

The International School of Älmhult

Primary Years Programme

Assessment Policy



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Our philosophy, principles and practice

What is 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 in the learning process. (IBO January 2001)

The International School of Älmhult assessment policy is aligned with the principles of the IB assessment philosophy. ISÄ recognizes that teaching, learning and assessment of that learning are fundamentally interdependent.

Purpose of Assessment

The primary objective of assessment is to provide feedback on the learning process. At the International School of Älmhult assessment is integral to all teaching and learning. It provides a framework within which educational objectives are set and students' progress is continuously encouraged and monitored. Furthermore, it helps the school as a community of learners to strengthen learning across the curriculum.

The ISÄ believes that assessment:

- monitors progress and support students' learning;
- recognizes the achievements and needs of pupils;
- guides future planning, teaching and curriculum development;
- informs parents of pupil achievement and needs;
- provides information to ensure continuity when the pupil changes school or year group;
- produces coherent feedback for students, parents and external institutions;
- is varied and differentiated
- should be collaborated between the PYP and MYP to ensure consistency;

The ISA recognizes that the students:

- Have differing learning styles;
- Have different cultural experiences, expectations and needs;
- Perform differently according to the context of learning;
- Need to know their achievements and areas for improvement in the learning process;
- Should receive feedback that is positive, constructive and timely from their teacher;
- Are empowered in their learning through peer and self-assessment

Areas of assessment

Assessment is central to the school's 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 and the decision to take action. It is essential to assess the process of inquiry as well as the products, so assessment strategies that are both performance and process based drive our approach to assessment. A variety of assessment tools are used to gather information on and support both parts of the learning process. Opportunities for students to consider their progress in relation to the attributes listed in the IB learner profile must be given within the context of student learning. In this case the focus is on the process used by the student to complete the product.

Assessment can be divided into three closely related areas.

1. **Assessing:** how we discover what the students know and have learned
2. **Recording :** how we choose to collect and analyze data
3. **Reporting:** how we choose to communicate information.

1. Assessing:

Student learning is enhanced through planning and refining the teaching and learning process to meet individual or group needs. Both assessing prior knowledge and experiences as well as monitoring student progress helps inform teachers as they plan and refine their teaching accordingly. Also, well- designed learning experiences provide data on students' knowledge, skills and conceptual understanding and are used for both summative and formative assessment purposes

1.1 Formative: On-going *assessment for learning* is carried out by teachers, both formally and informally, during a unit of work. The results of formative assessments help teachers and students to set learning targets and adapt teaching materials, methods and procedures.

Formative assessment tools in the classroom include:

PM Benchmark	Parent-teacher conferences	Visible Thinking Routines
Phonographix assessment	Three-way conferences	International Schools' Assessment (ISA)
Big Write	Student Portfolios	Swedish/Maths National tests
Teacher-student conferences	Learning continuums	

1.2 Summative: *Assessment of learning* takes place at the end of a unit of work (e.g. unit of inquiry). It aids teachers tracking pupils' progress and ensuring that learning standards and learning objectives are met.

Summative assessment tools in the classroom include:

Three-Way Conferences	Exhibition
Student-Led Conferences	Open House/Summative Presentations
Annual Student Written Report	

1.3 Diagnostic: All assessments can provide diagnostic evidence. This type of assessment can be carried out at any time throughout the school-year when an evaluation of the student's and weaknesses is needed in order to meet learning targets.

Swedish and Maths National tests

2. Recording:

A range of assessment strategies and tools provide a basis for a comprehensive approach to assessment strategies. These are the methods teachers use when gathering information and the tools are the instruments used to record and collect the data.

Assessment strategies and tools						
Assessment strategies \ Assessment tools	Rubrics	Exemplars	Checklists	Anecdotal records	Continuums	
Observations	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Performance Assessments	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Process-focussed Assessments	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Selected responses		✓	✓			✓
Open-ended tasks	✓	✓		✓	✓	

The strategies identified are central to the assessment process providing a balanced view of the student through a range of approaches

Assessment Strategies Definition	
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, 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.
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.

The following tools can be used in conjunction with other forms of assessment in order to assess student performance and the efficacy of the programme. The above strategies can be put into practice by using a variety of assessment tools such as those described below.

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.
Exemplars	Samples of student's 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.
Checklists	These are lists of information, data, attributes or elements that should be present.
Anecdotal Records	Anecdotal records are brief written notes based on observations of students. "Learning stories" are focused, extended observations that can be analyzed later. These records need to be systematically compiled and organized.
Continuum	These are visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement or identify where a student is in a process.

Documentation Folder

The documentation of student learning is an assessment tool relevant to all students throughout the Primary Years. Teachers document student learning as a means of assessing student understanding. This includes learning continuums, PM Benchmark results, 'Big Write' samples, 3-Way conference signed document, Phonographix (EAL and PYP 1-2), International Schools' Assessment (ISA) results in Mathematical literacy and Reading.

Portfolios

Portfolios can be used as a tool for assessment and reporting purposes. The portfolio is used to show the development of knowledge, conceptual understanding, transdisciplinary skills, attitudes and the attributes of the learner profile over a period of time.

Portfolio entries document learning from all curriculum areas. Images and evidence of students in the process of constructing meaning will be used to demonstrate the process of learning as well as the product. This will be used during conferences and in other aspects of the curriculum as necessary.

The PYP 5 Exhibition

In the final year of the PYP, students participate in a culminating project, the PYP Exhibition. It is a transdisciplinary inquiry as well as a summative assessment activity that is a celebration as students move from the PYP into the MYP.

This is also an opportunity for students to put into practice all the learning they have developed in the learner profile and 5 essential areas knowledge, attitudes, action, concepts and skills, during the entire Primary Years Programme. The event includes the sharing of the students' process or learning journey throughout a personalized, student driven unit of inquiry, the action they have taken, and finally communicating their understandings in a large group setting.

3. Reporting

Reporting on assessment is for the purpose of communicating what students know, understand and can do. It describes the progress of students' learning, identifies areas for growth and contributes to the efficacy of the programme. Reporting involves the parents, students and teachers as partners.

Reporting at The International School of Älmhult happens in the following ways:

October- Three-way Conferences: These involve the parents, student and teacher. Students discuss their learning and understanding with their parents and teacher who are responsible for supporting the students through the process. The process includes the student, parent and teacher collaborating to establish and identify the student's strengths, areas for improvement. This leads to the setting of goals with all

determining how they can support the achievement of the goals. The teacher supports by helping to guide the process and recording the discussion.

April-Student-Led Conferences: these involve the student and the parent. The students are responsible for leading the conference and sharing their progress with parents. The students discuss and reflect upon samples of work that they have previously chosen with support from the teacher. The student identifies strengths and areas for improvement. The format changes depending upon the age of the child involved. The parents gain an insight into the kind of work their child is doing and have the opportunity to discuss it with their child. Student portfolios will be a part of this process and show progress towards the stated goals during the 3-Way conferences in October.

Parent-teacher conferences: These are designed to give parents information about their child's progress development and needs in all aspects of their school life. A teacher can schedule this conference anytime within the year as deemed required.

June- Annual Written Report: Reports provide information of pupil's progress and promote a good communication between school and parents. This is a summative record of a student's progress and a helpful aid to a student's development. This states if the pupil has met the curriculum goals for the year. It also clearly indicates the areas of strength, areas for improvement and the student's progress. A separate written report for needlework and woodwork will be sent through post.

Parents receive an electronic copy of the Written Report through Managebac towards the end of the academic year.

External Assessment

- International Schools' Assessment (ISA) is administered at our school in February. All students from PYP 3 to PYP 5 take this assessment in the areas of Reading and Mathematical Literacy. Results are shared with the teachers and parents and are compiled by our ISA/PYP Coordinator.

These are some of its purposes:

- it provides diagnostic information that can be used at the school, class, or individual level;
- performance on the ISA can be related to international benchmarks;
- evaluate the reliability of their internal assessments and confirm that they are aligned with international expectations of performance;
- measuring individual students' achievement in order to reflect on and address strengths and weaknesses.

National Test

Students in PYP 4 undergo both Swedish language and Maths tests towards the end of school year. The purpose of which is to measure if students are achieving the Swedish grade level expectations. We recognize that students who are taught Swedish as a second language at our school are not required to meet the same grade level expectations in Swedish language. This national test will only become effective until June 2016 due to the full implementation of the IB curriculum starting S.Y 2016-2017.

Support for Learning

EAL students (English as an Additional Language)

Support for Learning Needs are addressed with the help of Learning Support teachers. The inclusion model is used at the ISÄ so Learning Support staff work alongside class teachers with identified students. Students who need extra practice in basic skills may spend some time with Learning Support teacher(s) outside the classroom on a temporary or occasional basis to enable them to meet particular goals.

There is an initial language skills assessment – diagnostic assessment - for new EAL students. This helps teachers better evaluate and respond to students language needs. This assessment is carried out formally, by the class teacher and the support for learning teacher during the first month of the student’s arrival to school.

The overall student’s language progress is assessed and recorded based on the development of the different language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

EAL students and students with other learning needs

Once the learning needs of a student have been identified, ongoing assessment is carried out by class/subject teacher and support for learning teacher. Student’s progress is recorded, reviewed and reported 8 to 9 weeks until learning targets have been achieved.

This document was created using information:

IBO. Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for (international primary education. Rep. Cardiff: Ibo, 2009. Print

The International School of Älmhult Assessment Policy and essential agreements

International Schools’ Assessment; <https://www.acer.edu.au/isa>

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