

## ISB Lower School Assessment Handbook Grades 1-5

### Policy Statement

*'Assessment is an integral part of the learning process. Clearly communicated assessment helps foster positive attitudes to learning and guides the growth of the learner. Informative and reflective assessment supports the school as a learning community and secures a balanced programme.'*

**The ISB Lower School assessment handbook describes the three related areas of the assessment component of the curriculum:**

#### **1. Purposes for Assessment**

#### **2. Assessment Beliefs and Values**

#### **3. Types of Assessments**

#### **4. Assessment Practices**

### **1. Purposes for Assessment**

*"The prime objective of assessment in the PYP is to provide feedback on the learning process."*  
(IB, 2007)

#### **To guide the growth of the learner and foster positive attitudes to learning by:**

- Making explicit for students which criteria (within the essential elements of skills, knowledge, concepts, attitudes or action) should be demonstrated or mastered for success on a given task
- Giving constructive feedback on the learning process, on areas of strength and areas to which the student needs to direct their focus or change their approach
- Providing opportunities for reflection, and for self and peer assessment
- Providing students with opportunities to consider their progress in relation to the attributes listed in the PYP learner profile and attitudes.

#### **To support the school as a learning community and secure a balanced programme by:**

- Monitoring student and performance
- Providing evidence to support dialogue and analysis about class and individual learning with colleagues, parents, students and external bodies
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the programme delivery and informing curriculum review
- Providing reflection on a unit of inquiry to assess:
  - The unit's suitability for a range of cultural backgrounds, language levels and learning styles, student attainment, suitability of assessment tasks/learning engagements – relevant, engaging, challenging
  - Suitability of assessment tasks/learning engagements for the aspects of the five essential elements (knowledge, concepts etc) being focused on
- Reflecting on the extent to which each aspect of the essential elements is represented in the programme of inquiry

## **2. Assessment Beliefs and Values**

The IB suggests the criteria listed below for consideration when teachers are planning and choosing assessments.

At ISB these criteria for effective assessment will be referred to at the planning stages (when considering summative assessments), during units of inquiry (in developing formative assessments) and later, when reflecting upon units of work and the resulting learning.

### **Effective assessments allow the student 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
- analyse their learning and understand what needs to be improved.

### **Effective assessments allow the teacher to:**

- inform every stage of the teaching and learning process
- 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
- inform POI review and revision
- collaboratively review and reflect on student performance and progress
- take into account a variety of learning styles, multiple intelligences and abilities including different cultural contexts

### **Effective assessments allow the 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."(IB, 2007)

## **3. Types of Assessment**

### **Pre-Assessment**

- Assesses prior knowledge
- Assesses what students want to learn
- Supports the teacher in planning.

### **Formative Assessment**

- Is interwoven within daily learning and instruction
- Allows the teacher to make necessary adjustments to teaching plans and methods
- Promotes learning by giving regular and frequent feedback, which helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding and fosters enthusiasm for learning
- Engages in thoughtful reflection, develops the capacity for self-assessment, and helps

learners recognize the criteria for success.

### **Summative Assessment**

- Is designed before a unit or stand-alone concept is taught
- Addresses different learning styles
- Occurs at the end of the teaching and learning processes
- Measures understanding of concepts and ideas
- Can prompt and support student action
- Provides students with opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned.

## **4. Assessment Practices**

### **a) Strategies**

“The strategies are the methods or approaches that teachers use when gathering information about a student’s learning. Teachers record this information using a variety of tools, which are the instruments used to collect data.” (IB, 2007)

The PYP identifies the following assessment strategies as central to the assessment process. Teachers should aim to use all of the strategies as they cover a range of approaches and therefore provide a balanced view of the student:

#### **Observations**

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).

#### **Performance assessments**

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.

#### **Process-focused assessments**

Students are observed often and regularly. Observations can be made by collecting multiple observations to enhance reliability, and synthesizing evidence from different contexts to increase validity.

#### **Selected responses**

Single occasion, one-dimensional exercises. Tests and quizzes are the most familiar examples of this form of assessment.

#### **Open-ended tasks**

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. (IB, 2007)

## b) Tools

The assessment strategies listed may be put into practice using the following tools:

### Rubrics

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. And shared with students beforehand to share criteria

### Exemplars

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.

### Checklists

These are lists of information, data, attributes or elements that should be present. A mark scheme is a type of checklist.

### Anecdotal records

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.

### 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. (IB, 2007)

## c) Recording

Data on student progress against short term and long-term goals (formative and summative assessments respectively) is collected and analyzed in a systematic way using strategies and tools as described above.

## d) Reporting

Communication with parents regarding student progress should approximate the schedule below, with revision at the start of each year to take into account events:

Reporting schedule for grades 1 to 5:

Formal report cards	Twice a year (January and June)
Home-School Conferences (involving students, parents, teachers)	Twice a year
Student-led conferences gr 1-4	In the second half of the school year
Grade 5 Exhibition	In the second half of the school year
UOI sharing	Parents invited into classrooms on at least 1 occasion for sharing in connection with UOI (besides student-led conference)

## **e) Portfolios**

The purpose of the portfolio is to demonstrate the process and progression the student has made. Portfolios can be used to assess a student's understanding and to document the process of learning, as well as being available for student-led conferences and parent meetings. They are available to relevant teachers, staff, students and families.

## **f) Exhibition**

In the final year of the PYP, students participate in a culminating project, the PYP exhibition. This requires that each student demonstrate engagement with the five essential elements of the programme: knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action. It is a transdisciplinary inquiry conducted in the spirit of personal and shared responsibility, as well as a summative assessment activity that is a celebration as students move from the PYP into the middle years of schooling.

The exhibition represents a significant event in the life of a PYP school and student, 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.

The PYP exhibition has a number of key purposes including the following:

- For students to engage in 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 for 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

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

This assessment should take two forms: firstly, ongoing assessment of each individual student's contribution to and understanding of the exhibition; secondly, a summative assessment and reflection on the event itself. Assessment of the exhibition takes place within the school. It should take place throughout the whole process of the exhibition and should be rigorous.

(IB, 2007)

Students, teachers and mentors complete assessment rubrics after the Exhibition.

## **g) Screening Assessments**

The IENS coordinator may use the tools from the following list along with other unspecified tools for screening purposes as needed:

### General Screening for all Grade One Students

Lucid Rapid (identification of dyslexia)

### Language Arts Assessment Material

Lucid Rapid (identification of dyslexia)

Lucid COPS 4-8, Lucid LASS 8-11

Schonell Reading/Spelling and Reading Comprehension

### Maths Assessment Material

MaLT Diagnostic Mental Mathematics Tests

Access Mathematics Tests

### Other Assessment Material

Special Needs Assessment Profile (General covers LA & Maths ++)

NNAT Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test

ADDES (AD/HD)

### Bibliography

Some of the text and ideas found in The ISB Lower School Assessment Handbook are taken from:  
*Making the PYP Happen, A curriculum framework for international primary education, IB 2007*