ASSESSMENT POLICY

Purpose

This policy outlines our commitment to assessment and sharing tasks and assessment frameworks with the community so all stakeholders are clear about the task being set and the mode of assessment and the way the task will be graded for the programme being taught. We aim to make the role of all stakeholders clear and be transparent in our approach.

Rationale

We believe assessment at Nexus International School (Singapore) is used to take a snapshot of progress against a specific set of criteria at that moment in time. The outcome of this does not define who a child is as a learner but where they are in their learning journey.

Assessment Philosophy

Nexus embraces the IB rationale that the purpose of assessment is to inform learning and teaching. It involves the gathering and analysis of information about student learning to inform teaching practice. It identifies what students know, understand and can do at different stages in the learning process.

As Vygotsky shared, the teacher is seen as a supporter rather than a director of learning and should make use of assessment tasks and instruments that help the student work in the "zone of proximal development". This is the range of achievement between what the student can do on his/her own, and what the student can do with the support of the teacher.

Rights and Responsibilities

Leaders will

- Raise awareness of this policy in the community to ensure it is implemented consistently, evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis.
- Provide training and support for all staff to assess the programmes they teach.
- Ensuring effective assessment approaches within programmes.
- Maintain robust internal quality assurance processes through Teacher Professional Assurance and Teacher Professional Enhancement processes and Learning Walks.
- Ensure staff conduct assessments fairly with appropriate levels of control for external qualifications.
- Provide meaningful collaboration time where teachers can moderate and standardise assessment.
- Share progress information with families at regular intervals.
- Be responsible for meeting all examination centre and programme requirements.
- Provide more than one opportunity each year for parents to connect with their child's teachers and discuss progress and engagement.

Staff will

- Provide a variety of formative and summative opportunities for learners to demonstrate learning.

- Administer assessment positively and consistently and not mark punitively.
- Give notice and calendar summative assessments.
- Explain what is required to fulfil the criteria for any assessed piece of work.
- Keep clear and accurate records of learners' progress throughout a programme.
- Grade learners appropriately for each criteria giving credit for what has been achieved.
- Feedback promptly in a constructive and supportive way showing they believe the learner can develop.
- Share academic concerns and recognitions with families as they arise.
- Authenticate learner work using integrity checks where appropriate.

Learners will

- Produce work to the best of their ability in the programme they are studying.
- Use assessments as an opportunity to demonstrate learning and show positively what they have achieved.
- Produce work that is their own and show academic integrity appropriate for their age, both at school and through their home learning.
- Use criteria to identify strengths and areas of development.
- Use feedback constructively to become the best learner they can be.
- Make improvements on a task when invited to do so by their teacher.
- Reflect on and evaluate progress and set goals for improvement.
- Be prepared to discuss their learning and next steps at home and in school.

Parents and Guardians should

- Support their child to learn by engaging with the school and the information provided.
- Work with teachers to support the best interests of their child as a learner.
- Support their child by providing the equipment and environment needed to complete learning at home.
- Contact the class teacher with any concerns they have about their child's learning or progress.
- Support their child to complete work without completing it for them.
- Ensure any external tutoring is working inline with school expectations.
- Ensure all work submitted by their child for external qualifications is genuinely the work of the child and has not been completed by anybody else.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Assessment is on-going rather than episodic. Teachers provide informal verbal and written feedback throughout the programme of study to guide the learner. This is known as formative assessment and is diagnostic. It is used by the teacher and learners to provide data about the learner's readiness for further learning. If a teacher has any concerns about a learner's progress they share these as they arise.

Assessment tasks are common across groups and the learners' work is moderated and standardised by the teams teaching them to ensure consistency of feedback. Progress information is shared at regular intervals throughout the programme and families have an opportunity to discuss progress with teachers in learning conferences. Assessment feedback is used by learners to identify goals and next steps. Assessment data is used by teachers to inform teaching and intervention.

Primary School

It is assumed that there will be a development of the elements of the PYP over the course. Assessment should effectively guide learners through these different elements of the PYP framework:

- the understanding concepts
- the acquisition of knowledge
- the mastering of approaches to learning
- the decisions to take action as a result of learning

Effective Assessment

The purpose of assessment in the Primary School is to provide feedback on the learning process and the development of the different elements to inform future learning and teaching. As such assessment for learning is the most appropriate approach. Learners, teachers and parents are actively engaged in this process.

Effective assessment that achieves this purpose provides valuable information to understand what constitutes learning and how to support it, and is meaningful to all members of the learning community. (Learning and Teaching, IBO, 2018)

The key characteristics of effective assessment are that it is authentic, clear and specific, varied, developmental, collaborative, interactive, and provides feedback and feed forward information. (Taken from 'Learning and Teaching, IBO, 2018)

The approach to assessment recognises the importance of assessing the process of inquiry as well as the products of inquiry.

The assessment capable teacher needs to consider:

- if the nature of learners' conceptual inquiry develops over time—if they are asking questions of more depth, that are likely to enhance their learning substantially

- if learners are becoming aware that real problems require solutions and they take action accordingly
- if learners are demonstrating mastery of the approaches to learning
- if learners are accumulating a comprehensive knowledge base and can apply their understanding to further their inquiries successfully
- if learners are demonstrating the attributes of the learner profile.

Collecting and Recording Evidence

To assess learning and progress teachers will use a range of tools and strategies to assess. Tools may include rubrics, exemplars, checklists, anecdotal records, continuums and standardized tests. Strategies include observations, performance assessments, process-focused assessments, selected responses and open-ended tasks. Details of these may be found under the 'How to Assess' within Assessment section of the 'Learning and Teaching' document. (IB 2018)

Evidence may include, but is not limited to, videos, audio, photographs and graphic representations. Teachers may also use written records of learner conversations, comments, explanations and hypotheses as well as annotated pieces of learner work that may form part of a learner's portfolio of learning.

The minimum expectations for assessing PYP learners are as follows:

- For each unit of inquiry evidence of learning will be gathered as the unit progresses in line with identified success criteria and using a range of tools and strategies as mentioned above. These success criteria will be co-constructed alongside learners where appropriate and shared with learners/students in order for progress to be visible. Success criteria can take into account the process of learning, knowledge, conceptual understanding, approaches to learning, the attributes of the learner profile and learner initiated action.
- Within 6 weeks of arriving in Nursery or Kindergarten, learners will be assessed on their understanding of Concepts About Print. This assessment will be repeated at regular intervals through the year until all areas are completed. Concepts About Print will be repeated within 6 weeks of joining Year 1.
- Children in Years K (starting as soon as appropriate) to 6 are regularly individually assessed for reading using the PM or PROBE tools (refer to the Language Arts flowchart to determine which tool(s) to use. As a minimum this takes place in Terms 1, 2 and 3, but more frequently for learners below age expectations for reading as defined in the Language Arts Scope and Sequence. A Term 3 assessment is not required for children exceeding age expectations in Term 2. All learners new to the school in these year groups will be assessed within a month of arriving at the school.
- Children in Nursery (starting Term 3) to Year 1 are regularly individually assessed for phonics using Letters and Sounds materials, this includes the Nexus Essential Word List. As a minimum this takes place once each term. All learners new to the school in these year groups will be assessed within a month of arriving at the school. In Year 2 this assessment will take place as a minimum in Term 2 and Term 4.
- Children in Years 3 to 6 are regularly individually assessed for word study using Words their

Way materials. As a minimum this takes place once each term. All learners new to the school in these year groups will be assessed within a month of arriving at the school.

- Writing will be regularly assessed against the expectations in the Language Arts Scope and Sequence and rubric created for the appropriate genres. Writing will be moderated using exemplars developed by the Language Arts team.

- Formative assessment in Mathematics will be carried out regularly using pre and post inquiry assessments (these may take the form of rich maths tasks, performance tasks or diagnostic interviews). These will be assessed against the expectations in the Mathematics Scope and Sequence.

- A Summative Assessment for Reading and Mathematics will be carried out annually for Years 4 to 6 using an internationally benchmarked assessment tool, ACER-ISA. The sample of learners will be selected randomly for the ISA. The purpose of using this internationally standardised assessment is to externally validate our curriculum outcomes.

- Concepts and skills in Music, Visual Arts, PHE and LOTE are regularly assessed against the relevant scope and sequence documents.

Homeroom teachers will be responsible for recording assessment information for all the learners in their class. Specialists will be responsible for all the learners in their groups. The Primary Leadership Team will have access to all assessment information. However to ensure robust conversations and open communication, information is shared widely across the Primary School.

Secondary School

Progress of Secondary learners will be tracked against CAT4. CAT4 is a comprehensive and objective test of a learners' developed abilities and provides an indicator of skills and potential attainment in different subjects. CAT4 will be re-evaluated as learners enter each new programme to ensure learners' cognitive growth is accounted for. This data does not limit the attainment of any learner and is used to initiate conversations around capabilities. CAT4 enables Nexus to personalise tracking of individual learners' progress rather than expect whole cohorts to achieve the same level.

Effective Assessment

The purpose of assessment in the Secondary is two-fold. For formative assessment, the aim is to provide detailed feedback to teachers and their students on the nature of students' strengths and weaknesses, and to help develop their capabilities. Summative assessment focuses on measuring **what** the candidate can do, typically to demonstrate the completion of a programme and/or readiness to progress to the next stage of education. Assessment at Nexus is valid, varied, fair, reliable, criterion-based, accessible, and designed to be completed with integrity.

Valid assessment tools means the extent to which assessments measure the stated learning outcomes.

Varied assessment tools means learners are able to demonstrate their understanding in a number of ways (eg written tasks, oral tasks, and through different media)

Fair assessment means that it must not be biased (eg gender, ethnic background, etc.) so that all students have an equal chance of performing well.

Reliable assessment tools means their consistency over repeated use or within the same subject group and against the standards of external assessment.

Criterion-based assessment is based upon predetermined criteria that all students should have access to. The level of student success in reaching the outcomes and/or criteria is measured in terms of levels of achievement described in each assessment criterion.
- In the MYP, this refers to Criteria A-D specific to each subject
- In the IGCSE, this refers to the Assessment Objectives specific to each subject
- In the DP, this refers to Criteria A-D specific to each subject

Accessible in that they give all students the opportunity to reach all levels of achievement appropriate to the course requirements and or limitations.

With integrity in that the assessment processes cannot be bypassed or manipulated unfairly. See **Academic Integrity Policy** for further guidance.

Submission of work

Teachers will allow sufficient time for learners to complete tasks and learners should make every effort to meet deadlines. Teachers will not mark work that is submitted late unless a learner has had an extension agreed with the teacher prior to the deadline. Extensions may be given in cases of ill health or bereavement and in all cases the learner or their family must seek agreement with the teacher before the deadline. It is appropriate for the families of younger learners to request an extension to a deadline. Older learners should take on this responsibility themselves.

Academic integrity

It is the learners' responsibility to ensure that any work they submit for assessment is authentic and that they have followed age appropriate citation conventions. It is the responsibility of the teacher to use plagiarism software to ensure the academic integrity has not been violated. Software is used to provide authentication of learner work in accordance with our Academic Integrity Policy. Library staff and curriculum leaders are responsible for teaching academic integrity and providing learners with the knowledge needed to abide by the academic integrity policy, including referencing.

Standardisation of Assessment

Standardisation is the process by which teachers at NEXUS share their expectations and understanding of common criteria and standards with each other in order to improve the consistency of their decisions about student learning. Standardisation helps teachers to increase the reliability and consistency of the assessment information that they gather so that it can be used to guide and improve teaching practices and enhance student learning. Standardisation serves to ensure that teachers are accountable for accurate and consistent assessment of student work.Teachers change over time, but the standard and consistency of assessment must remain consistent.

The Benefits of Standardisation for Teachers: Making reliable and valid decisions across different points in the learning process is important, particularly when teachers teach common courses, publish learning updates and evaluations on student progress, or compare cohort data with historical information. Standardisation ensures that teachers make consistent grading decisions over time. Consistent and secure standardisation protocols used over time can prevent unreliability in grading in a number of ways:

- Applying the same standardised protocols ensures consistency across the Secondary school
- Allowing the creation of exemplars that can become references used each year for benchmarking different levels of student achievement
- Using the exemplars for teaching purposes with the students
- Sharing the exemplars with new teachers so they can quickly acclimatise themselves to the teaching standards within the school.

Internal Standardisation Internal Standardisation is the process by which the assessments of a teacher are quality assured by another colleague(s) from the same subject or course. It is the process where teachers share their understanding of grading criteria in order to improve the consistency of their assessments across classes and grade level. Internal standardisation takes place to ensure that the grading process is uniform and shares a consistent interpretation of the criteria of the IGCSE, International Baccalaureate MYP and DP. Internal standardisation can be done either teacher to teacher, or student to student.

Middle Years Programme (MYP)

Nexus is offering a three year MYP programme for years 7 to 9 this programme culminates with a Community Project. Nexus follows the International Baccalaureate grading system for the MYP subjects and Community Project.

MYP Assessment Procedures

Formative assessment is characterised by continuous and constant monitoring of a student's readiness, skill development and concept understanding by the teacher to inform his/her teaching and planning over a continual basis. Formative assessment is drawn from a range of assessment activities, including the use of assessment descriptors, self-evaluation, peer assessment and developmental portfolios.

Home learning procedures form part of the formative assessment practices. Home learning is seen as a meaningful vehicle for developing wider AtL skills and as such should take the form of, for example, research, information finding and wider thinking problems.

Summative assessment occurs at the end of a specific teaching period and is the culmination of skills and knowledge learnt in a particular topic. Summative assessment allows students to demonstrate their understandings and apply their knowledge in various ways. Summative assessment is also used to help student performance in a formative manner as well as to inform teachers in developing further formative assessment opportunities.

MYP assessment at Nexus is criterion-related as it is based upon pre-determined criteria that all students have access to. Criterion-related assessment does not require mastery of each descriptor and is better described as a "best-fit" approach. The criteria for each subject reflect the objectives of the subject group. The level of student success in reaching the objectives of each subject group is measured in terms of levels of achievement described in each assessment criterion.

Students in Years 7-9 are assessed according to modified criteria that have been aligned with the IB published interim objectives. Year 7 modified criteria are based on the MYP1 interim objectives whereas Year 8 and 9 modified criteria are based on the MYP3 interim objectives. Where appropriate subject teachers are encouraged to developed task specific clarifications, to encourage students to self and peer assess.

Teachers are required to devise a variety of valid assessment tasks that will provide students with the opportunity to show clearly what they know and can achieve. Valid assessment tasks must address at least one MYP objective and in using the appropriate criteria allow all students access to all levels of achievement. Teachers are expected to plan for assessment of learning during the initial stages of developing the unit of work. Where appropriate, teachers endeavour to use the MYP command terms when designing assessment.

Each [subject area](#) has four assessment criteria, each of these is marked out of 8. The scores for each criteria are then added to arrive at the learner's final achievement level for each subject. MYP grades range from 7 (high) to 1 (low). These grades are defined differently to other programmes offered by either IGCSE awarding bodies or the IBDP.

In preparation for the End of Semester and End of Year Report in December and June respectively, teachers are required to communicate to parents the student's achievement level in each criterion within each of the 8 MYP subject groups. All subject groups must have assessed students in all criteria at least once during the first semester to determine the overall achievement level. Over the course of a year, students must be assessed on each criterion a minimum of two times.

To determine a level of achievement for specific criteria, teachers must gather sufficient evidence to determine whether a student is working at the lower or higher end of a descriptor. Achievement levels are described as a whole number and the final level of achievement determined for the End of Year Report is NOT an average of the achievement levels recorded over the course of the year. The final level of achievement is based on the teacher's professional and informed judgement of the student's performance reflecting the level descriptors for each criteria. Once the level of achievement has been determined for each criteria, then the final levels achieved are summed and the total applied to a set of grade boundaries. (see relevant section of the MYP coordinators handbook for grade boundaries).

Determining a student's level of achievement for each criteria will require teachers to provide several opportunities for the different criteria to be assessed throughout the year. To assist student development and reflection, teachers must collect all summative assessments for inclusion in student portfolios for each subject. The student portfolio provides evidence of the learning journey that each student takes and forms a central part of Parent, Teacher, Student conference. Where there is more than one teacher teaching the same subject or subject group, the process of internal standardization will take place regularly throughout the year and before levels of achievement are awarded and reported to parents.

MYP Grade Descriptors

Grade	Descriptor
7	Produces high-quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations.
6	Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real- world situations, often with independence.
5	Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations and, with support, some unfamiliar real-world situations.
4	Produces good-quality work. Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations.
3	Produces work of an acceptable quality. Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally significant misunderstandings or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking. Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.
2	Produces work of limited quality. Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills.
1	Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.

IGCSE

For IGCSE we use Edexcel and CAIE as awarding bodies. Each subject is awarded a grade separately. CAIE award grades A*-G and Edexcel award grades 1-9.

CAIE and Edexcel use different grading systems for IGCSE

CAIE	A*		A		B		C		D		E		F		G		U
EdExcel	9		8	7		6	5	4			3		2		1		U

Where there is more than one teacher teaching the same subject or subject group, the process of internal standardization will take place regularly throughout the year and before levels of achievement are awarded and reported to parents.

IB Diploma Programme (DP) and IB Courses

Nexus follows the International Baccalaureate grading system for the Courses and IB Diploma Programmes. This is a criteria-referenced scale ranging from 7 (high) to 1 (low). Each subject area has published grade descriptors from IB and these are expected to form the basis for any grades that are awarded. The IBDP coordinator will work with Learning Area Leaders to ensure teams follow this policy with the outcome that:

- Assessments are designed in line with IB criteria/requirements
- DP assessments are assessed against published criteria / previous grade boundaries
- IB Markschemes/rubrics are used where possible
- Termly reports use IB grades, using IB grade descriptors
- The full range of grades are accessible for the whole 2 years in all assessments
- DP assessment criteria are known and understood by the community
- Internal assessments are internally moderated
- Trial exams are run twice over the 2 years
- Predicted grades are produced consistently and fairly and are used to inform learners and learning
- Learners will produce work that is their own and show academic integrity appropriate for their age, both at school and through their home learning.
- The process of internal standardization will take place regularly throughout the year and before levels of achievement are awarded and reported to parents.