



Mar Qardakh School

Title: Assessment Policy

Related policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Language Policy
- Academic Honesty Policy
- Technology Policy

I. Philosophy

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this document is to clarify the understanding of the assessment process within the school setting. The policy applies to the whole school and is to be communicated to and understood by all teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

Mar Qardakh School seeks to empower the whole person by providing means for academic, social, spiritual and personal development.

Table 1: Beliefs and Practices

	PHILOSOPHY <i>Why</i> do we assess the way we do at Mar Qardakh School?	ACTIONS <i>What</i> assessment actions do we take because of our philosophy?	EXAMPLES <i>How</i> does assessment look at our school specifically?
1	We believe that the ultimate purpose of instruction is not simply to generate a grade, but to guide our planning and instruction so that we can support and enhance student learning.	We make sure that assessment is frequent, on-going, varied, and continuous, in order to best guide our planning and instruction.	At our school, assessment might look like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubrics • Checklists • Continuums • Benchmarks/exemplars • Observations/discussions
2	We believe that <i>assessment</i> , rather than instruction, is the beginning of the teaching/ learning cycle.	We assess frequently to discover what the student already knows and can do, and use that information to determine the next best steps in teaching and learning.	We pre-assess before all units, and utilize anecdotal records to individualize each student's instruction.
3	We believe that each student is a complex individual with a wide range of abilities, knowledge and skills.	We assess in many different areas in many different ways.	We consider a wide range of assessment data to plan our instruction, including formal and informal, standardized and non-standardized, and relevant and authentic performance data. We do not rely on any one test to guide our instruction.

	PHILOSOPHY	ACTIONS	EXAMPLES
4	We believe that students bring a variety of learning styles, expression styles, interests, and abilities to the classroom.	We differentiate our instruction to allow students to draw on their strengths and develop their weaknesses.	We use flexible grouping to divide students according to interests, abilities, learning styles, and expression styles at different times. We use differentiated learning software (Renzulli Learning) to customize research and practice opportunities for each student.
5	We believe that teachers are professionals with the ability to make valid and weighty informal assessments.	We collaborate regularly with other teachers to design, discuss, reflect on, and refine units based on formal and informal assessments.	We use the perspectives of multiple teachers to gain a whole picture of each student's learning.
6	We believe that parents can and do contribute valuable assessment data, which should be actively sought.	We collaborate regularly with parents to discuss and reflect on student learning.	At the beginning and end of each unit, we solicit parent input and feedback as to how students demonstrate new learning from the unit at home.
7	We believe that students must be able to competently self-assess in order to reflect on their learning and change and develop as a life-long learner.	We actively teach our students to self-assess in both academic and behavioral areas.	At the end of units, we ask students to reflect on their learning and experiences, and make contributions to their portfolios.
8	We believe that the best assessments are those that are most authentic.	We do not assess reading and writing by artificially contrived tasks that real readers and writers do not do; rather, we assess reading by reading and writing by writing.	We seek assessments that reflect and affect the real world, for example, writing a letter to a publication.

9	<p>We believe that there are many valid ways for students to show their understanding to us for any knowledge, skill, or expectation that is being assessed.</p>	<p>We do not require that all students have their knowledge and abilities assessed in the same way. We value and validate multiple and creative forms of assessment. We believe that the important thing is to know that the student <i>got it</i>.</p>	<p>For every unit's summative assessment(s), the student may choose among assessment tasks to demonstrate his or her understanding of the central idea.</p>
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	PHILOSOPHY	ACTIONS	EXAMPLES
10	We believe that assessment data is important for everyone involved in a student's academic life, not only for the teachers.	We regularly share assessment data with students, teachers, administration, parents, and the community.	We communicate assessment data and/or concerns to parents in a timely manner and do not wait for scheduled parent/teacher conferences and/or official report cards.

II. Assessment in the PYP

A. Types of Assessment

Pre-Assessment: Teachers use pre-assessment at the beginning of each unit of inquiry to discover what the students already know and can do, and use that information to determine the next best steps in teaching and learning.

Formative Assessment: Formative assessment is ongoing assessment interwoven within each unit of inquiry. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked; neither can function effectively or purposefully without the other. Formative assessment provides both students and teachers with regular feedback regarding student understanding and use of knowledge, concepts and skills.

Summative Assessment: Summative assessment is an opportunity for students to demonstrate what has been learned through the unit of inquiry. Summative assessments take place at the end of each unit of inquiry and show the sum of the student's understanding of the unit's central idea, including one or more of the following: acquisition of data, synthesis of information, application of knowledge and processes.

Self-Assessment: Mar Qardakh School gives its students frequent opportunities to reflect on their own learning throughout their daily learning engagements. Students reflect on their progress in all subject areas, as well as their progress with Learner Profile attributes. Student self-assessment can be in the form of a general reflection on the unit of inquiry, including knowledge and understanding of the central idea and possible future investigations, and/or a response to a piece of work from the unit of inquiry.

Portfolios: Portfolios are used to document student progress over time. Students play an active role in building their portfolios and reflecting on the student work in their portfolios in

order to see their progress over time and identify learning strengths and challenges. Portfolios also give parents the opportunity to see the continual learning process of their children.

5 Essential Elements of the PYP: Students are regularly assessed in terms of their knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and action. These elements are assessed through both formative and summative assessment. Assessment of knowledge is most emphasized in summative assessments at the end of each unit of inquiry.

PYP Exhibition: At the end of PYP 5, students demonstrate their learning by participating in the PYP final year exhibition, which requires them to take what they have learned and apply it in a new situation. The PYP exhibition is a summative assessment of the students' participation in the PYP.

B. Assessment Strategies

Teachers at Mar Qardakh School employ a variety of assessment strategies, including but not limited to the following:

Observation: Teachers regularly observe students in order to note the growth, progress and challenges, of individuals, groups and the entire class.

Performance-based Assessment: Performance-based assessments are tasks defined by specific goals and criteria that have more than one possible outcome, require students to use multiple skills, provide problem-solving opportunities.

Process-based Assessment: Process-based assessments occur when a teacher assesses students on a particular skill

Open-Ended Assessments: Open-ended assessments require the students to formulate an original response to a task, which can be expressed in a variety of ways, including but not limited to oral responses, written responses, drawing, diagrams or charts, and student-designed actions or experiments.

Closed Assessments: Closed assessments, such as tests and quizzes, are used to test student mastery of specific knowledge or skills.

Student Reflections: At the end of each lesson or unit, students are asked to reflect on their learning and progress as part of self-assessment.

C. Assessment Tools

Rubrics: Rubrics establish sets of criteria for grading students in different areas. Rubrics give students clear descriptors of what is expected, what teachers will look for in their work, and how their work will be graded. In some assignments, students, as well as teachers, participate in preparing the rubric.

Checklists: Checklists provide students with lists of steps, concepts or other information that should be present in the completed assessment.

Anecdotal Notes: These are records based on student observations.

Sample Assessments: Sample assignments are used to show students examples of a completed assessment that meets the defined objectives.

D.Feedback and Reporting

Students receive oral and written feedback on a regular basis, based on both formative and summative assessments. Reporting is another form of feedback primarily focused on establishing, encouraging and maintaining communication between the home and school, the child and parent, and the learner and teacher. In addition to the scheduled conferences and written reports, parents are always welcome to call throughout the year and make an appointment to receive additional feedback regarding their child's progress.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

The purpose of Parent/Teacher conferences is to establish a relationship with the parent(s), to learn about the student from the parent, to compare observations and set goals, and to share evidence of student learning through the grade level expectations, the curricular standards, and through measures of growth which record students' progress over time.

Teacher /Student Conferences

Teacher/Student conferences are an opportunity for students to get and to give feedback that will be critical for differentiation and individual growth, for teachers to get information that can guide instruction, and to help students with self-reflection through modeling and discussion.

Written Reports

Mar Qardakh School issues report cards twice a year. Due to local educational requirements, these report cards need to use a point scale established by the local ministry of education. Each student's progress is therefore converted into the local point scale. When working with parents, the school relies more heavily on written feedback provided by the teacher at the end of each unit. All IB progress and achievement levels are regularly recorded through ManageBac. Parents are able to view student progress through ManageBac electronically, at their convenience. The progress report comments on ManageBac also address student

assessment and progress regarding the Learner Profile and the Essential Elements of the PYP.

III. Assessment in the MYP

In the MYP, student assessment focuses on student progress not only in their conceptual understanding of their units of study, but also in the learner profile, global context, and the MYP fundamental concepts of communication, holistic learning and intercultural understanding, as well as the approaches to learning. These different elements are not all directly subject to assessment, but they form an essential part of the assessment process. Comments regarding student progress that are uploaded on ManageBac also address these elements. Students also receive direct oral and written feedback regarding these elements.

Students receive written and verbal feedback on formative assessments.

All MYP summative assessments at the end of each unit are assessed according to the objective, criteria and descriptors provided in each subject guide. Each objective and strand in a subject area must be directly assessed at least twice a year, once in the first semester and once in the second semester.

Teachers provide all students with a copy of the assessment rubric at the beginning of each academic year so the students can refer to the objective and strand descriptors when completing assessments.

A. Types of Assessment

Pre-Assessment: Teachers use pre-assessment at the beginning of each unit to discover what the students already know and can do, and use that information to determine the next best steps in teaching and learning.

Formative Assessment: Formative assessment is ongoing assessment interwoven within each unit. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked; neither can function effectively or purposefully without the other. Formative assessment provides both students and teachers with regular feedback regarding student understanding and use of knowledge, concepts and skills.

Summative Assessment: Summative assessment is an opportunity for students to demonstrate what has been learned through the unit. Summative assessments take place at the end of each unit of inquiry and show the sum of the student's understanding of the unit's central idea, including one or more of the following: acquisition of data, synthesis of information, application of knowledge and processes.

Self-Assessment: Mar Qardakh School gives its students frequent opportunities to reflect on their own learning throughout their daily learning engagements. Students reflect on their progress in all subject areas, as well as their progress with Learner Profile attributes. Student self-assessment can be in the form of a general reflection on the unit of inquiry, including knowledge and understanding of the central idea and possible future investigations, and/or a response to a piece of work from the unit of inquiry.

Portfolios: Portfolios are used to document student progress over time. Students play an active role in building their portfolios and reflecting on the student work in their portfolios in order to see their progress over time and identify learning strengths and challenges. Portfolios also give parents the opportunity to see the continual learning process of their children.

B. Assessment Strategies

Observation: Teachers regularly observe students in order to note the growth, progress and challenges, of individuals, groups and the entire class.

Performance-based Assessment: Performance-based assessments are tasks defined by specific goals and criteria that have more than one possible outcome, require students to use multiple skills, provide problem-solving opportunities.

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Open-Ended Assessments: Open-ended assessments require the students to formulate an original response to a task, which can be expressed in a variety of ways, including but not limited to oral responses, written responses, drawing, diagrams or charts, and student-designed actions or experiments.

Closed Assessments: Closed assessments, such as tests and quizzes, are used to test student mastery of specific knowledge or skills.

Student Reflections: At the end of each lesson or unit, students are asked to reflect on their learning and progress as part of self-assessment.

C. Assessment Tasks

Assessment tasks are designed by teachers or the students themselves for the summative assessment at the end of each unit. Assessment tasks implement one or more of the assessment strategies, applying them to the objectives and content of that unit. Mar Qardakh teachers implement the MYP prescribed minimum of tasks for each subject area each year, as a way of helping the students prepare for the final year of MYP throughout their continuum of learning in the MYP. All tasks are assessed using the objectives, criteria and scale found in

each respective subject guides. During the first years of MYP, students will be assessed using the interim objectives provided in the subject guide; during the final two years of MYP (MYP 4 and 5), the students will be assessed using the final objectives provided in the subject guide.

D. Final Assessment

At the end of each year, teachers determine each student's final level of achievement, based on a range of assessment tasks that provide evidence of student learning and achievement. The final assessment is not an average of grades from the year, but a reflection of the students' progress and current levels of achievement based on the MYP subject objective and criteria descriptors, and using the best fit approach.

Final Assessment General Grade Descriptors:

Grade	Descriptor
1	Minimal achievement in terms of the objectives.
2	Very limited achievement against all the objectives. The student has difficulty in understanding the required knowledge and skills and is unable to apply them fully in normal situations, even with support.
3	Limited achievement against most of the objectives, or clear difficulties in some areas. The student demonstrates a limited understanding of the required knowledge and skills and is only able to apply them fully in normal situations with support.
4	A good general understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them effectively in normal situations. There is occasional evidence of the skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
5	A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them in a variety of situations. The student generally shows evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation where appropriate and occasionally demonstrates originality and insight.
6	A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them in a wide variety of situations. Consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation is shown where appropriate. The student generally demonstrates originality and insight.
7	A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them almost faultlessly in a wide variety of situations. Consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation is shown where appropriate. The student consistently demonstrates originality and insight and always produces work of high quality.

All descriptors are taken directly from the MYP Coordinator's Handbook

E. Personal Project

All MYP 5 students are required to complete the MYP personal project. The personal project gives students the opportunity to inquire into a topic of their choice, utilizing the concepts and skills they have acquired throughout the programme, as well as the approaches to learning. The completed project includes a product, process journal, report and bibliography. The project is assessed using the criteria defined by the IB:

- A – Use the process journal
- B – Define the goal
- C – Select sources
- D – Apply information
- E – Achieve the goal
- F – Reflect on learning
- G – Report the project

F. Reporting

Students receive oral and written feedback on a regular basis, based on both formative and summative assessments. Reporting is another form of feedback primarily focused on establishing, encouraging and maintaining communication between the home and school, the child and parent, and the learner and teacher. In addition to the scheduled conferences and written reports, parents are always welcome to call throughout the year and make an appointment to receive additional feedback regarding their child's progress.

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IV. Assessment in the DP

All assessments in the DP will be graded using the criteria and scales established by the International Baccalaureate for the Diploma Programme. There are different scales for assessments completed within the subject groups, final grades awarded, and assessments for TOK and the Extended Essay.

The IB DP uses the following scale for final grades in all subject areas:

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

The IB DP uses the following letter scale for TOK assessments and the Extended Essay:

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

Teachers will refer to the subject guides for the assessment scales and criteria within each subject group. All Diploma candidates will have full access to the assessment criteria rubrics for the different subject groups.

A. Types of Assessment

On-Going Assessment: Teachers in the DP will continue to use pre-assessments, formative assessments, summative assessments, self-assessments and portfolio assessments throughout the DP. These assessments do not constitute part of the internal or external assessments that will determine the candidates' final DP grades, but they will be used to help inform teaching and learning within the classroom, provide the candidates with an idea of how their ongoing performances measures against the standards that will be used for their official DP assessments, and keep parents updated regarding the students' progress throughout the two years of the Diploma Programme. Summative assessments will be issued at least once per unit, and may take the form of mock internal or external assessments and examinations, and/or other teacher-developed or student-developed assessments aligned with the same criteria and standards. All summative assessments, as well as many formative assessments will be graded using the IB assessment rubric for each respective subject area. Some formative assessments may be assessed more informally, through oral and written feedback to the students.

Internal Assessment: Internal Assessments (IAs) refer to assessments comprising a percentage of the candidates' final grade for a subject group that will be completed by the DP candidates and evaluated internally by the subject teachers. Internal assessments may be subject to moderation by external examiners assigned by the IB. Internal assessments can take various forms, including portfolios, projects, oral assessments, presentations, laboratory work (in the sciences) and performances (in the arts). All IAs will be graded using the criteria rubric provided for the respective subject area.

External Assessment: External assessments refer to the Extended Essay, as well as assessments comprising a percentage of the candidate's final grade for a subject group that will be evaluated by external examiners assigned by the IB. External Assessments will be evaluated using either the appropriate subject group criteria/rubric, or, in the case of the Extended Essay, the Extended Essay rubric and grading scale.

Examinations: DP subject examinations will take place at Mar Qardakh School in May of each year. The examinations will take place according to the IB DP examination regulations and the schedule determined by the IB. The examinations for each subject group will include a variety of assessment techniques, including, but not limited to short-answers, essays, analyses, problem-solving, etc. Students must have previously completed and submitted all internal and external assessments in order to participate in the examinations. Examinations will be mailed to external examiners assigned by the IB for evaluation. The grades of the examinations will be combined with the grades from the internal and external assessments to determine the candidates' final grades for each subject area.

B.Reporting

Students receive oral and written feedback on a regular basis, based on both formative and summative assessments. Reporting is another form of feedback primarily focused on establishing, encouraging and maintaining communication between the home and school, the child and parent, and the learner and teacher. In addition to the scheduled conferences and written reports, parents are always welcome to call throughout the year and make an appointment to receive additional feedback regarding their child's progress.

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Appendix I: Related Documents

-Classroom agreements

-MQ Learner Profile Reflection

-Student/teacher/etc. agreements (See “Agreements” section, page 4)

Appendix II: Glossary

Anecdotal records: Brief written notes based on observations of students.

Benchmarks: A standard against which student work is judged. Generally there is one benchmark for each achievement level in a rubric.

Central ideas: Conceptual ideas, linked to knowledge, attitudes, and action, around which a PYP school's curriculum is structured.

Conferences: A meeting between parents of a student and representatives of the school, with or without the student present.

Checklists: Lists of information, data, attributes or elements that should be present.

Continuums: Visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement or identify where a student is in a process.

Differentiation: Taking the variety of learning styles, expression styles, interests and abilities of the students into account when planning lessons, learning engagements and assessments.

Essential elements: The five essential elements of the PYP are knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes, and actions. A balance of these elements forms the PYP curriculum.

Exemplars: Samples of students' work that serve as concrete standards against which other samples are judged.

Expression style: The way a student prefers to demonstrate learning, for example, through a written report, an oral presentation, an artistic work, or a service project.

Formative assessment: Assessment tasks which provide insight into students' understanding during the course of a unit.

Inquiry: An approach to teaching and learning that emphasizes the active construction of meaning through questioning, inquiring, and research.

Learner Profile: A set of ten attributes selected by the IBO as defining international-mindedness and central to its mission and philosophy.

Learning style: The way a student learns best or most naturally, for example, through listening, visual aids, reading, hands-on activities or discussion.

Pre-assessment: Assessment tasks given at the beginning of a unit which allow the teacher to find out what students know and can do in order to plan the unit.

Renzulli Learning: An online learning platform comprising a database of online educational resources and a resource for differentiated instruction and research.

Rubric: An established set of criteria for evaluating students in all areas. It has descriptors which tell the assessor what characteristics or signs to look for in students' work and then how to rate that work on a predetermined scale.

School community: All persons or groups with an interest in the school, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, and governing body.

Student portfolios: A record of students' involvement in learning which is designed to demonstrate success, growth, higher-order thinking, creativity, assessment strategies and reflection. It provides a picture of each student's progress and development over a period of time.

Summative assessment: Assessment tasks which demonstrate students' understanding of the central idea or guiding question of a unit; reveals the *sum* of the students' understanding of the topic.

Appendix III: References

MYP. 2008. *MYP: From principles into practice*.

PYP. 2007, revised 2009. *Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education*.

PYP, MYP and DP. 2010. *Programme standards and practices*.

Wade King Elementary School, USA. 2010. *King Assessment Policy: Wade King Elementary Assessment Philosophy and Agreements*.

Appendix IV: Policy History