

2022

# Al Zahra College Secondary Assessment Policy



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## Al Zahra Mission Statement

*Al Zahra College aims to develop faithful, knowledgeable and wise young people who take responsibility for creating a better and more peaceful world. We will challenge our students to become active learners and critical thinkers who promote intercultural understanding and respect. Therefore, we aim to develop internationally minded learners who strive to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective.*

## International Mindedness at Al Zahra College

At Al Zahra College, we agree that global citizenship is an integral part of education. To be a global citizen is to understand and promote basic human rights, to know the nature of our physical and social world, and to be aware that our actions impact others and the planet. This goal is best accomplished by knowing ourselves and knowing our place in the world through the cultural backgrounds of all members of our community. Through this knowledge, we strive for a level of empathy that will direct our actions.

## 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 IB works with schools, governments and international organisations 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.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> International Baccalaureate Organisation©

## AZC Philosophy of Assessment

Al Zahra College believes that assessment should provide both students and teachers with the opportunity to improve learning. Through thoughtfully constructed, regular assessments that cultivate authentic learning and reflect the curricular goals of courses, teachers enable students to develop and build on course specific skills and knowledge. Al Zahra College recognises the importance of carefully articulated, purposeful feedback that enables students to become active participants in their own learning, and believes that, first and foremost, assessment should act as a productive, ongoing conversation between students and teachers that conceptualises learning as a journey in which both parties share an equal responsibility. Assessment given prior to the Diploma years is richly descriptive, providing students with a strong foundation for understanding assessment, not as a competition for the highest grade, but as a means of improving one's learning. Fundamentally, success at Al Zahra College is about students achieving their own goals, not about how they perform against others. This reflects Al Zahra College's commitment to the flourishing of each individual in a supportive environment that does not include reprisals or the threat of failure as a means of motivation.

### Rationale:

The primary objective of assessment is to support student learning. For this reason, it is important that all assessment is observant of curricular goals, authentic, purposeful and relevant. It should be responsive to the changing needs of students, as they may be understood within the context of the aims and objectives of the programmes and courses, and the knowledge teachers require to identify these changing needs. Assessment should furnish the opportunity for teachers to provide meaningful feedback that can be utilised by students to improve their learning in specific ways and, by utilising a variety of assessment instruments, allow them to become better judges of their own progress and performance. Assessment should also provide a means through which the effectiveness of teaching can be evaluated. In the Diploma Programme it is important that assessment is designed so as to enable students to effectively demonstrate their mastery of relevant skills and knowledge when the time comes for their formal assessments.

Because of its significance to improving teaching and learning, assessment should be ongoing. The outcomes of assessment should be recorded for the purposes of reflection, action and formal analysis. It is important that assessment is supported by a secure, sensitive and nurturing relationship so as to cultivate a positive attitude towards feedback and so enable students to use it as a means of improving their learning.

## Staff Responsibilities

All teachers are expected to engage in regular assessment that is aligned to the curricular goals of the programme and their subject/s. The assessment must be integral to the learning process and have a clear purpose. It should be constructed in such a way as to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of knowledge and attainment of skills rather than their capacity to simply recall factual knowledge. Effective assessment recognises that students express their learning in different ways and acknowledges the importance of capacitating students to critically assess their own work and so become active participants in their learning journey. For this reason, teachers are expected to use a diverse range of assessment instruments and to provide opportunities for students to engage in teacher-supported self-evaluation and peer evaluation.

## Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is often described as ‘assessment for learning.’ It encompasses those tasks and activities used to monitor student progress and to gather data to evaluate and modify teaching and learning. Because of its regular nature and direct alignment to the broader curricular goals expressed in summative assessments, formative assessment is an invaluable means through which students can evaluate and direct their own learning.

Each teacher is responsible for developing and delivering regular formative assessment. Formative assessments must be purposeful and clearly aligned with course aims and assessment objectives. Assessment instruments designed for formal summative assessments can be adapted and used formatively to ensure coherence. When the nature of the assessment is task-based rather than based on classroom observation, teachers must clearly communicate to students:

- A description of the assessment
- The learning purpose underpinning the assessment
- The criteria for assessment
- The due date.

Feedback relating to formative assessments should be specific in nature and delivered in a timely manner. It is important that, when delivering feedback, teachers remember the role feedback plays in helping students to assess their own progress and performance and direct their efforts to improve their learning.

## Summative Assessment

If formative assessment may be understood as ‘assessment for learning’, summative assessment is ‘assessment of learning.’ It refers to those assessments that are used to evaluate student learning for the purposes of reporting and certification. In the MYP, summative assessment is entirely internal whereas in the DP, summative assessment is generally externally assessed (or moderated) and includes both examinations and coursework.

All summative/coursework tasks in the MYP and DP must be:

- Should be submitted via Canvas by 08:30am on a Monday or Friday. During online learning periods, tasks can also be submitted on a Wednesday.
- The submission of practical tasks can occur within the class time stipulated on the student assessment notification.
- Submission of corrupted files and file formats not indicated on the assessment task will be treated as an assessment task non-submission.

## Summative Assessment in the MYP

From Principles to Practice defines Collaboration as working together on a common aim, with shared information; this is open and cooperative behaviour that does not result in allowing one’s work to be copied or submitted by another (IBO, 2014, p.74). Where students use each other’s ideas and work as unattributed sources, this is collusion, not collaboration.

All MYP assessment is aligned with the MYP assessment model and is designed through discussion and collaboration. Tasks are assessed via MYP criteria first and then converted to a NESAs grade equivalent for reporting purposes. The chart below demonstrates this conversion process.

**Chart 1:1: Aligning MYP and NESAs Grading Scale:**

MYP Grades	Boundaries	NESA Grade
1	1-5	E
2	6-9	D
3	10-14	C/D
4	15-18	C
5	19-23	B/C
6	24-27	B
7	28-32	A

The teacher will make assessment task specific, preferably in collaboration with students. Teachers must communicate the assessment criteria before the assessment task is assigned. Task specific clarifications can be displayed in the classroom, given individually to students, presented in a discussion or posted on an online, shared classroom, such as Canvas. Years 7 and 8 use the Year 3

MYP Assessment Criteria and Years 9 and 10 use the Year 5 MYP Assessment Criteria. These can be found in the MYP subject Guides and can be accessed by teachers on the myib.com website. A summary of the MYP assessment criteria across subject groups can be found in the appendices of this document.

Teachers are responsible for assessment and each subject area must assess students using the MYP criteria **at least twice a year**. All assessment must be recorded on Al Zahra College's management system, Canvas or Sentral.

Final scores are not determined by averaging summative performance scores over the year, using pieces of work to determine final grades, or by combining homework, classwork and test grades. In a team-teaching environment, teachers will cross-mark or moderate either within Faculty and/or with the Faculty Leader. The subject area teacher's professional judgment along with student evidence will contribute to the final score.

The criterion-based feedback is shared with the student, **not** the 1-7 numerical grade which is given at the end of the semester when all criteria have been addressed.

An assessment schedule is published at the beginning of each term. This is shared with the school community- teachers, students and parents.

## Summative Assessment in the DP

Summative assessment in the DP refers to those assessments prescribed by the IB and described in the subject study guides. It comprises of both internal and external assessments. Internal assessments are graded by the teacher and externally moderated, through a selection of random samples of a proportion determined by the class size, by the IB. External assessments are graded exclusively by the IB. Internal assessments can take a range of forms, including oral presentations, written tasks, exhibitions, investigations and reports. External assessments include examinations as well as other tasks prescribed by the IB, such as written assignments, folios, presentations, etc., which are completed in class but are externally graded by the IB. It should be noted that in some subjects' external assessments do not include an examination, e.g., visual arts.

Summative assessment in the DP is prescriptive and teachers are responsible for ensuring they have a clear understanding of each summative assessment task and the criteria against which each is judged. Teachers must always use the prescribed criteria when developing, assessing and reporting on summative assessment. Students need to clearly understand assessment requirements and the standards and practices that align to these requirements. These requirements should be outlined to

students at the commencement of the course and revisited in a timely manner. Descriptions of internal assessments and external assessments other than examinations should be communicated to students in written form and recorded on Canvas or Managebac. At the time of communication students should be given a copy of the criteria against which the task will be marked, from the relevant subject guide. These criteria should be clearly explained to students. Students should also be provided with clear descriptions of the tasks they will be expected to complete during their formal examinations and a copy of the mark bands/schemes against which their papers are assessed. These mark bands/schemes should be clearly explained to students. It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that every student is adequately prepared for all summative assessments.

In the case where more than one teacher is involved in delivering a course, student work must be moderated to ensure cohesion across the cohort. Although not a requirement for teachers who are solely responsible for course delivery, cross-marking with another teacher who is familiar with the subject is an invaluable way of improving the accuracy of marking and is therefore encouraged, particularly if the teacher is inexperienced.

At the commencement of the programme all students will be given a copy of the Calendar of Deadlines, which will also be made available to parents through Skoolbag or Canvas. The calendar lists the due dates for all internal and external summative assessments and, where possible, the due date for preparatory work, such as drafts. The Calendar of Deadlines plays an important role in making the workload for students more manageable by allowing them to plan ahead. For this reason, it is imperative, unless there are significant mitigating circumstances, that the Calendar of Deadlines is adhered to by all teachers without exception. It is also advisable that, where possible, teachers break down summative tasks into parts to facilitate manageability and aid with the process of authenticating student work, although the deadlines for these parts do not need to be included in the Calendar of Deadlines. Where the nature of the task allows for the submission of a completed draft, teachers should provide feedback in a timely manner. The feedback should be specific, insofar as it allows students to clearly identify what they need to do to improve their work, but should not include writing on, editing or re-writing any part of the document. Submission of multiple drafts of the same summative task for additional feedback is unacceptable. Once a student has officially submitted the final draft of their work it cannot be retracted.

Once work has been checked for authenticity teachers will be responsible for completing required documentation and uploading students' assessments to IBIS. The coordinator will advise teachers when the system is open for submission. Teachers must keep a copy of each assessment as a record.



## MYP and DP Academic Honesty

It is important that teachers are able to authenticate student work, so it is advisable that teachers keep student drafts. On submission, all summative tasks may be run through plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) to check authenticity. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are submitting a correct file and file format. The submission of corrupted files will be treated as a non-submission. For DP, teachers must ensure that students have completed the Declaration of Authentication, which will be kept as both an electronic and hard copy by the coordinator. The procedures for dealing with suspected academic misconduct are explained in full in Al Zahra College's Academic Honesty Policy. At the time when summative tasks are outlined to students' teachers should draw their attention to this policy and remind them of the categories and consequences of academic dishonesty.

## Recording and Reporting Student Achievement

### In the MYP:

At the end of each semester students will receive a final achievement from the MYP General Grade Scale (see appendices). Student achievement is recorded on a shared assessment and reporting document overseen by the MYP coordinator. The Grade boundary guide is the same for all years and subjects in the MYP (refer to Chart 1:1). Comments and criterion achievement levels should be recorded on Canvas so both students and their parents may access comments.

Student achievement is reported to families in a variety of ways including:

- Semester reporting
- Teacher emails, phone calls and meetings
- Parent teacher conferences
- Individual Education Plans

### In the DP:

Due to its importance in monitoring student progress and capacitating students to assess their own progress and performance and improve their learning, assessment of formative tasks, where feasible, should be recorded on Canvas so both students and their parents may access comments. Just as assessments should reflect the curricular goals of the relevant course, feedback on assessments should be specific to course goals and assessment objectives, thereby allowing students to understand exactly what is required for them to improve their performance in relation to the requisite skills and knowledge.

In the case of internal, summative assessments teachers should provide students with written feedback that specifically draws on the language used in the assessment criteria described in the relevant course guide. The comments should be recorded and made available to students on Canvas.

Given that Al Zahra College uses a continuous reporting model it is vital that, when recording comments on Canvas for both formative and summative assessments, feedback supplied coheres with the course goals and assessment objectives (or assessment criteria in the case of summative assessments). When making their selections teachers should be mindful of the requirements regarding feedback described above.

In addition to monitoring student progress and reporting on student achievement via Canvas, teachers will also be expected to communicate progress and achievement via:

- Emails, phone call and meeting with parents
- Semesterised Parent-teacher conferences (as required) / Semesterised Academic reports
- Individual Education Plans.

## **Procedures for the analysis of data in the MYP/DP:**

Analysis of the students' and cohort's performance at the conclusion of the programme is an important means through which the effectiveness of teaching and learning can be assessed. It is therefore important that all staff engage in careful analysis of data relating to student results. A curriculum day will be put aside at the beginning of each year to engage in this process.

## **Student Responsibilities**

Although teachers bear a significant responsibility when it comes to assessment, it is important that students recognise the role they play in the assessment process as active participants in their learning journey. To facilitate best practice, students are expected to familiarise themselves with, and make regular use of, communication tools such as Canvas. Students should also pay close attention to assessment guidelines and criteria, seeking clarification as required, and observe the submission dates for assessments.

Although it is understood that in exceptional circumstances students may require extensions, extensions will not be given without appropriate documentation (such as a medical certificate).

## Late Submission in the MYP:

If a student does not complete an assignment, they may be granted an extension with appropriate documentation (such as a medical certificate). If the assignment is more than 3 days late without explanation, parents will be notified, and students may receive a 'ungraded' result for that task.

Students who do not submit their summative task on time will automatically accrue an academic detention. This also includes partial or incomplete submissions.

## Late Submission in the DP

The Calendar of Deadlines, which will be disseminated at the beginning or middle of Year 1 of the Diploma Programme and will be made available to the school community via Canvas, will ensure that students are aware of submission deadlines of summative assessments well in advance. It is imperative that students adhere to these deadlines as well as the deadlines for the various stages of the summative assessments set by classroom teachers, including the draft completed for comment. If these latter deadlines are missed teachers must:

- Speak with the student about the missed deadline to ascertain the reasons that work has not been handed in
- Speak with the parents of the student within 48 hours to alert them that the deadline has been missed
- If work is not submitted within 3 days of the deadline the teacher will make a time for the student to complete the work under supervision and in accordance with a suitable time limit decided by the teacher and/or Diploma Programme Coordinator
- A teacher is not required to provide feedback on work that has been submitted after the due date.

If a student misses the deadline for a completed, final draft of a summative assessment without meeting the agreed 'mitigating circumstances' the teacher will submit the 'draft for comment' as the final piece of work. If, for some reason, no draft is available, the student will be given the option to complete a final draft for submission under supervision and in accordance with a time limit set by the teacher and/or Diploma Programme Coordinator, at a time convenient for the teacher (or Diploma coordinator) but within one week of the final submission date. The work produced will be submitted to IBIS as the final.

Diploma students should note that a failure to submit required summative assessments will result in the withholding of the final award.

The requirements and due dates for formative assessment tasks will be formally communicated to students. Although formative assessment tasks do not directly contribute to a student's final score for a subject, they provide students with the opportunity to exercise skills and develop knowledge relevant to their summative assessments and teachers with the necessary data to evaluate student learning. Students are required to complete formative assessments in accordance with the deadlines set by teachers. If a deadline is missed teachers must:

- Speak with the student about the missed deadline to ascertain the reasons why the work has not been handed in.
- The student will then be required to complete the work during the next available class time, or, if such a time is not deemed suitable by the classroom teacher, at another time chosen at the teacher's discretion but within 5 days of the original deadline.
- If the opportunity to re-sit the task is missed parents must be alerted.
- Teachers will not be required to provide feedback on formative assessments that have been completed after the due date.

Students with special educational needs will be carefully supported to meet assessment deadlines. Individual Education Learning Plans will detail this support and be made available to all relevant staff.

## Process and Procedures

This Assessment Policy has been developed and revised in consultation with the Executive team and staff at Al Zahra College, in accordance with IB regulations. Al Zahra College's Executive team and staff will meet at the beginning of each year to discuss its implementation and monitoring. The policy is scheduled to be reviewed and updated by the Executive team and staff at Al Zahra College in 2024.

## Communication

The Assessment Policy will be communicated to the Al Zahra College community on the Al Zahra College website, Skoolbag, Canvas and at information sessions. Diploma students will receive a copy of this policy, as well as the Academic Honesty Policy when they commence the Diploma Programme.

## References

- International Baccalaureate Organisation (2010) *Guidelines for Developing a School Assessment Policy in the Diploma Programme* Geneva, Switzerland
- International Baccalaureate Organisation (2015) *Diploma Programme: From Principles to Practice* Geneva, Switzerland
- International Baccalaureate Organisation (2017) *Handbook of Procedures for the Diploma Programme 2017* Geneva, Switzerland

## Appendix I: MYP Assessment Criteria

The MYP assessment criteria across subject groups can be summarised as follows.

	A	B	C	D
<b>Language and literature</b>	Analysing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
<b>Language acquisition</b>	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
<b>Individuals and societies</b>	Knowing and understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking critically
<b>Sciences</b>	Knowing and understanding	Inquiring and designing	Processing and evaluating	Reflecting on the impacts of science
<b>Mathematics</b>	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics in real-world contexts
<b>Arts</b>	Knowing and understanding	Developing skills	Thinking creatively	Responding
<b>Physical and health education</b>	Knowing and understanding	Planning for performance	Applying and performing	Reflecting and improving performance
<b>Design</b>	Inquiring and analysing	Developing ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating
<b>MYP projects</b>	Investigating	Planning	Taking action	Reflecting
<b>Interdisciplinary</b>	Disciplinary grounding	Synthesizing and applying	Communicating	Reflecting

Schools must regularly report student progress towards the MYP objectives using the prescribed subject-group assessment criteria. The criteria for each subject group represent the use of knowledge, understanding and skills that must be taught. They encompass the factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive dimensions of knowledge. Assessment criteria for years 1, 3 and 5 of the programme are provided in MYP subject-group guides, and their use is mandatory

(From Principles to Practice, p.80)

## Appendix II: MYP General Grade Descriptor

DESCRIPTOR
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>

## Appendix III – Assessment Glossary

**Diagnostic assessment** is a type of formative assessment particularly intended to diagnose areas of weakness, or misunderstanding, and strength.

**Formative assessment** is used to monitor learning progress during a learning sequence. It provides continuous feedback to teachers and students, which enables them to monitor progress and identify and address errors in learning. Because formative assessment is primarily directed towards improving learning, the results are typically not used for assigning standards.

**Self- and peer assessment** involves students using the above techniques to assess their own work and the work of their peers. Self- and peer- assessment allow teachers to take account of students' perceptions when gathering evidence.

**Summative assessment** seeks to establish the level of achievement attained by a student, and typically occurs at the end of a learning sequence, course or unit. Although the main purpose of summative assessment is to establish levels of achievement for reporting and certification, it also provides information for judging the effectiveness of teaching. Every subject group has a task at the end of every unit which gives the teacher evidence for evaluating the student's achievement level against the assessment criteria. The criterion and their descriptors are mandated by the IB.

**Consultation** involves teachers discussing student work with students, colleagues, parents/carers or other paraprofessionals. The varying perspectives of the participants in consultations can help enrich the evidence gathered about students' demonstrations of learning outcomes. Consultation can be used to verify the evidence gathered using other techniques. Some consultations may reveal a need for more detailed assessment.

**Focused analysis** involves teachers examining in detail student responses to tasks or activities (e.g. computer- generated presentations, group discussions, tests, debates or research projects). This technique provides detailed evidence about students' demonstrations of learning outcomes.

**Monitoring** refers to a series of assessments made over time, in order to keep track of developments in students' learning.

**Observation** involves teachers observing students as they participate in planned activities. Teacher observation occurs continually as a natural part of the learning and teaching process and can be used to gather a broad range of evidence about students' demonstrations of learning outcomes. Teacher observations can also be structured.