individual student development and progression

ISR Assessment Practices

General ISR Assessment

- Assessment allows the school to monitor effectiveness of programs and provides direction for teachers, students, parents, administration and overall school development
- Assessments should be sensitive to and reflect, cultural, linguistic, racial, class, learning style, physical and gender differences
- Assessment should use a variety of tools and strategies – both formal and informal
- Formative and summative assessments should be used
- Assessment should allow for all students to be successful
- Assessment should be differentiated to meet students' needs
- Assessment should be transparent to all stakeholders, noting the criteria needed to succeed
- Assessment should assess all aspects of the program – not only skills and knowledge
- Reflection is an essential process of assessment and indicates understanding over time
- Assessment provides students and teachers with feedback to revise performance and improve learning and teaching
- Timely, direct, specific and appropriate feedback is central to all learning and teaching
- Assessment is designed to improve student learning and understanding
- Assessment is anchored in authentic and valid tasks

Standardized Testing

The school participates in the International Schools Assessments. Each year, students in Grades 4, 6, 8 and 10 and any new students in Grades 5, 7, and 9 will participate in these. Results will be analyzed and compared with internal assessments. Individual results are used

internally and not shared with parents. Overall school results are shared with parents through the newsletter.

Primary Years Programme (PYP)

Effective assessments allow the child to:

- Have expectations that are known and understood in advance
- Analyse their learning and understand what needs to be improved
- Demonstrate the range of their conceptual understandings, their knowledge, their skills and their attitudes
- Be able to use and apply their learning, not merely recall facts
- Ask further questions, base their learning on real-life experiences, to problems they would like to solve
- Focus on the learning journey of producing a quality product or performance
- Highlight and celebrate their strengths to demonstrate mastery and expertise
- Express different perspectives
- Promote reflection, self- and peer-evaluation.
- Assessment expectations refer directly to discipline strands and their phase continua

Assessment in the classroom includes:

- Representative examples of students' work or performance to provide information about student learning
- Evidence of students' understanding and thinking
- Documentation of the learning process for groups and individuals
- Engagement of students in reflecting on their learning
- Students assessing work produced by themselves and by others
- Development of clear rubrics
- Identifying exemplar student work and sharing
- Records of test/task results

Continuous assessment provides insights into children's understanding, knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes. It is a means of exploring the learning styles and individual differences of the children in order to differentiate instruction. Feedback from assessment allows for the improvement of the overall programme.

Effective assessments allow the students to:

- Share their learning and understanding with others
- Demonstrate a range of knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills
- Use a variety of learning styles, multiple intelligences and abilities to express their understanding
- Know and understand in advance the criteria for producing a quality product or performance
- Participate in reflection self- and peer-assessment
- Base their learning on real-life experiences that can lead to further inquiries
- Express different points of view and interpretations

Effective assessments allow the parents to:

- See evidence of student learning and development
- Develop an understanding of the student's progress
- Provide opportunities to create informed dialogue with the teacher to support and celebrate student learning

Continuums

These are visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement or identify where a student is in a process.

Portfolios

Seesaw is the tool used for students' portfolios for Kindergarten 3 to Grade 6. In Kindergarten 1 and 2 students maintain hard copy portfolios.

A portfolio is a record of students' involvement in learning which is designated to demonstrate success, growth, higher-order thinking, creativity, assessment strategies and reflection. A portfolio is a celebration of an active mind at work. It provides a picture of each student's progress and development over a period of time both as individual and group learners. It enables students to reflect with teachers, parents and peers in order to identify their strengths and growth as well as areas for improvement, and then to set individual goals and establish teacher and learning plans.

The portfolio should:

- Document a range of experiences and curriculum areas
- Show the development of knowledge, conceptual understanding, transdisciplinary skills, attitudes and attributes of the learner profile over a period of time
- Be used to document action
- Document both the process of learning and the product – including images and evidence of students in the process of constructing meaning
- Be used as a tool for assessment and reporting purposes for students, parents, teachers and school administrators

(Primary Years Programme The Primary Years Programme: A Basis for Practice)

Reporting

Reporting is a means of giving feedback from assessment. It describes the progress of children's learning and identifies areas for growth.

Conferences

The purpose of conferences is to give information to children, teachers and parents.

At ISR the following four structures are used:

1. Teacher-Student Conferences (Informal)

These are designed to give students feedback so they can reflect on their work and further refine and develop their skills. It is important that these individual conferences occur frequently in order to support and encourage the student's learning and teacher planning.

2. Teacher-Parent Conferences (Informal)

These are designed to give the parents information about the student's progress development and needs, and about the school's programme. Teachers should take this opportunity to gather background information, to answer the parents' questions, to address their concerns, and to help define their role in the learning process. The parents should take the opportunity to provide the teacher with the cultural context of the student's learning.

3. Student-led Conferences (SLC's) (March/April)

Student-led conferences involve the student and the parent. The students are responsible for leading the conference, and also take the responsibility for learning by sharing the process with their parents. It may involve students demonstrating their understanding through a variety of different learning situations. There may be several conferences taking place simultaneously. All participants will know the format of the SLC and their roles prior to the day.

The ISR PYP Team has agreed:

Students hold their SLC, near the end of the academic year, in order to celebrate their learning accomplishments.

Students are involved in planning and preparing for their SLC. Students will, with teacher guidance, be responsible for creating stations to share learning experiences. These stations will be in their homeroom classrooms. Homeroom and single subject teachers will be present. Students will be responsible for leading their parents through the conference, discussing their development.

4. Three-way Conferences

The three-way conferences involve the student, parents and teacher. Students discuss their learning and understanding with their parents and teacher, who are responsible for supporting the student through this process. Students are responsible for reflecting upon work samples they have chosen to share, that have been previously selected with guidance and support from the teacher and could be from the student's portfolio. The student, parents and the teacher collaborate to establish and identify the student's strengths and areas for improvement. This may lead to the setting of a new goal, with all determining how they can support the achievement of the goals. The teacher is an integral part of the process and takes notes of the discussion. These notes may then be used in the written report. All of the participants must understand the format and their roles prior to the conference.

Grade Level Expectations (GLE)

- A Grade Level Expectations document will be created by all teachers for all subjects during the school year.
- The GLE will be created from the PYP discipline strand phases and learning outcomes and follows students from Kindergarten 1 to Grade 6, then will be passed to their MYP homeroom teacher.
- At the end of each academic year homeroom teachers will discuss individual grade level expectations with the homeroom teacher for the following year.

Written Reports

Written report cards are sent home twice per year communicating student learning. Report cards will be written and sent to parents twice per year and used for assessment purposes as a formal communication with parents.

Exhibition

As the culminating PYP experience, it is required that the exhibition reflects all the major features of the program. Therefore, it must include regular and carefully planned assessment.

This unit of inquiry is in the last year of the PYP, and is the last unit. As such, it is the responsibility of the entire PYP team to contribute to the exhibition – either through their

teaching of the PYP throughout the years and/or by volunteering to be a mentor for groups during the Exhibition unit itself.

Middle Years Programme (MYP)

Assessment in the MYP is an integral part of learning, involving students in self-assessment and providing feedback on the thinking strategies and processes as well as the outcome. The MYP requires teachers to organize continuous assessment, over the course of the programme, according to specified criteria that correspond to the objectives of each subject. Regular internal assessment and reporting play a major role in the students' and parents' understanding of the objectives and criteria, in the students' preparation for final assessment, and more generally in their development according to the principles of the programme. The MYP offers a criterion-referenced model of assessment. Teachers are responsible for structuring varied and valid assessment tasks (including tests and examinations) that will allow students to demonstrate achievement according to the required objectives within each subject group. These include open-ended problem-solving activities and investigations, organized debates, hands-on experimentation, analysis and reflection (*Middle Years Programme MYP: From Principles into Practice*).

Task Specific Clarification and Rubrics

- Task specific expectations and rubrics are based on criteria for each year established in advance and aimed to provide focus on specific learning and teaching targets.
- The ISR assessment criteria documents provide a space for task specific expectations and rubrics to be specified.
- Expectations should be provided to the students prior to assessment.

Diploma Programme (DP)

Assessment plays a crucial role in supporting learning as well as in measuring learning.

It is important to stress that the single most important aim of DP assessment is that it should support curricular goals and encourage appropriate student learning. This is achieved by the DP assessments measuring students' achievement levels against published criteria that are derived from the course aims and objectives. To be fairly measured students need to understand what the assessment expectations are and these should all be introduced early in the course and be the focus of class and homework activities. The assessment requirements make it clear how summative assessment will be conducted, and how the student will be judged at the end of the course.

ISR DP assessments throughout the two years of the program

In the Diploma Programme, assessment is intended to support curricular goals and to improve and assist student learning. Assessment results enable teachers to adjust and design lessons that support all students and provide challenging experiences in the subject taught. Assessment also provides feedback on the students' approaches to learning and informs planning for approaches to teaching ("Assessment Policy"). DP assessments are based on the course aims and objectives and, therefore, effective teaching to the course requirements also ensures effective teaching to the formal assessment requirements. The DP also places an emphasis on criterion-related assessment. This method of assessment judge students' work in relation to identified levels of attainment, rather than in relation to the work of other students.

Assessments contributing to the official final IB Diploma grades

Most of these assessments are externally assessed, and include examinations or work completed during the course and then sent to an external examiner. Some formal summative assessments are internally assessed, requiring the teacher to mark the work to the accepted IB standard. Their standard is then confirmed or moderated by an external moderator.

Recording and Reporting

Recording and reporting DP assessment consists of grade bank on Managebac which must be maintained regularly by each Diploma teacher. Assessment tasks must be posted on Managebac in advance or at the time a task is assigned so students are well aware of upcoming assessments and can organize their time appropriately. Managebac also contains a record of marks and feedback comments based on the IB Diploma subject assessment criteria. In addition, comments can and should be written on assessed work, as is common practice. Teachers are obliged to scan assessed work for their own records and in the event such documentation is needed. These scanned assessed works can be shared with students and parents via Google Drive. Assessed work must be returned within ten school days of being handed in, i.e. in a timely manner, in order that the work remains relevant to the syllabus.

During the course of one school year ISR aims to formally report to all parents on four occasions as indicated below:

October/November: Mid semester progress and Parent Teacher Student Conferences
Parents are invited to meet with their son's/daughter's subject teachers to discuss academic progress to date. A progress report indicating the cumulative achievement grades will be made available shortly before the conferences.

January: Semester Grades
For Grade 11 students a report is issued with a grade and a comment from the teacher addressing the student that gives forward strategies based on performance to date that include student targets for improvement with a clear indication of how they may be achieved. (Approaches to learning expectations)

For Grade 12 students a report is issued with a grade and comments
A comment from the teacher addressing the student that gives forward strategies and targets to aid students in preparation for the internal mock exams in February/March. The comment should give a clear indication of how set targets may be achieved. (Approaches to learning expectations)

March / April: Mid Semester Grades and Parent Teacher Student conferences
Grade 11 and 12 parents are invited to meet with their son's/daughter's subject teachers to discuss academic progress to date.

Grade 12 teachers give an IB predicted grade based on students' performances and the internal assessment grades and this will be made available to the IBDP coordinator for uploading onto the IB information system.

May: Grade 12 Semester Grades and Written Report
For Grade 12 the report is given after the exams and is a final report from the school.

June: Grade 11 Semester Grades and Written Report
For Grade 11 a comment from the teacher addressing the student that gives forward strategies based on performance to date that include student targets for improvement with a clear indication of how they may be achieved. (Approaches to learning expectations)

The semester and mid-semester grades are based on the IB 1-7 grades and are derived from a variety of assessment tasks using the appropriate criteria and descriptors provided by the IB Grade Descriptors guide. Grades are based on the various completed components ratios within each subject, founded on the syllabus guide and the most recent IB posted Grade boundaries. Some discretion and professional judgment is also required, as each subject is an ongoing part of the two-year program. However, it is important that grades are based on the work covered to date, not on where they are expected at the end of the two-year program. Grades are meant to be constructive, providing students with a snapshot of how they are doing at any particular time in the program. Grades are not meant to be punitive.

ISR High School Diploma

ISR is accredited by CIS and all ISR students who meet the requirements are eligible to graduate with an ISR high school diploma at the end of Grade 12.

Student Progress Policy

Based on student performance in Grade 11 parents of those students who are seen to be struggling in the IB Diploma Programme will be counselled and given advice for how to progress.

Works Cited

"Assessment Policy." *Curriculum | Bonn International School*. Bonn International School, n.d. Web. 13 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.bonn-is.de/node/5173>>.

IB Diploma Programme: From Principles into Practice. N.p.: IB, 2015. Print.

Middle Years Programme MYP: From Principles into Practice. N.p.: IB, 2014. Print.

Primary Years Programme The Primary Years Programme: A Basis for Practice. N.p.: IB, 2009. Print.