



# Assessment Policy

Guidelines for members of the  
Middle school community

*This document has been prepared by the school's MYP Coordinator along with a team comprising administrators and teachers.*

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## Assessment in DES Middle School

The assessment policy of DES School aims to provide a framework that promotes student learning, ensures fairness and transparency in assessment practices, and aligns with the principles and philosophy of the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme\*. Our assessment practices are designed to support the development of knowledgeable, principled, and reflective learners who are prepared for success in the global community.

### Purpose of the assessment

Assessment at our school embodies a holistic approach, focusing on fostering a supportive and nurturing environment where students feel safe, happy, and empowered. We prioritize assessment for learning, emphasizing formative and diagnostic assessments that provide ongoing feedback to both teachers and students during instruction. This allows for personalized curriculum adjustments tailored to individual student needs, creating an environment where students can unlock and activate their background knowledge, identify strengths and weaknesses, and construct new knowledge at their own pace. Assessment is a way of learning, empowering students to take ownership of their learning journey through self and peer assessments, reflection, and goal-setting. We view assessment not only as a means to measure achievement but as a tool for continuous growth and development, aligning with our commitment to personalized education and student well-being.

### Assessment Strategies

At our school, we employ diverse assessment strategies and tools to gather information about our students' learning journeys. Assessment strategies encompass various methods tailored to individual student needs, while assessment tools are the instruments used to collect data in alignment with these strategies.

Our **assessment strategies** include:

- ✓ **Observation:** Systematically viewing and recording students while they work
- ✓ **Performance tasks:** Students create, produce, perform, or present works on real-world issues to showcase knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes developed throughout a learning unit.
- ✓ **Learning journals:** Students' personal records containing reflective responses to material they are engaging with, used for detailing service and action and reflecting on learning processes.
- ✓ **Projects/Activities:** Students can demonstrate their understanding and skills through a variety of methods such as presentations, essays, diagrams, or problem-solving solutions, allowing for diverse and personalized expression of learning.
- ✓ **Periodic tests:** Throughout the academic term, students are assessed through periodic tests, providing opportunities to demonstrate their ongoing comprehension of course material.
- ✓ **Term evaluations/exams:** Students showcase their comprehension of the curriculum through structured evaluations held biannually in January and June.



## When are students assessed?

**Pre-assessment** : typically at the beginning of the academic unit, it can take a variety of formats using different strategies

**Formative assessment:** an ongoing process used by teachers and students during the entire unit on inquiry, to guide them on the unit's progress.

**Summative assessment:** takes place at the end of each unit of inquiry serving to evaluate students' overall understanding and progress before proceeding to the next phase of learning.

## Reporting progress to students and parents

At DES Middle School, we prioritize transparent reporting methods to keep parents, students, and teachers informed and engaged in the learning process. Below you will find the ways in which we report students' progress:

### **A. Parent-Teacher Conferences (In School - Twice a Year):**

Twice a year, we hold parent-teacher conferences, providing valuable opportunities for in-depth discussions about student progress, strengths, and areas for growth. These conferences foster open communication and collaboration between parents and teachers, ensuring that everyone is actively involved in supporting student success.

### **B. Report Cards (Through ManageBac - Twice a Year):**

Our comprehensive report cards, accessible through ManageBac, provide a holistic view of student performance, including academic progress, skills development, and attitudes towards learning, helping parents and students track growth over time. Below you will find the assessment types visible in the Report Card:

- Achievement Level - grades for the four assessment criteria (A, B, C, D) mandated by the International Baccalaureate (IB). Each criterion is awarded between 1-8 achievement levels spread across four bands.

- Final Grade - using the achievement levels from the four assessment criteria, the holistic grade is determined as a number (out of 32) from which a grade from 1-7 is derived, with 7 being the highest.

- Approaches to Learning (ATL) Skills - encompass a range of transferable skills such as communication, research, and self-management. These skills are subject-specific and integral to students' development as lifelong learners.

EE (Exceeding Expectations), ME (Meeting Expectations), AE (Approaching Expectations), BE (Below Expectations)

- Teacher's comments per subject

- Students' reflections - Reflection is a key component to IB learning. Our students are asked to reflect on their learning progress and write down the goals they aim to achieve next.

### **C. Portfolios (Managebac):**

We encourage students to maintain portfolios as a dynamic record of their learning journey. Portfolios showcase student work, assessment strategies, reflections, and growth over time. By compiling evidence of their achievements and progress, students gain a deeper



understanding of their learning process and can actively engage in goal-setting and self-reflection.

**D. Showcasing Student Works (Through different mediums- Regularly):**

We celebrate student achievements by showcasing their work through various platforms, including our school website, ManageBac, and wall displays. Through digital and physical mediums, we highlight student projects, artwork, performances, and achievements, providing opportunities for recognition and appreciation within the school community and beyond. These displays not only celebrate student success but also inspire and motivate others to strive for excellence.

### **Missed Assessments**

In case of missed assessments, DES Middle School has clear procedures in place to ensure fairness and flexibility for students:

**Assessments Handed in Late:**

Students are expected to complete all assessment tasks by the specified due date (visible in Managebac, both in the student’s calendar and next to the task). If a student requires an adjustment to a deadline due to a valid reason, they should initiate contact with their teacher promptly. While extensions are not encouraged, teachers may consider valid reasons for late submission on a case-by-case basis. Our school's policy prioritizes flexibility to minimize adverse effects on students due to circumstances beyond their control.

If a satisfactory explanation for a late submission is not provided, or if alternative arrangements cannot be arranged, the rubric associated with the assessment task will be marked as 'not yet assessed' (N/A).

**Assessment Missed Due to Absence:**

Special arrangements for missed assessments are granted for valid reasons such as illness, injury (supported by medical documentation), bereavement (supported by a death certificate), or participation in external academic or sports competitions where the student represents the school.

Advance notification to the school is required whenever possible. Any assessments due on the day of absence must be submitted prior to the absence or upon the student's return to school.

In cases where no satisfactory explanation for an absence is provided, or alternative arrangements cannot be made, a notation of 'not yet assessed' (N/A) is recorded for the assessment task.

## Assessment in the IB MYP Framework

(MYP: From principles into practice p.79-80)

Assessment is integral to all learning and teaching. MYP assessment requires teachers to assess the prescribed subject-group objectives using the assessment criteria for each subject group in each year of the programme. In order to provide students with opportunities to achieve at the highest level, MYP teachers develop rigorous tasks that embrace a variety of assessment strategies.

In the MYP, teachers make decisions about student achievement using their professional judgment, guided by mandated criteria that are public, known in advance and precise, ensuring that assessment is transparent.

Across a variety of assessment tasks (authentic performances of understanding), teachers use descriptors to identify students' achievement levels against established assessment criteria. MYP internal (school-based) assessment uses a "best-fit" approach in which teachers work together to establish common standards against which they evaluate each student's achievement holistically.

This "criterion-related" approach represents a philosophy of assessment that is neither "norm-referenced" (where students must be compared to each other and to an expected distribution of achievement) nor "criterion-referenced" (where students must master all strands of specific criteria at lower achievement levels before they can be considered to have achieved the next level).

Assessment in the MYP aims to:

- ✓ support and encourage student learning by providing feedback on the learning process
- ✓ inform, enhance and improve the teaching process
- ✓ provide opportunity for students to exhibit transfer of skills across disciplines, such as in the personal
- ✓ project and interdisciplinary unit assessments
- ✓ promote positive student attitudes towards learning
- ✓ promote a deep understanding of subject content by supporting students in their inquiries set in real world contexts
- ✓ promote the development of critical- and creative-thinking skills
- ✓ reflect the international-mindedness of the programme by allowing assessments to be set in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts
- ✓ support the holistic nature of the programme by including in its model principles that take account of the development of the whole student.

In summary, when creating MYP units, teachers must ensure that assessments:

- ✓ are integral to the learning process
- ✓ are aligned with subject-group objectives
- ✓ gather information from a variety of perspectives, using a range of tasks according to the needs of the subject and the nature of the knowledge, skills and understanding being assessed
- ✓ are appropriate to the age group and reflect the development of the students within the subject
- ✓ provide evidence of student understanding through authentic performance (not simply the recall of factual knowledge).



## MYP assessment criteria across subject groups

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

### MYP Grading System

In the MYP grading system, final assessment occurs at the end of the term to evaluate individual student achievement in relation to subject-specific criteria. Grades ranging from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest) are awarded based on predefined grade boundaries (see table 1) determined by students' levels of achievement (see table 2). Each subject is assessed against a set of objectives aligned with assessment criteria, with four criteria featuring identical numerical bands. Grading is determined by assessing students' achievement levels across each criterion, considering both formative and summative work throughout the term and the teacher's professional judgment. The "best-fit approach" allows teachers to select the achievement level that most accurately reflects students' overall performance. Subsequently, achievement levels for all criteria are totaled to derive a final criterion levels total, to which grade boundaries are applied to determine the final grade for each subject.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Boundaries	0 – 5	6 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 18	19 – 23	24 – 27	28 – 32

Table 1. Final Grade Boundaries



# Grade Descriptors

Final 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.
N/A	Not Yet Assessed.

Table 2. Final Grade Descriptors



## Sources

International Baccalaureate Organisation, "Programme Standards and Practices", 2020

International Baccalaureate Organisation, "Assessment procedures", 2024

International Baccalaureate Organisation, "MYP: From principles into practice", May 2014 (Updated August 2022)

\*DES Middle School is a candidate school for the MYP. This school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. IB World Schools share a common philosophy- a commitment to high-quality, challenging, international education- that we believe is important for our students. Only schools authorized by the IB Organization can offer any of its four academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme (DP), or the Career-related Programme (CP). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted.