

Assessment Policy

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School – Halton Catholic District School Board (applicable to IB programme)

Statement of purpose and principles

The primary purpose of Assessment and Evaluation is to improve student learning. The Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) is committed to assessment and evaluation practices that are grounded in the belief that all students should be able to demonstrate their learning in an environment that reflects the Catholic values of fairness, equity, and respect for all. The HCDSB is committed to enabling every student to reach his/her potential and to succeed by maximizing student learning and school effectiveness through continuous assessment and evaluation of programs and student achievement at the classroom, school, family of schools, and board levels. As outlined in the Ministry of Education's *Growing Success* policy, the HCDSB recognizes that it must be made clear to students that they are responsible for providing evidence of their learning within established timelines, and that there are consequences for dishonesty, plagiarizing, not completing work, and submitting work late.

Assessment is the process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a course. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is seen as both “assessment for learning” and “assessment as learning”. As part of assessment for learning, teachers provide students with descriptive feedback and coaching for improvement. Teachers engage in assessment as learning by helping all students develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who are able to set individual goals, monitor their own progress, determine next steps, and reflect on their thinking and learning.

Evaluation is the process of judging the quality of student learning on the basis of established performance standards and assigning a value to represent that quality. Evaluation accurately summarizes and communicates to parents, other teachers, employers, institutions of further education, and students themselves what students know and can do with respect to the overall curriculum expectations. Evaluation is based on assessment of learning that provides evidence of student achievement at strategic times throughout the course, often at the end of a period of learning.

Reporting is the process of communicating students' achievement of the curriculum expectations and the demonstration of Learning Skills and Work Habits. The Provincial Report Card represents a summary of a teacher's professional judgements about student achievement; it gives students descriptive feedback in comments, indicating what they have learned and need to learn, as well as providing guidance to help students improve their learning.

The HCDSB expects that the fundamental principles from the *Growing Success* policy will guide assessment and evaluation in all schools. To ensure that assessment, evaluation, and reporting are valid

and reliable, and that the process provides for the improvement of learning for all students, teachers use practices and procedures that:

- respect the dignity of all learners;
- provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning;
- reflect the holistic nature of assessment which integrates the nature of learning and faith development;
- are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students;
- support all students, including those with special education needs, those who are learning the language of instruction (English or French) those with medical conditions, and those who are First Nation, Métis, or Inuit;
- are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals and, as much as possible, to the interests, learning styles and preferences, needs, and experiences of all students;
- are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the course and at other appropriate points throughout the course;
- are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
- provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement;
- develop students' self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning.

Assessment Practices

Teachers and administrators share the responsibility of implementing the principles within the *Growing Success* policy while respecting the dignity of all learners, providing multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning, and reflecting the holistic nature of assessment which integrates the nature of learning and faith development. The professional judgment of our teachers and administrators is crucial to the effective assessment, evaluation, and reporting of student achievement.

Schools have the responsibility to:

- implement practices aligned with the Fundamental Principles in the Ministry of Education's *Growing Success* policy;
- ensure that reported grades accurately reflect student achievement of the curriculum overall expectations of the subject or course;
- promote academic honesty;
- ensure that students are responsible for providing evidence of their learning within established timelines;
- ensure that the determination of interventions and consequences will take into consideration the following factors: grade level; maturity; pathway; the number, frequency, and severity of policy violations; and the individual circumstances of every student;
- assess the on-going effectiveness of interventions and consequences to determine further interventions required to support student success;
- ensure responsive differentiation in instruction, assessment, and evaluation to meet the needs of every student;

- ensure the students with special education needs are provided with accommodated, modified, and/or alternate programs as outlined in the Individual Education Plan.
- ensure that mark deduction will not result in a report card percentage mark that misrepresents the student’s actual achievement of the curriculum overall expectations;
- ensure there are appropriate preventative strategies, communication, and consequences for cheating, plagiarizing, not completing work, and submitting work late.

Purposes of Assessment

Assessment should have as its goal the development of students as independent and autonomous learners.

Assessment, classified according to its purpose, can be thought of as assessment *for, as, or of* learning.

Assessment <i>for</i> learning	The teacher provides students with descriptive feedback and coaching for improvement.	Data will not be considered as assessment data for evaluation.
Assessment <i>as</i> learning	The teacher helps students to develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set individual learning goals • monitor their own progress • determine next steps • reflect on their thinking and learning 	
Assessment <i>of</i> learning	The teacher assesses a student’s summative work at the end of a period of learning to determine to what degree the student has achieved the learning goal.	Data can be used as assessment data for evaluation.

Types of Assessment

The chart below describes the relationships between the **types** of assessment (*diagnostic, formative and summative*) and the **purposes** of assessment (*for, as and of* learning).

	Detail	Purpose(s) for Assessment
Diagnostic Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • occurs before instruction begins • is a process of seeking and interpreting evidence • can include gathering data about student interests, preferences, prior knowledge • answers the question “Where is the student now?” 	<u>Assessment for learning</u> Purpose for teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to determine what students already know and can do with respect to curriculum expectations • helps to determine instructional next steps and teaching points • may help to create instructional groupings

Formative Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • occurs frequently • ongoing and embedded in instruction • takes place while students are still gaining knowledge and practising skills • involves the teacher modelling, supporting, and guiding students (coaching) • guides in the determining of instructional next steps • aids the teacher in differentiating instruction to address individual student next steps 	<u>Assessment for learning</u> Purpose for teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to monitor students' progress towards achieving learning goals • to provide descriptive feedback to students and determine instructional next steps <u>Assessment as learning</u> Purpose for student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to monitor his or her own progress towards achieving learning goals (<i>self-assessment</i>) • to provide feedback to other students (<i>peer assessment</i>)
Summative Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • occurs at or near the end of a period of learning (a lesson or a series of lessons) • may be used to inform further instruction 	<u>Assessment of learning</u> Purpose for teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to summarize learning at a given point in time • to make judgements about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria • provides assessment data for evaluation

Assessment in the IBDP

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) uses both internally and externally assessed components to evaluate student performance. For most courses, written examinations at the end of the DP form the basis of the assessment.

IB Assessments

IB teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments to support and encourage student learning. IB assessment is criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced. This means that student work is marked in relation to clearly defined levels of skill attainment rather than against the work of other students. The levels of skill attainment for each subject are derived from the aims and objectives of the course and established by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). They are designed to be fair to students all over the world. The criteria for achievement are explained to students in each course and are the focus of class and homework activities.

Internal Assessment

IB internal assessments allow teachers to assess the students' work during the IB course. The marks for the internal assessments are submitted to the IBO, along with a representative sample of the work marked by the teacher. This sample is then sent to an IB moderator who evaluates how the teacher has

applied the IB grading rubric. IBO may then adjust the marks of the assignment up or down if the teacher's marking is deemed too strict or too lenient.

Internal assessments provide students with opportunities to show mastery of skills outside of final examinations. Students receive significant instruction and practice throughout their courses in order to effectively prepare for these challenging tasks. In each IB subject, teachers are given a very specific list of criteria to assess and guidelines about how to mark each criterion. To determine a mark, the teacher chooses the level of achievement that best matches the work being marked. The criteria for achievement are clearly communicated to students well in advance of the internal assessments. IB assessments are graded on a scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high).

External Assessment

IB external assessments are assessments that are completed by students while overseen by their teachers, but they are marked by external IB examiners. STA students write IB examinations in May. Up to two subjects are written in year 1 (grade 11) as anticipated subjects, and the other subjects are written in year 2 (grade 12). The dates for IB examinations are set by the IBO and given to students a year in advance of their exams. IB exams are conducted in strict accordance with IBO regulations.

School-Based Assessment

IB teachers also use school-based student assessment in addition to IB internal and external assessments. These school-based assessments are essential for student success and contribute to students' Ontario report card marks. Report card marks during the course are based on summative tests using past IB exam questions, practice exams, and in-class assignments modelled on IB assessments. Teachers evaluate school-based assignments using IB rubrics and then convert the marks to the agreed-upon regional association Table of Equivalence scores based on the grade boundaries available in the yearly subject reports provided by IB.

Reporting IB Grades

Regular reporting cycles (using the IB conversion chart below), and dialogue between teachers and students and parents, are used to communicate student progress throughout the academic year. Parent-teacher interviews are held each semester, providing parents and guardians a time to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress in each course. As needed, teachers consult with parents and guardians on an individual basis.

IB Grading

Marks in IB courses are reported using the IB 1 - 7 scale as described below. The 1-7 marks are based on the IB standardised criteria on levels of achievement in each course.

IB Grading Scale

- 7: Excellent Performance
- 6: Very Good Performance
- 5: Good Performance
- 4: Satisfactory Performance
- 3: Mediocre Performance
- 2: Poor Performance
- 1: Very Poor Performance

The Ontario Secondary School Report Card reports grades as percentages. In order to report achievement as a percentage grade, teachers use the Table of Equivalents instituted by the IB Schools of Ontario:

Ontario Grade	IB Level
40	Low 1
42	Mid 1
50	High 1
50	Low 2
55	Mid 2
60	High 2
62	Low 3
65	Mid 3
70	High 3
72	Low 4
78	Mid 4
82	High 4
84	Low 5
88	Mid 5
92	High 5
93	Low 6
95	Mid 6
96	High 6
97	Low 7
99	Mid 7
100	High 7

Predicted Grades

Predicted Grades (PG) are a calculation of student achievement. The Predicted Grade is based on previous academic progress, and might include practice exam marks, the various components of term work, and Internal Assessment (IA). The Predicted Grades are shared with the Ontario University Application Center (OUAC) in semester 2.

Teachers determine the most consistent IB level performance and will assign a mark accordingly. When a student has had more than one teacher over the instruction period of an IB HL or SL course, teachers will consult to determine the Predicted Grade.

Conversion of Final Grades

When the IB final results are released to the school in the first week of July, the student's permanent Ontario transcript will be updated to reflect these results. If the IB Predicted Grade is not matched by the IB Final Result, the OSSD final percentage will be adjusted up or down as the IB result demands. For example, if a student has an English PG of level 5 but earns an IB Final result of level 4, the mark will be changed to 83%. Should the student earn a level 6, the mark will be raised to a 93%. Where there are two or three OSSD grade 12 credits associated with an IB course of study, all courses will be adjusted to reflect final IB achievement. Where an adjustment is necessary in July, it will apply only to the official Ontario Student Transcript and not to any previous report card nor to graduation.

Links between the assessment policy and other documents

The Assessment Policy is integrated with the guidelines set forth in the St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School IB Academic Honesty Policy. Students with identified learning needs (e.g. IEP, ELL) will receive supports and accommodations based on their individual needs and guided by the St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School IB Special Educational Needs and Language Policies.

New Teachers

New teacher hires come with the understanding that they may be teaching an IB course, and thus they will be provided an opportunity to be trained in their IB subject area. They will also be provided with opportunities to complete in-school PD sessions with other trained IB teachers which may include mark moderation as per IB standards and exemplars, creating IB-modeled assessments, etc. IBSO Roundtables are also offered to support newly-hired IB teachers.

All teachers will be provided with PD time and support to review IB Assessment Policies.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every year by a committee consisting of the Diploma Coordinator, teaching staff members, and an administrator.

Resources

The following assessment resources were consulted in the creation of this document:

- *Assessment and Evaluation, Operating Policy II-46* (2015), Halton Catholic District School Board
- *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools* (2010), Ontario Ministry of Education
- *Guidelines for developing a school assessment policy in the Diploma Programme* (2010), International Baccalaureate Organization
- *Assessment Principles and Practice* (2018), International Baccalaureate Organization
- *Assessment, Evaluating, Reporting Handbook* (2013), Waterloo Catholic School Board

Addendum

Structure of the DP

In order to achieve the IB diploma certificate, a candidate must take six subjects, together with the core elements—theory of knowledge, the extended essay, and creativity, activity, service (CAS).

Students choose courses from the following subject groups:

- studies in language and literature
- language acquisition
- individuals and societies
- sciences
- mathematics
- the arts.

Students may opt to study an additional science, individuals and societies, or language course, instead of a course in the arts.

Students will take some subjects at standard level (SL) and some at higher level (HL). SL and HL courses differ in scope but are measured according to the same grade descriptors, with students expected to demonstrate a greater body of knowledge, understanding, and skills at higher level.

Each student takes at least three (but not more than four) subjects at higher level, and the remaining are taken at standard level.

How the IB Diploma Points are Calculated

The overall diploma points are calculated by adding together the grades (1 up to 7) achieved from each of the six subjects and then including between zero and three points from the core. This means that the highest score that a candidate can achieve is 45 points. The diploma is awarded to students who gain at least 24 points, subject to certain minimum levels of performance including successful completion of the three essential elements of the DP core. This approach means that SL and HL subjects are valued equally in determining the candidate's final points.

Unlike the other subjects, theory of knowledge (TOK) and the extended essay (EE) are graded from A to E. The third element of the core, CAS, does not receive a grade as it would not be meaningful to evaluate performance in this area. The core is worth between zero and three points towards the overall diploma points. The candidate can also fail to achieve the diploma certificate if they obtain a grade E in either TOK or EE or if they do not complete CAS. The number of points is calculated using the table below.

		Theory of knowledge					
		Excellent A	Good B	Satisfactory C	Mediocre D	Elementary E	Not submitted
Extended essay	Excellent A	3	3	2	2	1 + Failing condition*	N
	Good B	3	2	1	1	Failing condition*	N
	Satisfactory C	2	1	1	0	Failing condition*	N
	Mediocre D	2	1	0	0	Failing condition*	N
	Elementary E	1 + Failing condition*	Failing condition*	Failing condition*	Failing condition*	Failing condition*	N
	Not submitted	N	N	N	N	N	N

The IB Diploma will be awarded to a candidate provided all the following requirements have been met:

- a. CAS requirements have been met.
- b. The candidate's total points are 24 or more.
- c. There is no "N" awarded for theory of knowledge, the extended essay or for a contributing subject.
- d. There is no grade E awarded for theory of knowledge and/or the extended essay.
- e. There is no grade 1 awarded in a subject/level.
- f. There are no more than two grade 2s awarded (HL or SL).
- g. There are no more than three grade 3s or below awarded (HL or SL).
- h. The candidate has gained 12 points or more on HL subjects (for candidates who register for four HL subjects, the three highest grades count).
- i. The candidate has gained 9 points or more on SL subjects (candidates who register for two SL subjects must gain at least 5 points at SL).
- j. The candidate has not received a penalty for academic misconduct from the final award committee.