



# Assessment Policy<sup>1</sup>

Prepared on: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019  
Next review: June 2020

Prepared by:  
Franz Altinger, Maths Teacher  
Michael Kerschbaumer, Chemistry Teacher  
Stefan Moser, Physics Teacher  
Jennifer Simon, Economics Teacher  
Chesley Flannery, SALIS Dean of Students and Intercultural Affairs

---

<sup>1</sup> With changes envisaged in case of authorisation as an IB World School

## **Assessment philosophy and principles**

SALIS students experience their world, our world, very often through a teacher's eyes. If they are to extend their scope and become aware of their opportunities and obligations, we must be sure that students understand what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how to produce all manner of learning outcomes at a high standard. Assessment is an integral part of developing the whole child in accordance with the IB Learner Profile, and it should function as a tool to further growth and understanding. Both qualitative and quantitative assessment allows for every stakeholder to receive information about a student's academic progress, to monitor the individual's learning process, to provide many variations of feedback, to instill reflective practices, and to evaluate each student's overall performance with the goal of creating an avid and engaged learner.

### **Principles of Assessment**

- Teachers are actively engaged in assessing students with positive, constructive feedback
- Teachers use a wide variety of assessment techniques and strategies
- Assessment is ongoing and reflective
- Assessment recognizes different learning styles, abilities, and access requirements
- Assessment and evaluation practices are fair to all students
- Assessment enables students to demonstrate conceptual understanding and critical thinking
- Assessment helps students to analyze their own learning and set goals for improvements
- Assessment is criteria-referenced as students are assessed against published learning outcomes
- Assessment criteria are explained to students prior to assessment and rubrics are used as regular tools for instruction and review whenever possible and meaningful
- Teachers use assessment to guide instruction and to assist in collaborative efforts between all stakeholders

### **A Programme Within a School**

SALIS exists as a programme at an Austrian state school functioning within the IBO framework. As such, it is bound to both the Austrian regulations (see "Leistungsbeurteilungsverordnung" in the "Guide to SALIS and the Austrian School System") and the IB requirements. SALIS is legally required to conform to the Austrian curriculum for all subjects in the Austrian curriculum. Thus, students have the opportunity to complete their high school education with both the Austrian Matura and the International Baccalaureate Diploma provided students are able to complete the curricular obligations for both.

The Austrian system mandates that a student's final assessment grade for the course is based on the results in major exams (Schularbeit) and the student's class participation (Mitarbeit). The exams may also mirror many of the external assessments within the IBDP. Participatory practices incorporate the national requirements, depending on the subject; however, much of the upper school participatory assessment will rely on how students arrange and adhere to the portfolio process in preparation for individual diploma program summative assessments.

### Austrian Grading scale

1	Very good performance
2	Good performance
3	Satisfactory performance
4	Sufficient performance
5	Insufficient performance (failing condition)

### **Formative and Summative Assessment**

A variety of both formative and summative assessments are used at SALIS to keep students and teachers abreast of accurate and detailed information. We use such data to improve our teaching and learning strategies as a school community.

Formative assessment represents the process of gathering, analyzing, interpreting and using evidence to improve student learning. It is integrated into the daily learning process and is an integral part of instruction. It provides teachers and students with information about how learning is progressing. It helps the teacher to provide timely and specific feedback to students, scaffold next steps, and differentiate instruction in response to student needs. Results of formative assessment are used by students to monitor their own progress, make adjustments in their learning approaches, reflect on their learning, and set individual goals. In other words, formative assessment serves as the foundation for learning and prepares students for the “higher-stakes” nature of summative assessments, which measure achievement and are used to evaluate student knowledge level.

*Formative assessment strategies may include:*

- Class participation (“Mitarbeit”)  
Class participation as formative assessment may focus on the exploration of new content or reinforce topics already in progress.  
Class participation includes but is not limited to:
  - oral and written participation in class (e.g. posing questions, active listening and note-taking, seminar discussions, summary of lesson content, free-writes, exit slips, one-minute papers, group work, etc.)
  - teamwork
  - meeting deadlines
  - having all necessary course material in class
- Projects
- Homework
- Portfolios
- Presentations
- Lab Reports
- Quizzes

Summative assessment occurs at the end of a period of learning when students are given the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned by applying their knowledge in new and authentic contexts. Summative assessment is used by teachers to make judgments about the quality and quantity of student learning on the basis of established criteria, to assign a value to represent that quality and quantity, and to support the communication of information about achievement to students, parents, teachers and administrators.

*Summative assessment strategies include, but are not limited to:*

- **Schularbeiten (Unit Examinations):**  
"Schularbeiten" are the most important written tests in languages and mathematics that consist of individual tasks that students must respond to under controlled, isolated conditions. Students will be awarded marks for Schularbeiten.
- **"Tests":**  
Tests are usually a collection of many short-answer questions that students must respond to under controlled, isolated conditions. Students will be awarded marks for Tests. Tests are only allowed in subjects where no "Schularbeiten" take place.
- **Oral exams:**  
An oral exam consists of at least two independent questions, with usually only a small or no written component. Students must answer under controlled, isolated conditions. Students will be awarded marks for oral exams. It is a student's right to ask for one oral exam per term in lieu of a written exam, and oral exams are used in the case of missed exam due to an excused absence.
- **Term papers**
- **Lab reports**
- **Mock exams**—as used for internal summative assessment in place of Schularbeit or within the IB DP February of year 2.
- **Research Projects and Presentations**

## **IB Assessment, Internal and External**

The IB Diploma Program uses two types of summative assessment to determine the student's final IB grades: Internal and External Assessments.

The IB Internal Assessments (IA) provide students with opportunities to show mastery of skills outside of final examinations and reflect the student's summative achievement rather than an average of formative marks. The principle aim of conducting internal assessment is to evaluate student achievement against those outcomes that do not lend themselves to external written exams. These IA components are conducted by the IB teacher before they are marked by an external moderator.

Examples of Internal Assessments are science courses practical work, language oral interviews, historical investigation etc.

IB final exams are the major component of external assessment utilized in the IB as a great deal of reliability is provided by standardized examination external marking.

Other work such as the Extended Essay, Language A Higher Level Essay, ToK essay, and Music Investigations etc. are also externally assessed by IB examiners.

SALIS IB subject teachers are well informed of the detailed IB policies that describe the conditions under which these assessments must be administered.

#### 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

#### Grading scale for TOK, Extended Essay and internal assessments

A	Excellent
B	Good
C	Satisfactory
D	Mediocre
E	Elementary
N	No Grade

#### **Comparison of grading systems:**

Grade Description	IB Grade (SALIS)	Austrian Grade
Very Poor	1	5
Poor		
Unsatisfactory	2	5
Mediocre	3	4
Satisfactory	4	3
Good	5	2
Very Good	6	1
Excellent	7	1

## **Assessment Practices**

SALIS IB students receive significant instruction and practice throughout their courses in order to effectively prepare for these challenging IB internal and external assessments. As such, SALIS IB teachers utilize school-based student assessments that are essential for student success and contribute to the students' final course grade. These grades are based on unit exams (Schularbeit) using also past IB exam questions, practice exams, mock testing conditions, and in class and homework assignments modeled on IB assessments. These school-based assignments may be evaluated on a 1-7 score based on IB grading criteria and mark bands. However, the report card grade each student earns in a particular IB course is not tied directly to the marks earned on the formal IB assessments, but is reflective of work completed in preparation for those summative assessments. The methods as outlined below support our school-based assessment practices.

### Planning for assessment

- IB Teachers work with the director to create an internal assessment timeline for all components of the Diploma Program to help students and teachers realistically plan their work within a manageable time frame. The timeline will be handed out to IB students at the beginning of IB year 1.
- IB subject area teachers plan their courses with the IB Diploma Program outcomes, assessment criteria, and final exams in mind.
- IB teachers design courses so that students' current knowledge and experience are assessed before the introduction of new learning (See Admissions/Language Policy).
- Exam topics are published and reviewed one week prior to writing a unit test or having a major assignment due.
- A list of all tests and unit exam dates are published at the beginning of a term and signed by parents
- IB teachers may use various e-learning platforms to keep students and parents abreast of the course agenda.
- Homework is a significant tool that contributes to the student's successful mastery of topics taught in class, achievement of course outcomes and grades. Homework calendars are binding and help organize student deadlines and study habits.

### Assessment strategies

- Assessment in the IB Diploma Program is criterion-related, allowing student achievement to be judged against clearly defined pre-determined descriptors.
- IB teachers use a broad range of formal and informal assessment strategies throughout their course to allow students to demonstrate their learning.
- IB teachers provide students with multiple opportunities throughout the course to reflect upon their progress based upon meaningful feedback.
- IB teachers design assessment tasks that allow students to achieve at the highest levels in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts.
- IB teachers design formative assessment tasks that prepare students for success on their IB summative assessments.
- IB teachers provide students with rubrics (whenever possible and meaningful) that define expectations for assessment tasks and align with subject area criteria.

- IB teachers may provide students with exemplars to illustrate high levels of achievement on assigned tasks.

#### Analysis of assessment

- IB subject area teachers standardize their grading to ensure accuracy of interpretation of assessment criteria.
- New teachers are given an orientation to the grading rubrics and criteria and how the SALIS team utilizes these tools. Teachers standardize and calibrate based on published exam commentary and the exemplars provided by the IBO.
- IB teachers use assessment data to set goals that address students' learning needs, plan curriculum, and drive instruction.
- IB teachers regularly review assessment practices.
- Diagnostics and benchmark assessments are used to determine student placement and direction

### **Recording and Reporting**

#### Notification „Frühwarnung“:

Teachers communicate home (“Frühwarnung”) when assessment marks are unsatisfactory and offer an advisory meeting to the student and the parent/guardian to discuss potential improvement measures, such as analysis of learning deficits, support possibilities, individual plans, etc. in order to avoid failure of the subject. When students and teachers do not see immediate improvement, the student dean designs a *learning contract* with the help of all stakeholders that students must sign and follow.

#### Grade awarding („Schulnachricht und Zeugnis“):

Students will receive a „Schulnachricht” at the end of the first term, and an official Austrian end-of-year report (“Zeugnis”) at the end of each year (=after the second term). It is important to be noted that a “Schulnachricht” only has informational character.

Additionally, students receive an IB School report for each of their IB subjects in IB years 1 and 2 (grades 11 and 12). A pre-IB school report will be issued at the end of grade 10. These reports includes not only grades, but also individual comments reflecting the student's performance.

#### Parents-teacher conferences (“Elternsprechtage”) and consultation hours (“Sprechstunden”):

There will be one parent-teacher conference offered each term, where parents can have a short consultation with all subject teachers. These conferences serve to discuss potential improvement measures. For more detailed information it is advised to make use of the weekly consultation hours (“Sprechstunden”).

#### Procedures for poor/very poor performance

A student who fails in three or more subjects (i.e. Austrian grade = 5) must repeat the form year. A student who fails in one or two subjects can take an exam in each subject after the summer holidays to determine whether he/she can rejoin the form year. In the event the student passes the exams, no conference is needed. However, in the event the student fails one or both retake exams, the class conference (all subject teachers) discusses whether the

student is able to improve his/her overall performance. If they conclude that this will not be possible, the student has to retake the subject or repeat the year.

## **Assessment Access Arrangements**

Students with learning support requirements may need support and arrangements for both teaching and learning. The school tries to provide all necessary support for students with special educational needs (see Special Educational Needs Policy and Language Policy) so that all candidates can demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are fair and just. Teachers have to be informed and fully aware of any student's physical, psychological, mental or language disability that may affect assessment results.

This can include arrangements such as:

- Students with a hearing challenge may receive instructions from a communicator through the use of lip-speaking, fingerspelling or sign language.
- Students with vision challenges may use magnifying devices to enlarge print.
- For students who have colour blindness the coordinator is permitted to name colours in examination papers.
- Students who normally use an aid (for example, a Braille slate, a sound amplification device, a hearing aid, a magnifying aid, etc.) are allowed use their aid in examinations.

For more detailed information, please contact the IB coordinator and/or SALIS Dean or see document "Candidates with assessment access requirements" (2017).

## **Connections to Academic Honesty**

Each member of the SALIS community accepts responsibility for the overall climate of honesty within the school. Assessment should enrich the process of learning rather than create tension or foster malpractice. The SALIS community recognizes that teaching and learning principles and practices develop student attitudes and skills that allow for meaningful interaction between the learners and their environment. When teachers follow the principles and practices of assessment as outlined above, students are supported in reaching success and maintaining academic integrity.

## **References**

- Diploma Programme Assessment (2004), IBO, Geneva Switzerland
- Candidates with assessment access requirements (2017), IBO, Geneva Switzerland, available from <http://www.io1.gliwice.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Exams-2018-Candidates-with-assessment-access-requirements.pdf> (accessed July 3rd, 2019)
- Leistungsfeststellung und Leistungsbeurteilung (2007), Bundesministerium für Bildung und Frauen, Wien, Österreich available from [https://www.bmbf.gv.at/schulen/recht/info/Leistungsfeststellung\\_un1626.html](https://www.bmbf.gv.at/schulen/recht/info/Leistungsfeststellung_un1626.html) (accessed May 28th, 2019)