

International School of Piraeus

ASSESSMENT POLICY

The student's intellectual, personal and social development is the focus of INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF PIRAEUS. We offer a comprehensive, inquiry-based and student-centred approach to teaching and learning. We promote high academic standards and intellectual rigour, but also develop various skills and positive attitudes towards learning. We place an emphasis on the ideas of international understanding and responsible and active citizenship.

ESSENTIAL AGREEMENT

The assessment in the PYP is holistic. Teachers use various tasks, strategies and tools to give every student possibility to develop best in his/her own way. Furthermore, homeroom and single subject teachers, students, peers, external experts and the school community are included in the assessment. The Portfolio is an essential part of the PYP assessment process.

PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the gathering and analysis of information about student performance. It identifies what students know, understand, can do and feel at different stages of the learning process.

The assessment can be subdivided into three closely related areas:

- Assessing – how we actually discover what the students have learnt and know
- Recording – how we choose to collect and analyse findings
- Reporting – how we pass on the information.

At ISP we believe assessment is integral to all teaching and learning. It is central to the PYP goal of thoughtfully and effectively guiding students through the five essential elements of learning:

- the acquisition of knowledge
- the understanding of concepts
- the mastering of skills
- the development of attitudes
- the decisions to take action

- to evaluate programmes

Both teachers and students should be actively engaged in assessing students' progress as part of the development of wider critical thinking and self-evaluation skills.

Teachers should also be concerned with evaluating the effectiveness of the program. The PYP describes the taught curriculum as the written curriculum in action. Using the written curriculum, and in collaboration with colleagues and children, the teacher generates questions which guide structured inquiry and instruction. Assessment focuses on the quality of student learning during the process of inquiry and instruction and on the quality of the products of that learning.

Assessment is, therefore, integral to the taught curriculum. It is the means by which we analyse student learning and the effectiveness of our teaching and acts as a foundation on which to base our future planning and practice.

ASSESSING

The assessment of the students' development and learning is an essential component of the curriculum, and helps to inform continued development, learning and teaching.

At the International School of Piraeus, teachers put to use a range of formative and summative assessments which demonstrate students' achievements.

Pre-assessment: occurs before embarking on new learning to uncover prior knowledge and experiences.

Formative assessment: provides information that is used in order to plan the next stage in learning. It is interwoven with learning and helps teachers and students to find out what the students already know and can do. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked and function purposefully together.

Formative assessment aims to promote learning by giving regular and frequent feedback throughout the learning process. This helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding, to foster self motivation and enthusiasm for learning, to engage in thoughtful reflection, to develop the capacity for self-assessment, and to recognize the criteria for success. There is evidence that increased use of formative assessment particularly helps those students who are low achievers to make significant improvements in their understanding.

Summative assessment: aims to give teachers and students a clear insight into students' understanding. Summative assessment is the culmination of the teaching and learning process and gives the students opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned.

It can assess several elements simultaneously: it informs and leads to improvement in student learning and the teaching process; it measures understanding of the central idea and prompts students towards action.

Assessment in the classroom includes:

- using representative samples of students' work or performance to provide information about student learning
- collecting evidence of students' understanding and thinking
- documenting learning processes of groups and individuals

- engaging students in reflecting on their learning
- students assessing work produced by themselves and by others
- developing clear rubrics
- identifying exemplar student work
- keeping records of students' work

RECORDING

The International school of Piraeus uses a range of methods and approaches to gather information about students' learning. We record this information using a variety of tools, which are the instruments used to collect data.

Strategies	Tools
Observation	Anecdotal records, check lists, rubrics, continuum
Performance assessment	Rubrics, checklists, anecdotal records, benchmarks/exemplars, quizzes
Selected responses	Continuums, checklists, exemplars
Open-ended tasks	Rubrics, exemplars, anecdotal notes, continuums
Process focused assessment	Rubrics, anecdotal records, check lists, continuum
Portfolio	Rubrics, checklists, exemplars, anecdotal records

Who performs assessment
Teacher
Student (self assessment)
Parents
Peers
External (Ministry, IBO)
Audience beyond classroom (other classes, community)
Experts from public institutions

Reporting on assessment at ISP includes communicating what students know, understand and can do. Reporting involves parents, students and teachers as partners and is honest, comprehensive and understandable to all parties.

Reporting to parents, students and teachers occurs through:

- **Conferences**

student-teacher

Students and teachers have regular informal conferences, designed to give feedback so they can reflect on their work and further refine and develop their skills.

parent-teacher

Parents can meet with teachers at monthly parent-teacher conferences, which are held once a month from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. and weekly optional conference hours (in the morning) according to the list provided in September.

- **Portfolios and Student - led conferences**

Student Led Conferences are formal reporting sessions with parents, led by the students themselves. The teacher's role is to guide and prepare the students for this important role. The emphasis is on the discussion between a child and his/her parent.

The focus of the Student Led Conference is on students' progress – academic and social. Student Led Conferences are designed to give students ownership of their own assessment of their learning, so they can become more actively involved and committed. These conferences make students accountable for their learning and encourage student/parent communication.

Other benefits are that students learn to evaluate their own progress and build critical thinking skills, self confidence and self esteem. Parents become an active participant in their child's learning and skills and have an opportunity to help their child set positive goals. Students are trained to become confident participants. Parents will be supported and guided with checklists and suggested guided questions so that they get the most information possible from their child.

The Portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas. The collection of work is selected by students based on the personal as evidence of student self-reflection.

The Portfolio is a learning tool used throughout the child's primary years to show the progress of learning.

Essential Agreements about Portfolio Assessment

- The portfolio is a form of assessment that students collate together with their teachers.
- It is not just a collection of student work, but a selection - the student must be involved in choosing and justifying the pieces to be included.
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- It provides samples of the student's work which show progress over time. By reflecting on their own learning (self-assessment, reflections, assessment tools, teacher comments) students begin to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their knowledge. These weaknesses set goals for the students.
- The criteria for selecting and assessing the portfolio contents must be clear to the teacher and the students when they start the process.
- **Descriptive assessment and reports:**

Students get descriptive assessment at the end of each term (three times a year: December, March, June)

Descriptive assessments are seen as a summative record for students, parents and the school itself of a student's progress. They clearly indicate areas of strengths, areas for improvement, and where students are involved in providing input (through self-assessment), are helpful aids to a student's development.

Greek reports based on the Greek Ministry of Education are also given along with the descriptive assessment (Grades 4-6) as they are designated by the Ministry of Education for primary public or private education. There is a specific marking scale for Grades 4-6. (A,B,C marking scale for Grade 4 and 1-10 scale -10 being excellent- for Grades 5-6).

- **The exhibition:**

The Grade 6 exhibition is a significant event in the final year of the PYP, synthesizing the essential elements of the PYP, and sharing them with the whole school community. It is an opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of the learner profile that have been developing throughout their engagement with the PYP. Students are required to engage in a collaborative, trans disciplinary inquiry process that involves them in identifying, investigating and offering solutions to real-life issues or problems.

Key purposes of the PYP Exhibition include the following:

- For students to engage and report on an in-depth, collaborative inquiry
- To provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate independence and responsibility for their own learning
- To provide students with an opportunity to explore multiple perspectives
- For students to synthesize and apply their learning of previous years, and to reflect on their journey through the PYP
- To provide an authentic process of assessing student understanding
- To demonstrate how students can take action as a result of their learning
- To unite the students, teachers, parents and other members of the school community in a collaborative experience that incorporates the essential elements of the PYP
- To celebrate the transition of learners from primary to middle/secondary education

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

Effective assessment should enable students to:

- share their learning and understanding with others
- demonstrate a range of knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills
- 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
- analyse their learning and understand what needs to be improved.

Highlight their strengths and demonstrate mastery and expertise

Effective assessment should enable teachers to:

- plan in response to student and teacher inquiries
- develop criteria for producing a quality product or performance
- gather evidence from which sound conclusions can be drawn
- provide evidence that can be effectively reported and understood by the whole school community
- collaboratively review and reflect on student performance and progress
- take into account a variety of learning styles, multiple intelligences and abilities including different cultural background.

Effective assessments allow parents to:

- see evidence of student learning and development
- develop an understanding of the student's progress
- provide opportunities to support and celebrate student learning.

Continuous assessment provides insights into students' understanding, knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is also a means of exploring the learning styles and individual differences of the children in order to differentiate instruction.

Feedback plays an important role in the PYP Programme and we at ISP believe that parent feedback is essential to improve and further expand the overall programme.

GLOSSARY

Assessment strategies	
<i>Observations</i>	All students are observed often and regularly, with the teacher taking a focus varying from wide angle (for example, focusing on the whole class) to close up (for example, focusing on one student or one activity), and from nonparticipant (observing from without) to participant (observing from within).
<i>Performance assessments</i>	The assessment of goal-directed tasks with established criteria. They provide authentic and significant challenges and problems. In these tasks, there are numerous approaches to the problem and rarely only one correct response. They are usually multimodal and require the use of many skills. Audio, video and narrative records are often useful for this kind of assessment.
<i>Process-focused assessments</i>	Students are observed often and regularly, and the observations are recorded by noting the typical as well as non-typical behaviours, collecting multiple observations to enhance reliability, and synthesizing evidence from different contexts to increase validity. A system of note taking and record keeping is created that minimizes writing and recording time. Checklists, inventories and narrative descriptions (such as learning logs) are common methods of collecting observations.
<i>Selected responses</i>	Single occasion, one-dimensional exercises. Tests and quizzes are the most familiar examples of this form of assessment.
<i>Open-ended tasks</i>	Situations in which students are presented with a stimulus and asked to communicate an original response. The answer might be a brief written answer, a drawing, a diagram or a solution. The work, with the assessment criteria attached, could be included in a portfolio.
<i>Portfolios</i>	An ongoing, purposeful collection is composed of selected student work and is designed to demonstrate growth, creativity, and reflection.

Assessment tools	
<i>Rubrics</i>	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.
<i>Exemplars</i>	Samples of students' work that serve as concrete standards against which other samples are 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.
<i>Checklists</i>	These are lists of information, data, attributes or elements that should be present. A mark scheme is a type of checklist.
<i>Anecdotal records</i>	Anecdotal records are brief written notes based on observations of students. "Learning stories" are focused, extended observations that can be analysed later. These records need to be systematically compiled and organized.
<i>Continuums</i>	These are visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement or identify where a student is in a process.