

POLICY NAME: Policy on Assessment
POLICY NUMBER: 24.0
DATE OF APPROVAL: 7 November 2016

POLICY CROSS-REFERENCED:

- The Beacon Academy Student and Parent handbook 2015-2016
- Policy on Special Educational Needs
- Policy on Academic Honesty

REFERENCES

- IB Middle Years Programme: From Principles into Practice
 - IB Diploma Programme: From Principles into Practice
 - Manual of Operations for Private Schools of the Department of Education
 - Guidelines for Developing a School Assessment Policy, IBO 2009
 - Guidelines for Developing a School Assessment Policy in the Diploma Program, IBO 2010
-

POLICY STATEMENT

The Beacon Academy views curriculum development, teaching, learning and assessment as elements of a continuum. These elements are interdependent, each informing and strengthening the other. Together, they are designed to provide students with the means of taking personal ownership of their own learning.

Assessment is a practice that seeks to provide valid and reliable information to the teacher and student about the learning process so that judgments about student progress and achievement may be made. It is integral to the continuum identified above in four key ways: 1) it enables teachers to measure how effectively course aims and objectives have been met, how material has been learned, and how thoroughly or deeply students have understood the concepts and skills taught; 2) it serves as an indicator for teachers to adjust teaching approaches, encouraging them to seek alternative methods and materials best fit for an individual learner's progress and abilities; 3) it allows for the opportunity to provide constructive feedback to students on their academic performance in order to encourage reflection on their own learning; and 4) it is the basis of accurate reporting of student progress and achievement to students, parents and receiving schools.

Assessment at the Beacon Academy is criterion-based, i.e. it is conducted via task-specific descriptions of performances that are sought in order to demonstrate learning of content and skills. It affirms that how a student learns is as important as the knowledge that is gained, and thus recognizes the different learning styles.

The school values transparency in its assessment practices as a means of fostering a personal ownership and accountability of student learning.

POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Types of Assessment

- i. **Summative Assessment:** Summative assessments take place for the purpose of determining how much a student has learned over a particular period of time. It requires teachers to make judgments on how well or how deeply the learning has taken place. These judgments are based on how well a student has demonstrated the learning based on a set of course or subject objectives.

- ii. **Formative Assessment:** Formative assessments take place constantly, with teachers taking every opportunity to assess how students are learning, and then using this information to adjust teaching methods and materials to meet student needs. These assessments help teacher and student identify the knowledge, skills and understanding that students have prior to teaching the unit and are developing throughout a course. Students are given feedback to strengthen their understanding of themselves as learners and help them develop strategies to improve. This builds responsibility and accountability for their own learning

2. The Continuum of Assessment from Grades 9 -12

- i. All assessments at the Beacon Academy are developed from the learning objectives in the various subjects as specified in the course outlines. Although the courses in grades 9 and 10 are based on the Middle Years Programme framework and the courses in grades 11 and 12 follow the assessment objectives of the Diploma Programme courses. Every attempt is made to present the learning and development in the subject areas in a seamless continuum, with the knowledge, skills and understandings spiraling through the four years.
- ii. All assessments in grades 9-12 are internal to the Beacon Academy, with the exception of certain requirements that are submitted to the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) for moderation. They are designed to gain information on student achievement and learning. The information gained through either formative and summative assessments is shared with students to allow them to have greater control of their own learning. Assessment result also inform further teaching.
- iii. At the end of their tenure at the Beacon Academy, students have the option of registering for external exams, which allow them to be measured against other twelfth grade students across the world who have taken similar courses of study across the two years. External exams at the Beacon Academy are taken in May of every year, and final results are released in July of the same year. Formal external assessment results lead directly to final Diploma qualifications.
- iv. Grade reports issued by the Academy (see below) indicate student performance in class and are distinct from the result of the IB external assessments.

3. Grading System

- i. The grading system at The Beacon Academy is modeled on the grading system of the IBO. Student performance in the various criteria is assessed and marked, and grades are then issued and reported to parents.
- ii. The grade levels and descriptors of The Beacon Academy as follows:

| Grading Levels | Grade Descriptors |
|----------------|--|
| 7 | The student consistently demonstrates an excellent understanding of the knowledge and skills, and can apply these to a wide variety of situations. |
| 6 | The student consistently demonstrates an thorough understanding of the knowledge and skills, and can apply these to a wide variety of situations. |
| 5 | The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of the knowledge and skills, and can apply these to most of situations. |

| Grading Levels | Grade Descriptors |
|----------------|--|
| 4 | The student demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of the knowledge and skills, and can apply these to most familiar and some unfamiliar situations. |
| 3 | The student demonstrates a basic understanding of the knowledge and skills, and has difficulty applying these to most familiar and some unfamiliar situations. |
| 2 | The student demonstrates a limited understanding of the knowledge and skills, and has difficulty applying these to familiar situations. |
| 1 | The student demonstrates a very limited understanding of the knowledge and skills. |
| 0 | No grade awarded |

- iii. A student may obtain a grade of Incomplete (INC) for non-compliance of some requirements of a subject or course. In such cases, he or she will not be given any credit for the subject or course unless he or she satisfactorily remove the Incomplete grade through the completion of a requirement within a time period specified by the Dean of Faculty but not exceeding one year from the date it was obtained.

4. Guidelines for Developing Assessment Tasks

- i. Assessment tasks must reflect curriculum objectives and the taught curriculum. They must be planned at the beginning of the unit, and students must be informed of the assessment criteria before the tasks are assigned.
- ii. Assessment tasks should be designed by teachers to be varied and motivating to students in recognition of different learning styles. When possible, the teacher will include opportunities for each learner to demonstrate their learning.
- iii. Assessment must be geared toward a broad range of concepts and skills.
- iv. The quality of assessment tasks—i.e. the alignment of the assessment task and curricular objectives—takes precedence over the quantity of assessment tasks planned in a unit.
- v. Assessments are criterion-related. They employ task-specific descriptions of performances that are sought in order to demonstrate learning of content and skills. These descriptions are set down by the relevant programme requirements of the International Baccalaureate Organization and/or in keeping the standards stipulated by the Department of Education of the the Republic of the Philippines.
- vi. When possible, teacher should ensure that assessment tasks include opportunities for self- and peer-assessment.
- vii. All teachers must have at least two (2) summative assessments per semester except for subjects that meet once a week.
- viii. In order that marks issued reflect a fair judgment of student progress and achievement, teachers shall assess all criteria for their subject at least twice per term. Teachers must ensure that assessment is an accurate demonstration of student performance to date, and not just the result of averaging attainment grades over a reporting period.

- ix. Teachers must submit assessment tasks for evaluation by coordinators appropriate to the academic program.

5. Guidelines for Assessment Administration

- i. Teachers must always record all summative and formative assessments for which rubrics have been provided in the grading sheet format provided by the school. These are to be submitted in soft- and hard-copy to appropriate academic coordinators at the end of every term.
- ii. Collaborative planning and internal standardization are conducted regularly, as required by the IBO.
- iii. Mid- and end- of year examinations are held for all students, and are cumulative in nature for that half year (mid-year exams) or full year (end of year exams), i.e. assessing student progress and achievement of the course as a whole at these junctures of the school year. These examinations assess the ability of students to recall, adapt and apply learned knowledge and skills to novel questions and contexts.
- iv. When possible, teachers should ensure that scheduling of major assessments is done collaboratively with other instructors and this school administration in recognition of student workloads. Teacher must make use of the internal calendar of the school to inform the planning and scheduling of major assessments.
- v. Teachers must inform students of assessment schedules within reasonable timeframe. This may be done in class or via the school's online platform.
- vi. Teachers must attach task-specific clarifications to all summative assessments in order to communicate the objectives of the assessment and for students to be aware of how their work is to be evaluated.
- vii. Students must submit completed assessments on due dates required. Due dates for assessment tasks are determined by the teacher. This decision takes into consideration the demands of the course as well as the accountability to be fostered in student learning. As such, these dates and the corresponding consequences should a student fail to submit on time, may be discussed but must be agreed upon by both teacher and student. If a teacher is unable to assess a student's performance because of a failure of submission, this teacher may issue a term grade of Incomplete (Inc) for this task.
- viii. Teachers must return corrected assessments to students with appropriate feedback as promptly as possible.

6. Guidelines for Reporting of Assessment

- i. Parents receive feedback regarding student progress in several ways:
 - a. Advisory Notes. Advisory notes are descriptive of the progress of learning and include teacher observations of the students' attitudes and approaches to learning that encourage success in school. This is issued in the first quarter of the school year. For the third quarter, teachers will provide numerical grades for feedback of progress/performance.
 - b. Report Cards. These reports contain marks achieved per subject criteria, a final grade for each subject, Learner Presence marks for accountability, respect and participation in class, and a record of student attendance. This is issued at the end of every semester.

- c. Parent-Teacher Conferences. Face-to-face discussions with teachers. Two official dates are published in the school's annual academic calendar, although conferences outside of these dates may be schedule by appointment.
- ii. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's adviser and teachers should there be any concerns about their learning and assessment at school.
- iii. In cases of students experiencing difficulties in their classes or those with special educational needs, parents are given prior notification regarding their child's progress in formative assessments. The academic coordinator appropriate to the child's level informs his or her faculty adviser and parents through a Notice of Student Performance before summative assessments are given. Assistance and special conditions are stipulated on the form, as well as recommendations on how students, parents and teachers may provide support for the student.
- iv. All final projects or requirements of the IB Middle Years Programme and the IB Diploma Programme (e.g. personal project, internal assessments, extended essay, and course grades) are passed through the moderation or examination process of the International Baccalaureate Organization. While every effort will be made in determining predicted grades, these are still subject to adjustments by the IB. Therefore, IB predicated grades are for internal purposes only and will not be communicated to the public except for university application.

7. Assessment of Learning of Students with Special Educational Needs

- i. Teachers explore the use of alternative assessments to effectively engage the skills and capabilities of students with special educational needs throughout the semester and during examination periods. The Learning Support Teacher/Coordinator and the Guidance Counselor recommend to teacher's alternative assessments and possible accommodations for students with special educational needs.
- ii. Alternative assessments for students with special educational needs may take the form of the following:
 - a. Individual or collaborative presentations or performances
 - b. Creative projects or outputs
 - c. Peer, group and self-assessments
 - d. Portfolios
- iii. Accommodations during examinations or in activities conducted in fulfillment of a subject's major requirements may be made for the students with special educational needs. These accommodations include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Extensions to deadline
 - b. Extensions to examination times or duration
 - c. Modification of examinations
- iv. Parents of students with special educational needs are informed of such accommodations, assistance or special conditions, as well as provided recommendations on how best to support such students in their preparations by the faculty adviser.
- v. Teachers are supported and professional development training provided whenever possible so that specialized skills for and best practices in teaching students with special educational needs are learned and cascaded to the community. This includes developing the ability to differentiate curricular requirements without compromising program standards, to creatively and effectively vary the delivery of course content, and to prepare alternative assessment tools when necessary.

8. Assessment and Academic Honesty

- i. The Beacon Academy is committed to “academic excellence, citizenship, integrity, and the education of the whole student” in pursuit of its mission as a secondary school. In its adoption of the programs of the International Baccalaureate Organization, it seeks to cultivate qualities enumerated in the IB Learner Profile in the community, particularly the development of a principled, reflective and caring student body. As such, the institution adheres to academic honesty in all its endeavors and students, teachers and parents are expected to have read and understood the Policy on Academic Honesty of The Beacon Academy.
- ii. Institutional Responsibilities
 - a. Students
 1. Students must be honest and follow the proper citation of sources (e.g. MLA, APA) whenever incorporating another person’s ideas, words, videos, images, music, etc. in their work.
 2. All forms of work submitted or accomplished for class must contain the proper attribution of sources, when applicable.
 - b. Parents
 1. Parents must understand the Academic Honesty Policy and guide their children in its compliance. This includes encouraging their children to discuss, ask, and seek clarification of assigned tasks, and knowing and communicating the consequences of the academic dishonesty in their studies.
 - c. Teachers
 1. Teachers must ensure that all academic materials used in class have the correct and proper attribution of sources.
 2. Teachers must demonstrate acceptable methods of the academic citation of sources.
 3. Teachers must provide time for students to consult and clarify details of the task and the honest presentation of sources.
 4. Teachers must provide feedback to students, parents and administrators regarding the progress and needs of students in this area, raising concerns and possible formative interventions, if necessary.
- iii. Cases in which academic honesty in question in assessments follow the guidelines and procedures as discussed in the Policy of Academic Policy.

POLICY REVIEW

This Policy on Assessment will be reviewed on a regular basis as needed by the administration and faculty as a whole, in consultation with established guidelines of the school’s accrediting organizations. The Policy must be reviewed every five years.