SOS-Hermann Gmeiner

International College

Assessment Policy

## Mission Statement, Philosophy and Objectives

The Mission of SOS-Hermann Gmeiner International College is to provide a school of academic excellence for students from SOS Children's Villages from all over Africa, together with students from the host country, Ghana, in a spirit of Pan-Africanism and an awareness of the social needs of society. The School's philosophy embraces internationalism in its widest sense, a commitment to uplift Africa and active service to the community. Its educational mission is holistic in nature, aiming to develop all students into confident adults capable of facing the challenges of a fast–changing world, by inculcating in them critical and analytical abilities which will equip them to become compassionate thinkers who are aware of their common humanity, with a belief and pride in themselves as Africans. The College's ultimate mission is to graduate life-long learners who are fully prepared for the best universities worldwide and who are also committed to putting their knowledge, skills and resources into developing their continent, Africa.

IB 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 programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

IB Learner Profile
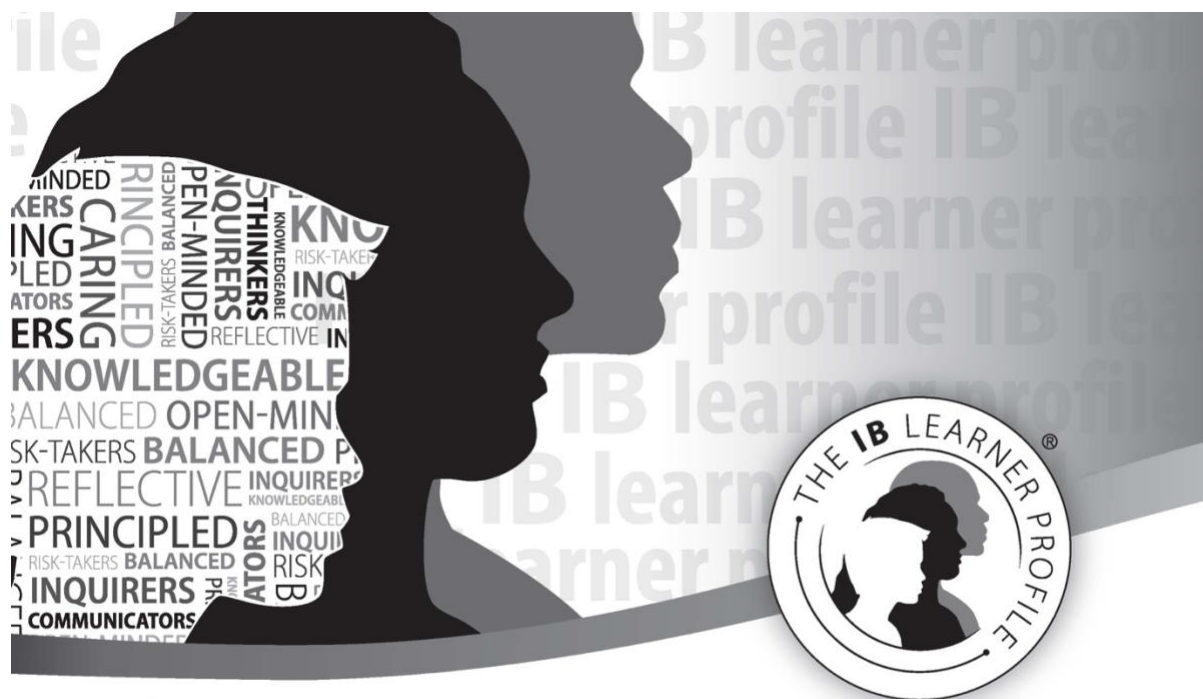
IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

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 analyse 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, 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.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Part A: The Nature of Assessment

What is assessment?

Assessment is a fundamental and integral to the learning process – concerned with the evaluation of student learning, progress, assessment readiness and attainment. It is important that assessment:

- o reflects what is taught
- o is based on clear instruments for assessment that are communicated to students
- o is subject to consistent procedures and policies articulated to everyone involved
- o provides relevant feedback as appropriate to students

SOS-HGIC is a whole-IB school, offering a two-year Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the two-year Diploma Programme (DP). As such is committed to the philosophy and approach to assessment espoused by the IB.

What is assessment for?

- o The purpose of **formative assessment** is to monitor students learning so as to be able to identify strengths and weaknesses that can guide subsequent teacher planning and provide feedback to students on their current capabilities. Formative assessment is sometimes referred to as **assessment for learning**.

- o The purpose of **summative assessment** is to evaluate student learning at the end of a unit of work, or at a particular juncture of, or the end of, the course, so that performance can be compared against some agreed standard or benchmark. Summative assessment is sometimes referred to as **assessment of learning**.

- o An initial assessment to establish level of competence at the start of the work may be undertaken - this is called **diagnostic assessment**.
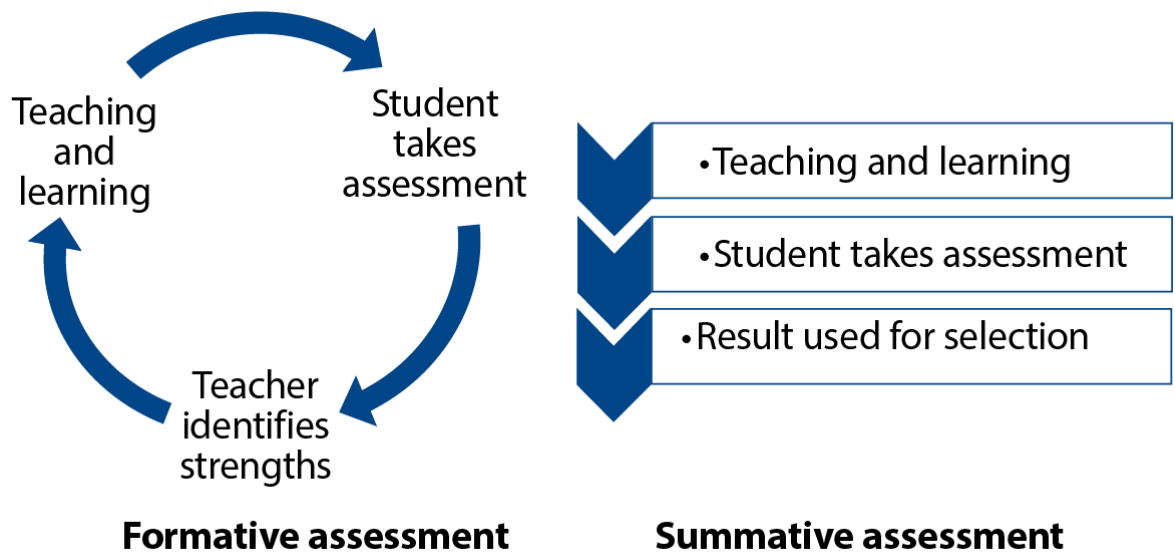
Formative assessment   Summative assessment

Fig 1. Two possible differences in how formative and summative assessments are used
[Image Source: https://resources.ibo.org/ib/topic/Assessment/works/edu_11162-47165?root=1.6.2.8.5&lang=en]

What are the key concepts for evaluating the quality of an assessment task?

In the construction and evaluation of assessment tasks, three key aspects must be borne in mind:

- o An assessment is **valid** if it measures what it is supposed to measure
- o An assessment is **reliable** if it is produces consistent results across different students, assessors or circumstances
- o An assessment is **authentic** if it sets a task to be performed in a meaningful real-life setting

Validity: an assessment is valid if the tests actually measures what it states it measures.

Reliability: an assessment is reliable if the student gets the same result if the test is repeated

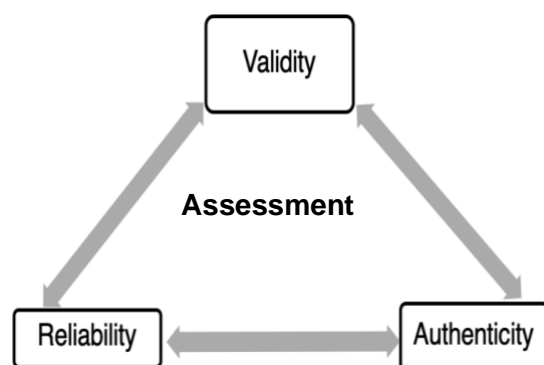**Authenticity:** an assessment is authentic if the task is presented as it would appear in a real-world situation

Fig 2. Evaluating quality of assessment

What is the IB position on these aspects of assessment?

IB insists that learning, teaching, and assessment effectively inform and influence one another (standard 0404). In order to achieve these interconnections, the following practices are advanced:

1. Students and teachers use **feedback** to improve learning, teaching and assessment
2. The school uses assessment methods that are **varied and fit-for-purpose** for the curriculum and stated learning outcomes and objectives

3. The school administrates assessment **consistently, fairly, inclusively and transparently**
4. Students take opportunities to **consolidate** their learning through assessment

Practice 1 emphasizes the importance of formative assessment. Practices 2 and 3 connect to the validity, reliability and authenticity of assessments. Practice 4 refers implicitly to the "backwash effect" in which assessment is used to shape subsequent learning experiences. Teachers should aim for a **positive backwash effect** in which assessment enhances the quality of teaching and learning by guiding teacher planning without allowing it to consume disproportionate resources or to dominate the educational landscape.
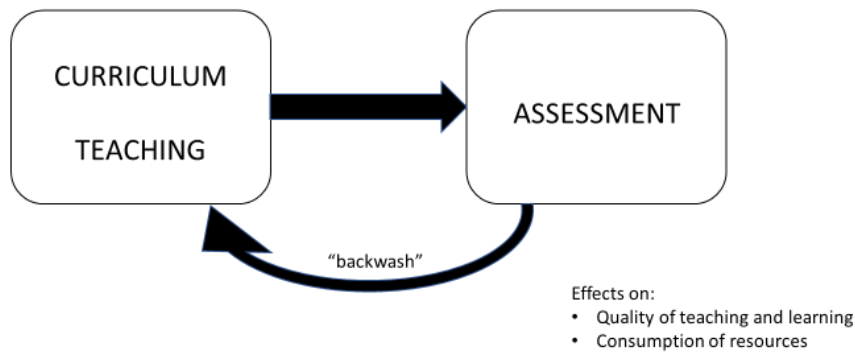

Fig 3. Backwash effect

Backward design is a model for creating such a positive backwash effect in which the role of assessment is sandwiched between the identification of desired learning outcomes and the planning of learning experiences. The assessment is designed with the learning outcomes in mind and provides a measure of the success of the learning experiences to which students have been exposed.
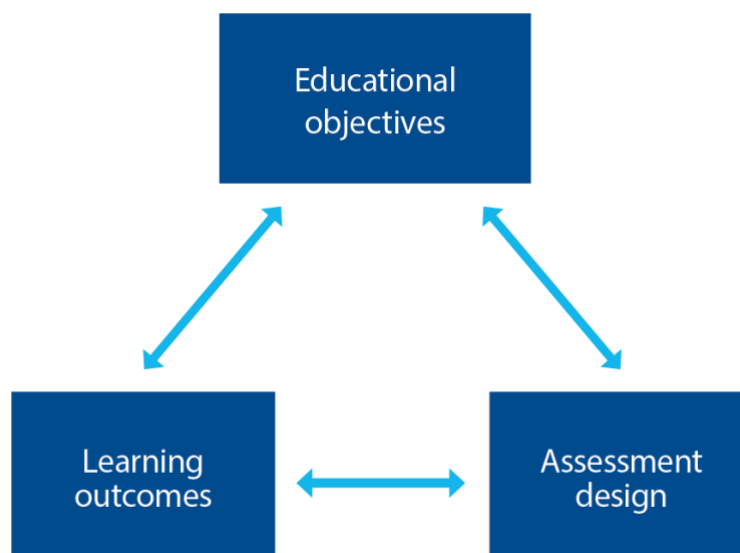

Fig 4. Relationship between objectives, outcome and design
Image source: https://resources.ibo.org/ib/topic/Assessment/works/edu_11162-47165?root=1.6.2.8.5&lang=en

The IB position is that, while all of the three aspects of assessment outlined above are crucial, validity and authenticity should not be compromised by an unrealistic obsession with maximising reliability. Hence the assessment tasks set by the IB, and the kinds of tasks that the IB encourages teachers to develop, focus on meaningful assignments in which skills and capabilities can be applied to novel situations. The primacy of validity and authenticity can be summed up in the mantra: "we should test what is important; not judge as important what we can test".

This emphasis places some extra demands upon stakeholders. It renders the setting and marking of tasks more time-consuming, requires students to put more effort into preparation and knowing how to respond, and it means that on some occasions a residual degree of subjectivity in the assessment may need to be tolerated.

What are the various types of assessments that can be deployed?

There are many different types of assessment task that are suitable for measuring learning of different kinds:

Types of Assessment Tasks

TASK TYPE	EXAMPLES OF RELATED SKILLS		DESCRIPTION
Written examination	• Communication • Organization • Affective	• Reflection • Critical thinking • Transfer	Formal individual test on substantial course material administered under controlled conditions
Unit test	• Communication • Organization • Affective skills	• Reflection • Critical thinking • Transfer	Formal individual test related to a completed unit of work
Presentation	• Communication • Collaboration • Organisation • Reflection • Information literacy	• Media literacy • Critical-thinking • Creative thinking • Transfer	Individual or group oral submission to the teacher, class or other audience
Project	• Organisation • Creative-thinking • Transfer • Collaboration	• Information literacy • Media literacy • Communication • Affective	Sustained task culminating in written product or exhibition
Portfolio/Dossier	• Organisation • Creative-thinking • Transfer	• Reflection • Affective • Collaboration	Collection of items that relate to one overarching assignment
Investigation / Laboratory report	• Communication • Information literacy	• Media literacy • Reflection	Written account of practical work undertaken in a science
Listening	• Reflection	• Critical thinking	
Blog post	• Reflection • Media literacy	• Information literacy • Communication • Social	**Typically a written academic reflection of student learning based on a concept on topic which allows students to engage with other colleagues and provide adequate and relevant peer feedback and opportunities for discussions**

The type of assessment task must be selected with the desired learning outcomes in mind, and its suitability for measuring them.

What is the difference between marks and grades?

It is important to maintain the distinction between marks and grades at all times.

- o **Marks**: marks can allocate to specific elements of a particular assessment task through the use of a markscheme – taken together, they indicate the proportion of the task answered correctly. Marks can also be awarded by using some assessment instruments other than markschemes (see below).
- o **Grades**: grades are measures of quality that indicate student attainment by making a professional judgment based on a defined standard. They carry the same value regardless of the specific tasks used to generate them

Marks can be awarded according to the specifics of the task set, whereas grades are always awarded on the basis of publicly-defined descriptions of performance, known as **grade descriptors**.

The IB aims for **criterion-related assessment** in which grades are determined on the basis of written descriptors. For most courses, grades are awarded on a scale of 1-7, where each grade corresponds roughly to the following adjectives:

- o 7: excellent
- o 6: very good
- o 5: good
- o 4: satisfactory
- o 3: mediocre
- o 2: poor
- o 1: very poor

Teachers need to develop a deep understanding of the meaning of each step on the IB grade scale so that they can judge students' work with reference to it. Assimilation of these standards and their consistent application across assessment tasks requires exemplars from previous tasks to be retained for reference, alongside the grade descriptors that are available.

What kinds of assessment instrument can be used and where are they appropriate?

- o **Markscheme**: marks are attached to specific parts of the assessment task and can be added up to give a total for the whole task

- **Analytic criteria**: aspects of the task are separated into criteria, each of which is composed of a set of level descriptors. Each level descriptor is associated with a mark, and marks for each criterion can be added up to give a total for the task

- **Markbands**: a single set of level descriptors – each of which is associated with a range of marks.

- **Global impression**: a single set of level descriptors – each of which is associated with a mark

Different types of tasks lend themselves to different types of assessment instrument. For example, tasks in science and mathematics, where there are easily identifiable independent sub-tasks, are best assessed with a markscheme specific to the task itself. On the other hand, some tasks in languages or the arts may be more effectively assessed using analytic criteria or global impression because the quality of the response can be best judged through a consideration of a small number of discrete aspects, or even as a completely integrated whole.

What processes are required in order to move from marks to grades?

There are two distinct stages in negotiating the journey from marks to grades:

- o **Standardisation**: to ensure that the award of marks to different candidates is fair. Where there are different teaching sets, this process requires collaborative work between the teachers involved.

- o **Grade award**: to examine student responses to the task and identify, using grade descriptors, where the boundaries between grades on the IB scale should be placed.
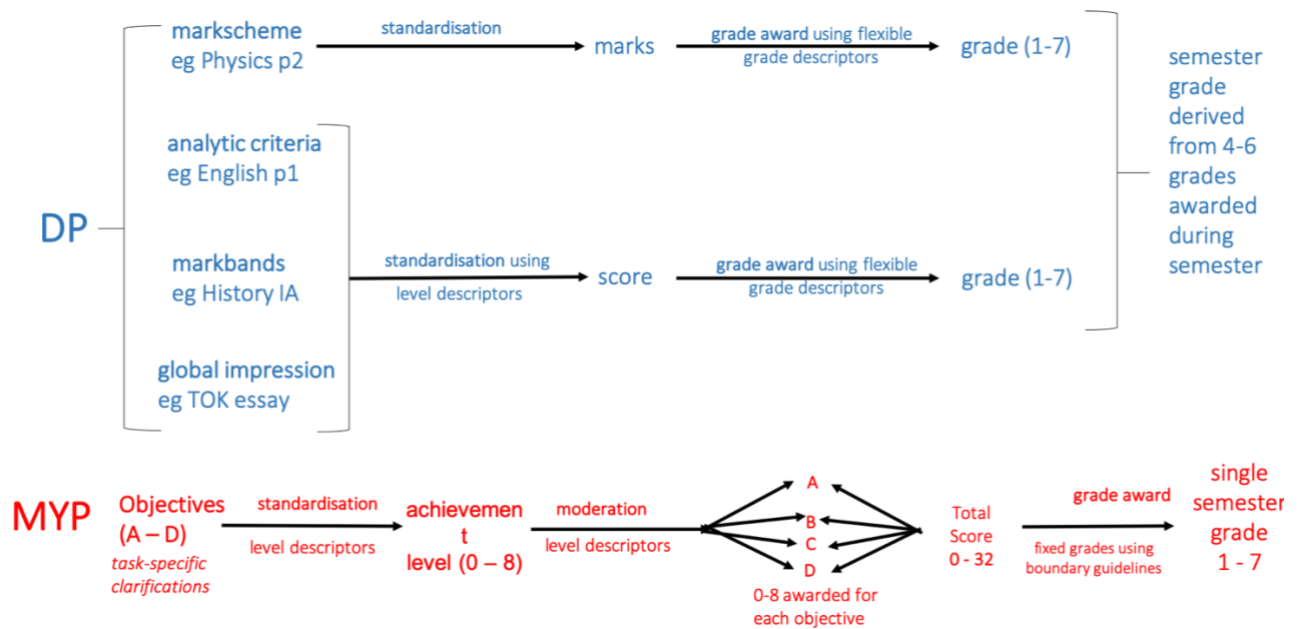

Fig 5. Summative Assessment Process: Instruments to Grades

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Part B: Assessment Practices at SOS-HGIC

Expectations

Management is expected to:

o ensure that assessment follows the principles and procedures as set out in this document – monitoring student performance and capabilities, and informing teaching and learning

o ensure that student achievement is documented adequately across all areas of the curriculum

o ensure that appropriate assessment data is supplied to parents and guardians along with the information needed to interpret it

Teachers are expected to:

o plan assessments well in advance and schedule them such that students have a manageable workload

o work collaboratively in the construction of assessment tasks and in standardizing the expectations and outcomes across teaching sets

o identify clearly to students well in advance the requirements for each assessment task

o give students reasonable opportunities to show their capabilities with respect to the requirements of the course

o provide timely feedback on assessments that will inform teaching and assist students in their learning

o ensure that student achievement is documented in a comprehensive and comprehensible manner

Students are expected to:

o understand the role of assessment in the learning process

o submit any required work for assessment on time and with due diligence

Parents are expected to:

o offer constructive and positive support to students as they complete their school work

o take note of, and abide by, the limits of assistance permitted by the school and the IB

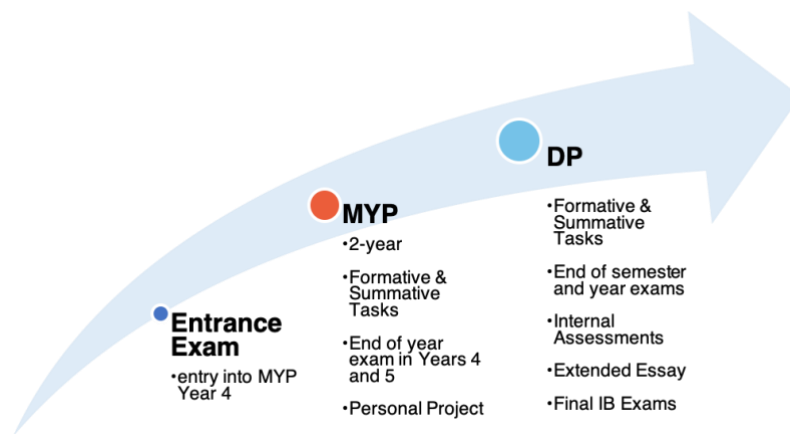The "assessment journey" experienced by students at SOS-HGIC is outlined below:

Fig 6. Assessment journey at SOS-HGIC

What assessment practices are involved in the admissions process for SOS-HGIC?

Offers of admission to SOS-HGIC are determined on the basis of previous academic records, performance in the school entrance examination and, for local applicants, an interview with senior management.

The **entrance examination** comprises written papers in English, Mathematics and the Sciences. These papers are written to meet the published **entrance examination standards**, which in turn are aligned with requirements for entry to the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) at year 4.

The **interview** provides an opportunity for a candidate to demonstrate:

- o competence in general conversation with others
- o awareness of the kind of environment in which SOS-HGIC students reside
- o an ability to reflect on previous educational experiences
- o self-awareness in identifying personal strengths and weaknesses, and possible future challenges
- o a capacity for responding to situations that require logical thinking and identification of implications

How are students assessed in the MYP?

SOS-HGIC offers the last two years of the MYP: the cohorts are named MYP4 and MYP5.

Assessments in the MYP are arranged around **units of work** whose structure is defined in terms of **concepts**, **contexts** and **skills**. Students are assessed formatively over the course of a unit and a summative assessment is made through a summative assessment task at the end.

Summative assessments are based on one or more of the **four analytic criteria (objectives)** specified for each course, and marks are awarded on the scale of achievement levels from 0 to 8.

	A	B	C	D
Language and literature	Analysing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
Language acquisition	Comprehending spoken and visual text	Comprehending written and visual text	Communicating	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 impacts of science
Mathematics	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics in 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 analysing	Developing ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating
MYP projects	Investigating	Planning	Taking action	Reflecting
Interdisciplinary	Disciplinary grounding	Synthesizing	Communicating	Reflecting

The MYP assessment criteria across subject groups. Source: MYP From Principles to Practice 2014

o   All four criteria are assessed at least once each semester

o   In the event of more than one assessment on a criterion, a professional judgement needs to be made by the teacher as to the level descriptor that best fits the student's performance, taking account of progress

o   The achievement level awarded is not necessarily the mean of all contributing scores.

At the end of the semester, **semester marks for each criterion are aggregated into a total out of 32, which is converted into a grade on the 1-7 scale** according to published MYP grade boundaries – common across all subjects – as below:

- ➢ 7: 28-32
- ➢ 6: 24-27
- ➢ 5: 19-23
- ➢ 4: 15-18
- ➢ 3: 10-14
- ➢ 2: 6-9
- ➢ 1: 0-5

In addition to these numerical grades, students receive feedback for the semester on Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills

ATL skill categories	MYP ATL skill clusters
Communication	I. Communication
Social	II. Collaboration
Self-management	III. Organization
	IV. Affective
	V. Reflection
Research	VI. Information literacy
	VII. Media literacy
Thinking	VIII. Critical thinking
	IX. Creative thinking
	X. Transfer

and the following compulsory bespoke courses (not official MYP courses):

- o Thinking Skills/Information and Communications Technology (TS/ICT)
- o Personal and Social Education (PSE)
- o Reading Seminars (RS) – MYP4 only

The scale for feedback on ATL and these courses is as follows:

Level	Description
EE	Exceeds Expectations: The student can show others how to use the skill and accurately assess how effectively the skill is used.
ME	Meets Expectations: The student demonstrates the skill confidently and effectively (demonstration).
AE	Approaching Expectations: The student emulates others who use the skill and uses the skill with scaffolding and guidance.
BE	Below Expectations: The student is introduced to the skill and observes others performing it.

- o Exceeding expectations (EE)
- o Meeting expectations (ME)
- o Approaching expectations (AE)

Personal Project

Assessment for the MYP personal project is criterion-related, based on four equally weighted assessment criteria as is the practice with all MYP assessments.

Criterion A	Investigating	Maximum 8
Criterion B	Planning	Maximum 8
Criterion C	Taking action	Maximum 8
Criterion D	Reflecting	Maximum 8

Each relates to specific ATL skills, as presented in the following table.

MYP projects objective	Students should be able to:	Relevant ATL skill clusters
A: Investigating	• demonstrate research skills.	• Information literacy skills • Media literacy skills
B: Planning	• demonstrate self-management skills.	• Organization skills • Affective skills
C: Taking action	• demonstrate thinking skills.	• Critical thinking skills • Creative thinking skills • Transfer skills
	• demonstrate communication and social skills.	• Communication (interaction and language) skills • Collaboration skills
D: Reflecting	• demonstrate self-management skills.	• Organization skills • Affective skills • Reflection

MYP examinations are set for students in all MYP courses at the end of the MYP4 and MYP5 years. Each examination:

- o Counts as summative assessment and is factored into the summative assessments for the semester as a whole (i.e. there is no separate examination grade)
- o Contains tasks that relate to specific criteria or strands from the MYP assessment instruments that teachers consider can best be assessed under examination conditions
- o Contributes to a mark on the 0-8 scale for each criterion (or part thereof) assessed by the examination
- o Provides an opportunity for students to practice working under examination conditions as preparation for their experiences in the Diploma Programme
- o Has a duration of 2 hours

How are MYP assessments used to guide enrolment in courses in the Diploma Programme?

The following are guidelines for previous performance related to suitability of certain DP courses.

Depending on the particular circumstances of a student, there may be exceptions made:

COURSE(S)	REQUIRED PRIOR EXPERIENCE	RECOMMENDED MINIMUM MYP GRADE
English A lit HL	MYP English language and literature	6 in English LAL
Amharic A lit SL		No minimum – for Ethiopian students
Swahili A lit SL	MYP Swahili language and literature	Completion of Swahili LAL by Tanzanian students
French A lal SL		No minimum – for continuing Burundian students
English B HL	MYP English language acquisition	
French B HL	MYP French language acquisition	6 in French LA phase 4; plus diagnostic test
French B SL	MYP French language acquisition	5 in French LA phase 3? To be discussed…
Language *ab initio* SL courses	No prior experience with language allowed	Not applicable
Swahili B HL		For Kenyan students without Swahili language and literature
History, Geography, Anthropology HLs	Any MYP individuals and societies course	
Economics HL	Any MYP individuals and societies course	Consider mathematics grades for quantitative aspects of DP economics
ITGS HL	Any MYP individuals and societies course	5 in any Individuals and Societies course; 5 in personal project
Biology HL	Any MYP science course	5 in Biology; or 6s in Chemistry and Physics in absence of Biology
Chemistry HL	Any MYP science course	5 in Chemistry; or 6s in Physics and Biology in absence of Chemistry
Physics HL	Any MYP science course	5 in Physics; or 6s in Chemistry and Biology in absence of Physics
Computer Science HL	MYP standard and extended mathematics	6s in both mathematics courses; 5 in design; 5 in personal project
Mathematics: analysis HL	MYP standard and extended mathematics	6s in both mathematics courses
Mathematics: applications HL	MYP standard and extended mathematics	[Course not currently offered]
Mathematics: analysis SL	MYP standard and extended mathematics	5s in both mathematics courses
Mathematics: applications SL	MYP standard and extended mathematics	No minimum
Visual Arts HL/SL	None required	
Theatre HL/SL	None required	
Music HL/SL	None required	

How are students assessed in the DP?

SOS-HGIC offers the two-year DP: the cohorts are named DP1 and DP2.

- o Assessments in the DP are often arranged around units of work, and emphasize concepts and skills as well as content

Subject group courses:

- o **DP students are awarded 4-6 individual grades on the 1-7 scale in each course during each semester** - this provides students with "real-time" indicators of how their performance level relates to the standards of the final assessments in DP2
- o Teachers use the suite of grades accumulated by the end of the semester in order to make a professional judgement as to the overall semester grade – these judgements are made with reference to the **published DP grade descriptors** (which vary across courses and subject groups of the DP)

Diploma core:

- o Assessment in Theory of Knowledge and the Extended Essay is recorded on a letter-grade scale from A to E
- o DP1 students receive a grade for Theory of Knowledge
- o DP2 students receive grades for Theory of Knowledge and for the Extended Essay, and these grades are combined in a core matrix to generate a points score between 0 and 3

Students also receive feedback for the semester on ATL skills and the following compulsory bespoke courses:

- o Personal and Social Education (PSE)
- o Reading Seminars (RS) – in DP1 only

In addition to normal ongoing assessments in the DP, there are three categories of work that contribute to final DP assessment and the award of the IB Diploma:

- o **Internally-assessed tasks** submitted to IB with teacher assessments moderated by external examiners
- o **Non-examination externally-assessed tasks** submitted to IB and assessed by external examiners
- o **Examination tasks** submitted to IB and assessed by external examiners

Internal examinations are set for students at the end of each semester of DP1, and at the end of the first semester of DP2. Mock examinations, involving full sets of papers for each course, take place in March of DP2 - two months before the final DP examinations in the first three weeks of May.

How is assessment information communicated?

SOS-HGIC uses ManageBac as its platform for supporting IB curriculum and assessment. The following rules are imposed for the purposes of clear communication and preparation for assessments in both the MYP and the DP:

- o Every **summative task** set must be entered on ManageBac as a TASK **at least four weeks before the task is due**. **Students must have <u>no more than three summative assessments in any one week</u>; once that limit is reached on ManageBac, teachers must place their dates elsewhere**

- o Every **formative task** set **requiring student time outside class** must be entered on ManageBac as a TASK **at least one week before the task is due**.

The following information must be provided to students on ManageBac in accordance with these timelines:

- o The **assessment criteria/objectives** (or particular strands within them) that will be assessed
- o **Instructions** for the completion of the task
- o The **form of the task required**, e.g. an essay, report, presentation, podcast, oral, performance, etc.

Feedback from teachers to students is expected according to the following:

- o **Summative assessment marks** must be returned to students **within two weeks of completion**.
- o **Formative assessment feedback** (quantitative or qualitative) must be provided **well in advance** of the next assessment task.

In the DP, there are also **deadlines for non-examination components**. Most of these falls in the period between **November and March of the DP2 year**, and all of them must be entered on ManageBac **at the start of the DP2 year**.

Parents have access to ManageBac through the **parents' portal**, which provides the following information:

- o Summative assessment dates
- o Summative assessment types and grades (DP)
- o Summative assessment types and criterion achievement levels (MYP)
- o Semester grades (DP and MYP)

There is an **open day** for parents held in December, during which teachers are available for further discussion. Dedicated conferences with parents of specific students can also be arranged for particular purposes.

What measures are there to deal with students who have academic problems?

Most problems fall under one of four main headings:

- o Lack of academic integrity: cases are handled according to the school's academic honesty policy
- o Persistent late submission of work: the student is placed on a tracking schedule that requires input from all teachers and appropriate measures are taken (See fig. 7)
- o Poor overall academic performance: the student is placed on a tracking schedule that requires input from all teachers
- o Behavioural issues: the student is placed on a tracking schedule that requires input from all teachers and the emotional counselling department
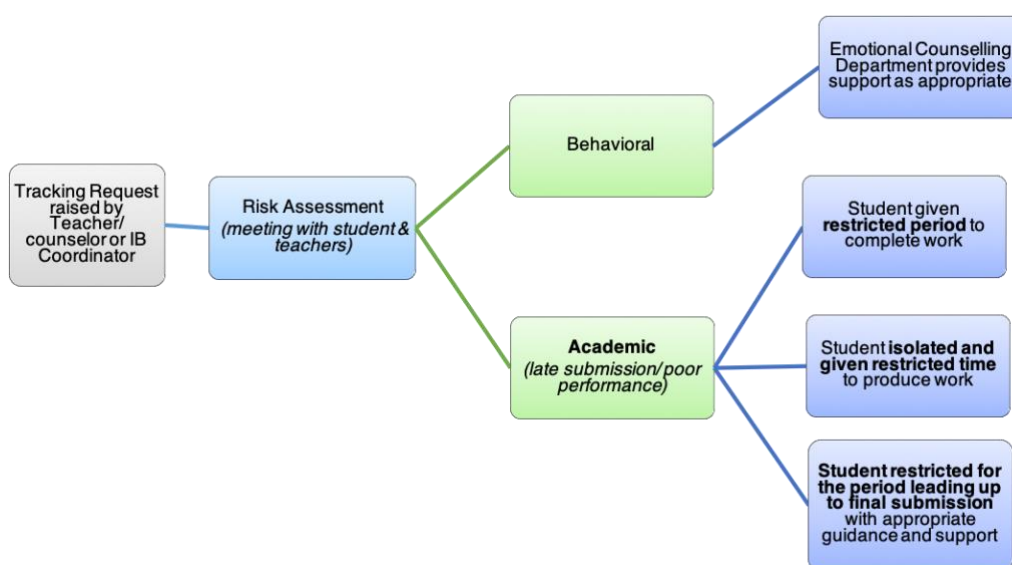

Fig 7. Response to persistent late submission of work

- All of these problem types must be included in the end-of-semester reports.

- Depending on the details of the case, parent/guardian conferences may be arranged.

- In all cases, it is essential that the nature of the problem and the measures for dealing with it are communicated by email so that there is a written and dated record to which all parties can be referred.

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