

# Diploma Programme



# Assessment Policy

2016 - 2017

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(to be reviewed by August 15th each year)



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## **ISE Mission** - who we are and what we do

- Develop inquirers, communicators, risk-takers and leaders
- Provide an environment of creativity, innovation and care
- Foster intercultural understanding and respect
- Empower students to implement positive change in the face of future challenges

**Our Core Values** - the qualities that must be in place and actively followed in order for ISE to accomplish its Mission

In all that we do, we value -

- care and compassion - We believe that we have an obligation to listen thoughtfully to others, to consider their points of view and to treat them with kindness and empathy.
- the pursuit of high quality - We set high but realistic standards for everything at ISE. We regularly assess how we are progressing towards those standards and constantly seek to improve. We encourage asking, “How can we do that better the next time?”
- inquiry-based learning - “Why?” is our favorite question. We see ourselves as life-long learners, and developing a joy of learning is essential to what we do.
- taking action - We are committed to making a difference. Therefore we work hard to connect learning to service. We look beyond ourselves and seek to make genuine, positive changes in the world around us.

**Our Vision** - ISE is internationally recognized as a school that develops and empowers future innovators and leaders

The core of International Baccalaureate programs is the **IB Learner Profile** and the International School of Estonia celebrates the promotion of these student attributes:

- Inquirer - Acquires skills for purposeful, constructive research
- Thinker - Applies thinking skills critically and creatively to solve complex problems
- Communicator - Receives and expresses ideas in more than one language including the language of mathematical symbols
- Risk-taker - Approaches unfamiliar situations with confidence
- Principled - Displays integrity, honesty and a sense of fairness and justice
- Caring - Develops a sense of personal commitment to action and service
- Open-minded - Respects the views, values and traditions of other individuals and cultures and is accustomed to seeking and considering a range of points of view
- Balanced - Understands physical, mental and personal well-being
- Reflective - Analyzes own strength and weaknesses

ISE in support of the Learning Profile and our IB curriculum, also champions the aims and goals of the International Baccalaureate Mission:

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 organization works with schools, governments and international organizations 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.

## Statement of Philosophy

At the International School of Estonia, student assessment is used to inform instruction and improve student learning. Assessment is ongoing (formative and summative), shows what students know and can do, and is fully integrated into the ISE program Preschool-12.

ISE's assessment policy is derived from the school's and the IB's assessment philosophy and principles. It is constructed around educational and pedagogical values and represents a statement of intent and action describing principles and practices for achieving educational goals relating to all aspects of assessment.

The aim of DP assessment is to support and encourage student learning. The DP places an emphasis on assessment processes that involve the gathering and analysis of information about student performance and that provide timely feedback to students on that performance. DP assessment plays a significant role in the development of ATL skills, especially skills that are closely related to subject-group objectives. In concurrence with the DP approach to assessment, ISE recognizes the importance of assessing not only the products, but also the process, of learning.

At ISE, DP assessment is integral to all teaching and learning in that it supports student learning. As required by DP guidelines, teachers assess using the prescribed subject-group objectives and 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, DP teachers develop rigorous tasks that embrace a variety of assessment strategies.

## ISE Assessment aims

Assessment is the systematic collection of information about student learning and the use of that information to create a continuing cycle of improved teaching and learning.

The primary goals of assessment within ISE's DP are to:

- provide an opportunity for students to exhibit transfer of skills across disciplines, such as in the extended essay and TOK
- 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.

## Implementation of Formative and Summative Assessment

In a balanced assessment system, both summative and formative assessments are an integral part of information gathering.

*Summative assessments* are given periodically to determine what students know and do not know right now. Summative assessments are generally used as part of the grading process and include tools such as end-of-unit assessments and end-of-term or semester exams. Summative assessments tend to be spread out over weeks or months, and occur *after* instruction. They can be used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of instruction, school improvement goals and student placement, but they happen too far down the learning path to be useful in making instructional adjustments and interventions *during* the learning process.

*Formative assessments* are part of the immediate instructional process. When incorporated into classroom practice, they provide the information needed to immediately adjust teaching and learning. Formative assessments inform teachers and students in order to make timely adjustments during the learning process - not after the fact.

Consistent with IB expectation, DP assessment encourages teachers to monitor students' developing understanding and abilities throughout the programme. Through effective **formative** assessment, teachers gather, analyse, interpret and use a variety of evidence to improve student learning and to help students to achieve their potential. Student, peer and self-assessment can be important elements of formative assessment plans. Internal (school-based) **summative** assessment is part of every DP unit. Summative assessments are designed to provide evidence for evaluating student achievement using required DP subject specific assessment criteria.

## Managebac

ISE utilizes an integrated information system, ManageBac, for gathering and reporting assessment information. This summative and formative assessment information is accessible to students, parents and teachers.

ManageBac is the primary data management system used at ISE for *all* matters concerning planning and assessment. It provides the basic means through which staff should record details of teaching and assessment along with communication of these to students and

parents. It should contain any documents relating to Subject Area policies and practices along with daily notification of work covered. A student's grade/achievement level for each assigned assessment will automatically be visible in ManageBac along with any comments posted by staff. Notice of homework and major assessment events will be posted on ManageBac.

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist ISE as it continues to strive to provide a high-quality international educational program for its students.

This document is intended to be useful to the ISE community of learners. It will be shared with new teachers during orientation each fall, and teachers are expected to reference it and adhere to it. Exceptions to these guidelines may be made with administrative approval. In order to maintain its usefulness, these guidelines should be reviewed every three years to ensure that they are aligned with best practices.

## **Common Practices in Using the DP Assessment Criteria and Determining Achievement Levels**

Assessment practices at ISE include using the DP criteria and determining achievement levels following DP guidelines.

At ISE, DP teachers make decisions about student achievement using their professional judgment, guided by mandated criteria that are public (DP Assessment Criteria/Rubrics are accessible in the Files section of ManageBac for each subject area), known in advance and precise DP Assessment Criteria/Rubrics are discussed with students early in the course, and at the start of a unit in which the assessment criteria/rubric will be used, ensuring that assessment is transparent.

## **Assessment Explanation**

The IBO has developed DP assessment criteria against which the student's work will be assessed. The student will not be judged against the work of other students, but against assessment criteria which the teacher will show and explain to the student. This will help the student to keep an eye on her/his progress and to see where she/he needs to improve.

### **How the final grade is achieved in the DP grading system?**

The goal of grade reporting at ISE is to inform the student and parent of the most up to date progress in the course to date.

As grades are reported four times per year, each report contains information about the student's achievement level at that point in the program. In other words, a student may earn a 7 in a given subject in the first quarter of the first year of the programme (grade 11), but that mark is representative of the material and topics that have been covered so far in the program.

The final ISE grade is determined by the student's achievement on the summative tasks for each component in each subject area. This includes the marks on the mock exams in March of the second year.

### **Common Practices in Recording and Reporting Student Achievement**

During the two years of the DP, ISE communicates student achievement and grades in each subject to parents at regular intervals. DP reports of student achievement communicate the student's achievement level for each assessment component for each subject. This practice provides students and their parents with information about the student's engagement with the objectives of each subject and is supported with advice for improvement, where applicable.

### **DP General Grade Descriptors**

To arrive at criterion level totals for each student, teachers add together the student's final achievement levels in all criteria of the subject. ISE uses the DP 1-7 scale for the grade boundary guidelines table that follows to determine final grades in each year of the DP. The table provides a means of converting the criterion level totals into a grade based on a scale of 1-7.

## DP general grade descriptors

Grade	Descriptor
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
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.

## Reporting formats and timeline

ISE uses report cards in which all teachers contribute assessment data from their subject, and which include achievement levels and grades at the end of each semester.

Report cards are used to communicate the overall results of assessed work and the progress students are making toward the student objectives of the ISE/DP curriculum. Our report cards include both numerical and narrative elements.

Reports are generated four times per year. The report content and format is reviewed each year in the spring to determine any changes for the following year.

### Report Schedule

Quarterly Progress Reports include

- Mid-semester achievement levels and teacher comments in all subject areas

Mid-semester achievement levels do not become part of the student's records that are sent to other schools, nor are they recorded on the student's transcript.

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester Report Cards include

- Semester grades and achievement levels in all subject areas.
- Teacher comments in each class in all subject areas

Semester grades do become part of the student's records that are sent to other schools, and they are recorded on the student's transcript.

### Parent Conferences

- Parent conferences—in which teachers communicate assessment data to parents openly and transparently, possibly supported by examples of each student's work.
- Student-led conferences—in which students share assessment data about their learning with their parents, possibly supported with a portfolio of achievement.

Students are required to participate in both conferences.

The responsibility of the student-led conference rests with the student. The teacher facilitates the conference, but the student is responsible for answering parent questions and concerns about student learning. Students share with their parents what they have learned, if

applicable, show their parents their student portfolios, and discuss the reasons for their academic progress.

## **End of Semester/Final Assessments**

Each Subject group teacher will determine whether or not students will take an End of Semester/Final Assessment. Instructors will determine whether or not End of Semester/Final Assessments will be given. If Subject group classes are at the beginning or middle of an DP Unit, extended lessons for students will be given in lieu of End of Semester/Final Assessments.

## **Practice/Mock Exams**

Practice, or Mock, Exams are conducted in March of the second year of the program. The intention of these exams is to practice the process for exams that will take place in May, to give the student and teacher an idea of current student achievement in order to provide evidence for which topics to revise during the month of April. These exams will count towards the students' final ISE grade.

## **Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to be principled and as such, they will complete all assessments and other work with academic integrity. Any violation to this will be dealt with strictly according to our DP Academic Honesty Policy.

## **Optional IB Assessment and Requirements for non-full IBDP Students**

### **DP Course Candidates**

A candidate who does not aim to achieve the full IB Diploma, but is registered for any combination of subjects, the Extended Essay, TOK and/or CAS is referred to as an DP Course Candidate.

### **Inclusion/SEN students**

ISE Inclusion/SEN policy section "Special Accommodations for IB Examinations" communicates guideline for inclusion/SEN students taking DP external assessments.

## Transcripts

ISE prepares transcripts for grades 9-12 for the purpose of university application, and will be completed at each quarter and semester end as required. Final transcripts shall be prepared in June by the school secretary, using grades taken from the official report cards. Transcripts shall be reviewed by the IB Diploma Coordinator and the Principal prior to being finalised.

No class rankings will be made, and there will be no valedictorians.

International School of Estonia

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