

ASSESSMENT POLICY

approved December 4, 2024

Introduction

At Dallas International School (DIS), assessment is integral to the educational process, serving as a compass that guides both teaching and learning. Our philosophy is rooted in the belief that effective assessment practices not only measure student progress but also enhance the overall learning experience by fostering a deep understanding of content, encouraging critical thinking, and promoting a lifelong love of learning. We are committed to creating a learning environment that is both challenging and supportive, where every student is encouraged to reach their full potential. Assessments at DIS are designed to be fair, transparent, and aligned with our mission to develop globally-minded, innovative, and well-rounded individuals.

Definitions

- **Assessment:** The systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting evidence of student learning to inform instructional decisions, guide student progress, and evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs.
- **Formative Assessment:** Ongoing assessments conducted during the instructional process that provide immediate feedback to both teachers and students. Formative assessments help identify areas where students are struggling and allow for timely interventions to support their learning.
- **Summative Assessment:** Cumulative evaluations administered at the end of an instructional period (e.g., unit, semester, or course) to determine student mastery of content and skills. Summative assessments are used to assign grades and to inform stakeholders of student achievement.
- **Benchmark Assessment:** Standardized tests administered at specific intervals during the academic year to measure student performance against established standards. Benchmark assessments provide data to monitor student progress, identify trends, and adjust instruction accordingly.
- **Standards-Based Reporting:** A method of reporting student progress that focuses on the mastery of specific skills and standards rather than the accumulation of points or grades.

Purposes and Principles of Assessment

The assessment process at DIS serves multiple, interrelated purposes that are foundational to student success, namely:

- **Improvement of Student Learning.** Assessments are tools for identifying student strengths and areas for growth. By providing clear, actionable feedback, assessments guide students in making meaningful progress in their learning journey.
- **Supporting Academic Achievement.** Through targeted assessments, teachers can tailor instruction to meet individual student needs, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to achieve their academic potential.
- **Program Evaluation.** Assessment data provides essential information for evaluating the efficacy of our instructional programs. These data inform curriculum planning, resource allocation, and the development of our school's strategic plan.

- **Equity and Fairness.** We are committed to ensuring that all assessments are fair, equitable, and accessible to every student. This includes providing accommodations for students with special needs and ensuring that assessments are free from bias.
- **Transparency and Communication.** Assessment criteria, processes, and results are communicated clearly to students, parents, and guardians. This transparency fosters trust and ensures that all stakeholders are informed participants in the educational process.

In line with our commitment to fairness and accuracy, it is important to emphasize that a zero cannot be awarded as a disciplinary consequence. A zero must only reflect a student's genuine performance on an assessment, and not be used as a punitive measure. If a student fails to complete an assignment, alternative measures must be considered to address the underlying issues.

Types of Assessment

At DIS, we employ a diverse range of assessment types to capture a comprehensive picture of student learning. These types of assessment include:

- **Pre-assessments** are administered at the beginning of a unit or topic to determine students' prior knowledge, interests, and potential misconceptions. The information gathered from pre-assessments helps teachers plan instruction that is responsive to students' needs and starting points.
- **Formative assessments** are embedded within the instructional process and are conducted frequently. Examples include quizzes, class discussions, peer assessments, and in-class activities. The primary goal of formative assessment is to monitor student progress and provide feedback that supports learning and improvement.
- **Summative assessments** are conducted at the conclusion of a learning period, such as a unit, semester, or course. These assessments evaluate students' overall mastery of the content and skills taught. Summative assessments may include final exams, major projects, and standardized tests. The results of summative assessments are used to assign grades and to inform instructional decisions.
- **Standardized assessments**, such as the MAP test or FB and IB exams, provide objective measures of student performance against national or international benchmarks. These assessments are used to monitor student progress, identify areas for intervention, and ensure that students are meeting established standards.

Responsibilities

Students play an active role in the assessment process. Our key expectations include:

- **Preparation.** Arrive fully prepared for all assessments, having completed any required study or preparatory work.
- **Timeliness.** Submit all required work on time and meet all deadlines for assessments.
- **Integrity.** Uphold academic honesty by completing your own work and refraining from any form of cheating or plagiarism.
- **Engagement.** Actively engage with feedback provided by teachers, using it to make improvements and set personal learning goals.
- **Neatness and Presentation.** Present your work neatly and professionally, demonstrating pride in your achievements.

Teachers have a critical role in designing, administering, and evaluating assessments. Their responsibilities include:

- **Fairness and Rigor.** Ensure that all assessments are fair, rigorous, and aligned with the learning objectives. Teachers must grade assessments with consistency and return them to students in a timely manner, typically within one week.
- **Transparency.** Clearly communicate assessment criteria and expectations to students prior to administering assessments. This includes explaining how grades will be calculated and what students need to do to succeed (e.g., rubrics, assessment criteria, etc.).
- **Feedback.** Provide regular, constructive feedback that helps students understand their progress and identify areas for improvement. Teachers must enter grades into MyDIS promptly to keep students and parents/guardians informed.
- **Professional Development.** Continuously refine your assessment practices through professional development and collaboration with colleagues to ensure that assessments remain relevant and effective.

Parents and guardians play a supportive role in their children's education through:

- **Support.** Create a conducive environment for learning at home, including providing a quiet space for study and ensuring access to necessary resources, such as a computer and internet connection.
- **Communication.** Keep open lines of communication with teachers regarding any events or circumstances that may impact your child's learning or performance on assessments.
- **Encouragement.** Offer constructive support and encouragement to your children, while allowing them to complete their work independently to maintain the integrity of the assessment process.

Assessment Feedback

Providing timely and constructive feedback is essential to the learning process at DIS. Feedback helps students understand what they have mastered and where they need to improve. It is a critical tool for guiding students' academic development and helping them achieve their learning goals. The following are expectations to ensure quality feedback:

- **Timeliness.** Teachers are expected to return graded work within one week of submission. Prompt feedback allows students to reflect on their performance and make necessary adjustments before moving on to new material.
- **Specificity.** Feedback should be specific and focused on the learning objectives. It should highlight both strengths and areas for improvement, providing clear guidance on how students can enhance their understanding and skills.
- **Growth-Oriented.** Feedback should encourage a growth mindset, emphasizing that learning is a continuous process, and that effort and perseverance are key to success.
- **Two-Way Communication.** Teachers should create opportunities for students to ask questions and seek clarification on feedback. This dialogue fosters a deeper understanding and helps students take ownership of their learning.

Reporting Progress

DIS employs a variety of grading systems to report student progress, depending on the program and grade level. Each system is designed to provide clear, accurate, and meaningful information about student achievement.

Standards-Based Reporting in Primary School

In Primary School, we use standards-based reporting to communicate students' mastery of grade-level objectives. This system focuses on specific skills and competencies, rather than traditional letter grades. Report cards provide detailed feedback on each student's progress toward meeting established standards, helping parents and students understand areas of strength and areas for growth.

The following mastery levels are used in the DIS Early Childhood program:

M+	<i>Strong Mastery</i>	The student demonstrates strong mastery of the objective.
M	<i>Mastered</i>	The student demonstrates mastery of the objective.
BA	<i>Being Acquired</i>	The student is still working toward mastery of the objective.
NA	<i>Non Applicable</i>	This objective was not studied during the current learning period.

The following mastery levels are used in the DIS Elementary School program:

EE	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	The student demonstrates a consistent mastery of the objective at a level that is typically expected in higher grades.
M+	<i>Strong Mastery</i>	The student demonstrates strong mastery of the objective.
M	<i>Mastered</i>	The student demonstrates mastery of the objective.
BA	<i>Being Acquired</i>	The student demonstrates inconsistent mastery of the objective.
NM	<i>Not Mastered</i>	The student has not achieved mastery of the objective.
NA	<i>Non Applicable</i>	This objective was not studied during the current learning period.

Secondary School Grading Scales and Equivalencies

At Dallas International School, we are proud to offer two unique and rigorous academic programs: the French Baccalaureate (FB) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program, alongside a US-based curriculum. Given the diversity of grading systems across these programs, we recognize the need for a standardized approach to accurately equate grades.

To ensure consistency and fairness in grading, we utilize equivalency tables that help translate grades between the French (0 to 20), US percentage (0 to 100), US letter (F to A), and IB (1 to 7) grading scales. These tables have been carefully developed to align with the rigor and expectations of each program, providing a clear and accurate reflection of student performance regardless of the curriculum in which they are enrolled. The use of these equivalency tables allows us to: maintain a standardized approach to grading across different programs; provide students, parents/guardians, and educators with a clear understanding of how grades in one program correspond to grades in another; and ensure that student achievements are fairly recognized and reported, regardless of the program or grading scale.

By implementing these equivalency tables, we uphold our commitment to academic ambition and fairness, ensuring that all students are assessed equitably across our diverse educational offerings.

Secondary School French Program Grading Scale

In the French Program, grades are reported on a scale of 0 to 20. This system allows for a detailed assessment of student performance, with each point representing a specific level of mastery. The grading scale is designed to provide clear feedback on student progress and to encourage continuous improvement.

The following grade descriptors are used in the DIS Secondary School French Program:

18.0 to 20.0	Excellent	<i>Félicitations</i>
16.0 to 17.9	Very good	<i>Très bien</i>
14.0 to 15.9	Good	<i>Bien</i>
12.0 to 13.0	Fairly good	<i>Assez bien</i>
10.0 to 11.9	Satisfactory	<i>Passable</i>
7.0 to 9.9	Poor	<i>Insuffisant</i>
0.1 to 6.9	Failing	<i>Échec</i>

Secondary School International Program Grading Scales

In our International Program, grades are reported using a percentage and letter grading scale (A to F). This system provides a measure of student achievement that is aligned with US educational standards and familiar to all universities in North America. The grading scale allows for a clear comparison of student performance across subjects and grade levels.

The following grade descriptors are used in the DIS Secondary School International Program:

97-100	A+	Excellent
90-96	A	Very good
80-89	B	Good
70-79	C	Satisfactory
60-69	D	Poor
0-59	F	Failing

International Baccalaureate Grading Scale

The International Baccalaureate uses a grading scale of 1 to 7 for the Middle Years Program (MYP), the Diploma Program (DP), and the Career-related Program (CP), with 7 being the highest level of achievement. This scale reflects the rigorous assessment criteria of the IB and is designed to prepare students for the expectations of higher education. The IB grading scale is used consistently across all IB subjects, ensuring that students' grades accurately reflect their mastery of the curriculum.

The following course grade descriptors are used in the International Baccalaureate MYP, DP, and CP:

7	Excellent
6	Very good
5	Good
4	Satisfactory
3	Mediocre
2	Poor
1	Very poor

Assessment Criteria. Both teachers and students must have a thorough understanding of the use of IB Middle Years Program (MYP) and Diploma Program (DP) course assessment criteria, as well as assessment criteria for the core components of the MYP, DP, and the CP (the CP Core will be assessed through the IB Personal and Professional Skills class). These criteria, as outlined in all IB guides, will be used consistently when assessing student work. Teachers are responsible for clearly communicating these criteria to students, ensuring that they are aware of the expectations for each assessment.

Standardization and Moderation. To ensure fairness and consistency in grading, multiple teachers of the same subject will participate in a standardization process. This involves moderating student work together, comparing assessments, and agreeing on the application of the assessment criteria. This practice helps maintain high standards across all classes and ensures that students are graded equitably, regardless of which teacher is assessing their work.

Secondary School Effort Grades

In addition to academic performance, Dallas International School places a strong emphasis on evaluating students' effort throughout the academic year. Effort grades serve as a reflection of a student's diligence, engagement, and behavior in the classroom. These grades provide valuable insight into how students approach their learning, complementing their overall academic performance.

Effort grades are determined based on several key elements:

- **Diligence:** The student consistently completes assignments on time and with care, demonstrating perseverance and attention to detail.
- **Engagement:** Active participation in classroom activities, discussions, and lessons, as well as their willingness to ask questions, seek help, and contribute to the learning environment.
- **Behavior:** The student's conduct and attitude towards peers, teachers, and their own learning experience, including respect for classroom rules and an appropriate response to feedback. Behavior also includes attendance and punctuality; students are expected to be regularly present and on time for classes.

The secondary school effort grading scale is as follows:

EE	Exceeding Expectations
ME	Meeting Expectations
AE	Approaching Expectations
BE	Below Expectations

Additionally, effort grades are influenced by the student's completion of assignments. If a student has any missing assignments, the following guidelines apply to their effort grade:

- If the student is missing one assignment, the highest effort grade they can receive is **ME**.
- If the student is missing two assignments, the highest effort grade they can receive is **AE**.
- If the student is missing three or more assignments, the effort grade will be **BE**.

University Reporting

At Dallas International School, we understand the importance of accurately and fairly representing our students' academic achievements to universities around the world. Given our diverse student body, which comes from a wide range of academic and linguistic backgrounds, we follow specific practices in line with international school standards to ensure that all students are represented equitably in their university applications.

No Class Rank

As a school with students from highly diverse academic and linguistic backgrounds, and in line with international school practices, DIS does not rank students. This policy ensures that all students are evaluated on their individual merits and achievements without being compared to their peers, allowing universities to focus on the strengths and unique qualities of each applicant.

DIS High School Diploma

Dallas International School is authorized to issue High School Diplomas through its accreditation by the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS). In line with ISAS accreditation standards, students earn the DIS High School Diploma by successfully completing a specific number of credits in designated subjects. The exact credit requirements and subject areas are detailed in the student handbook, ensuring that all graduates meet the rigorous academic standards set forth by the school and its accrediting body.

Official Transcripts

The school will issue official transcripts that include comprehensive information about each student's academic journey. These transcripts will feature:

- all subjects taken during high school.
- the student's grade for each subject.
- credits earned for each course.
- the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA); and
- the final diploma(s) awarded (e.g., International Baccalaureate Diploma, French Baccalaureate Diploma, and/or DIS High School Diploma).

Benchmark Assessments

Benchmark assessments are standardized tests that provide valuable data on student progress and help ensure that students are meeting key academic milestones. A key element of benchmark assessments is that they are regulated by external examination bodies who award final grades. At DIS, we administer a variety of benchmark assessments throughout the academic year.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Examinations

IB exams are comprehensive assessments that evaluate students' mastery of the IB curriculum at the end of 12th grade (or limited anticipated exams at the end of 11th grade). These exams are a critical component of the IB Diploma and are recognized by universities worldwide. Students must demonstrate proficiency in multiple subjects, and their performance on these exams is a key factor in determining their eligibility for the IB Diploma. Annually, DIS is able to benchmark against a set of global results for all subject areas.

French Baccalaureate (FB) Examinations

The French Baccalaureate exams are rigorous assessments that evaluate students' knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects. These exams taken at the end of 11th and 12th grades are essential for graduation and are recognized by universities in France and around the world. Success in the FB exams requires thorough preparation and a deep understanding of the curriculum.

French National Brevet (DNB) Examinations

The exams leading to the award of the *Diplôme National du Brevet* (DNB) are standardized tests administered in 9th grade. These exams serve as an important benchmark for student progress in the French education system and are a prerequisite for advancing to higher levels of education. The Brevet exams assess students' proficiency in core subjects, including French, mathematics, sciences, history, and geography.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

MAP assessments are computer-adaptive tests that measure student progress in reading, language, and mathematics. Administered to students from 1st through 10th grades, these assessments provide valuable data on student growth and help identify areas where additional support may be needed. MAP assessments are administered three times per year to monitor progress and adjust instruction as necessary.

French National Evaluations

French National Evaluations are standardized tests administered at key stages in the early years of education (Cycles 2 and 3). These evaluations assess student progress in core subjects and help identify areas for intervention and support. With benchmarking data coordinated through the French educational services overseas, the results of these evaluations are used to inform instructional planning and to ensure that students are meeting national standards.

Diploma of French Language Studies (DELF)

The *Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française* (DELF) is an internationally-recognized certification of French language proficiency. Available at various levels, the DELF assesses students' ability to communicate in French across four key areas: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The DELF, a lifelong diploma awarded through the French Ministry of Education, is a valuable credential for students planning to study or work in French-speaking environments.

Advanced Placement (AP) Examinations

Advanced Placement (AP) exams offer high school students the opportunity to earn college credit and demonstrate mastery of college-level material. Administered in a variety of subjects, AP exams are widely recognized by universities in the United States and abroad. Success on AP exams can enhance a student's college application and provide advanced standing in university courses.



University Entrance Assessments (SAT and ACT)

The SAT and ACT are standardized tests used for university admissions, primarily in the United States. These assessments measure students' readiness for college and are critical components of the college application process. Though DIS's academic program will engage students in the knowledge and skills needed to succeed on these exams, DIS does not provide test preparation lessons for these standardized assessments.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) assesses English language proficiency for non-native speakers. Required by many universities for admission, the TOEFL is an important benchmark for students planning to study in English-speaking countries, in particular the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Though DIS's academic program will engage students in the knowledge and skills needed to succeed on the TOEFL, DIS does not provide test preparation lessons for this standardized assessment.

Policy Review and Publication

This policy is reviewed regularly through collaborative planning, and final versions for publication are sent to and formally approved by the DIS Executive Leadership Team. The latest version of this policy is made available to the DIS community through the MyDIS platform.