

## Introduction

This policy sets guidelines and expectations for assessment at our school in terms of why we assess, what we assess, how we assess, how we use assessment and how we report on our assessment. At SISD, assessment is a continuous and integral part of learning and teaching. It is at the heart of the process of promoting personalised learning. It is the means by which each child's progress is measured. It pinpoints children's needs and informs teachers of specific next steps in a child's learning to ensure a quality education is provided for all learners. The Assessment Policy ensures progress from Phase 2 – Phase 4 in conjunction with UAE National Agenda Parameters. Assessment informs teachers of achievements, abilities, skills and knowledge that children have acquired.

## Aims of assessment in our school are to:

- Enable our learners to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do
- Help our learners understand what they need to know and develop to make progress
- Allow teachers to plan learning that accurately reflects the need of each child
- Provide regular information for all stakeholders, including parents, that enables them to support each child's learning
- Provide the school leadership and Board of Governors with information that allows them to make informed judgements on the effectiveness of the school

This Assessment Policy addresses these aims by answering the following questions in the coming sections:

- What is assessment?
- Why do we assess?
- How do we assess?
- How do we use assessments?
- How do we report assessments?

Overall, the purpose of assessment is to provide personalized, holistic feedback on the learning process to inform learning and teaching. Student progress and attainment is tracked over time to ensure personalized learning. Assessment in the curriculum is divided into three areas: assessing, recording and reporting.

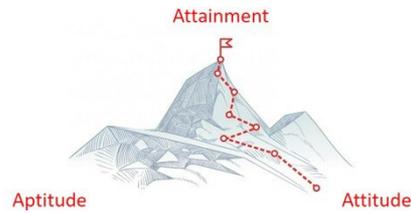
- Assessing—how we discover what the students know and have learned.
- Recording—how we choose to collect, analyze and synthesize data.
- Reporting—how we choose to communicate information.

As an IB Continuum School, SISD adopts whole school continuum practices to enhance coherence between programmes.

## ASSESSING

### 1. What is assessment?

## Getting to know our students



*'Appraising, assessing a value; the process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs.'*

Assessment is an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and abilities. Therefore, any opportunity that students have to demonstrate their learning could be deemed an 'assessment event', whereby a students' level of understanding can be judged. An assessment event could be anything from a formal exam to a Q&A session, a pop-quiz to a role-play, a presentation to a mind-map.

One core element of assessment at SISD is that classroom assessment is central to the teaching and learning process and an interactive process. Assessment is an essential part of the instructional cycle. It provides information about student learning and development, as well as a framework for planning, self-reflection, and collaboration for teachers.

Through effective assessment, learning is promoted by:

- Assessing prior knowledge and experience
- Differentiating instruction to meet individual needs
- Engaging learners in reflection to determine strengths and areas for development and to set goals
- Providing feedback for learners
- Expanding the learning opportunities of our learners
- Maintaining a record celebrating achievements and personal progress

Information about learning may be (but is not limited to) provided through:

- Examples of the work or performance of our learners
- Statistics relating to benchmarks and/or rubrics or test scores
- Assessment
- Discussions with parents
- Observation records

Programme evaluation uses a variety of learner assessments to:

- Assess the levels of learners' current knowledge and experience before embarking on new learning
- Assess new learning and progress made
- Guide teacher planning and presentation
- Inform and prioritise the learning of our learners
- Assess learner performance relative to identified school outcomes
- Guide school community programs and initiatives and action plans
- Analyse the results of assessments to support ongoing learning across all areas of the curriculum

## 2. WHY DO WE ASSESS?

The three main aims of student assessment are:

- Pedagogical - evaluate the success of teaching, inform teaching, evaluate and improve learning – **FORMATIVE**
- Communicative – reports, tracking sheets, - **SUMMATIVE**
- III Managerial – teacher targets, appraisal, monitor progress - **SUMMATIVE**

At SISD, we believe that the main purpose of assessment data should be its **formative** use informing the learning process, whilst accepting that some information needs to be used for reporting and quality assurance and appraisal purposes.

*'Formative assessment...is at the heart of effective teaching' (Dylan Williams)*

## 3. How do we assess?

### ASSESSMENT TYPES

Within education there are three key strands of assessment:

**Summative assessment** - often referred to as assessment of learning. This covers those assessments that aim to provide information about how much a student has learned and can do related to a specific unit of learning. End-of-year examinations are one example of summative assessments

**Formative assessment** - often referred to as assessment for learning. This is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence, for use by students and their teachers to decide where the students are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. For example, the use of questioning to assess students' understanding, listening to them read, feedback on homework.

**External Assessments** - These are assessments set as part of the NAP and validated by external agencies which provide some comparison with learners elsewhere and are an important part of understanding how our learners are achieving in a global context. Some examples of these assessments used at SISD include the CAT4 test, GL progress tests, Arabic ABT and reading benchmark test NGRT.

Although it is Formative Assessment that is often referred to as Assessment for Learning (AfL), it is clear that summative and external assessments are a diagnostic tool that must also fall within this sphere.

### METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

The various strands of assessment available to teachers and students have differing degrees of effectiveness. *Focus Education* lists the four most effective as (in order):

1. Self-evaluation

2. Questioning and immediate verbal feedback
3. Collaborative assessment and feedback
4. Written comments by teachers in exercise books (marking)

## CRITERION-RELATED ASSESSMENT

All five academic programmes (PYP, MYP, Swiss Matura, DP and CP) use criterion-related assessment. All summative assessment tasks are graded using IB published (where relevant) or school-based criteria with which performance is reported using the best fit model. Arabic and Islamic Studies use percentages as per Ministry of Education requirements. In Arabic criterion-based rubrics are used to support the overall percentage in line with IB guidelines.

Where students follow an ASDAN programme, they will be assessed on a personal learning portfolio using evidence of completion of ASDAN objectives.

Where students follow the CP or the BTEC pathway in G9 and G10, they have the option of completing Level 3 BTEC diplomas. These are assessed against Pearson's assessment rubrics.

## At SISD we will encourage the development of AfL strategies such as:

- III providing and using personalised learning objectives and clear success criteria
- III peer observation - to share good practice and provide constructive feedback
- III providing criteria and progress tracking in student speak
- III building-up a bank of exemplars, of varying degrees of high quality
- III ensuring schemes of work are embedded with key questions which are planned into lessons
- III rich classroom questioning that develops high order thinking skills and encourages discussion and debate
- III allowing all students sufficient time to respond to key questions
- III providing immediate verbal constructive feedback to individuals, groups and the whole-class
- III written comments that are effective in moving students forward in their learning
- III allowing students time to engage with and respond to written feedback
- III developing our students as thriving peer and self-assessors
- III using display boards as advice centres and learning resources
- III [introducing review books](#)
- III using summative assessment in a formative way, students knowing how they performed to set future goals and next steps

## Achievable and aspirational targets

- The MEG refers to the **Minimum Expected Grade**.
- This is not a target grade; it is an indicator of minimum expectations based on students' previous achievement.
- III MEGs are initially based upon prior attainment and are not a target grade. The calculation of the Minimum Expected Grade is to contextualise the data and to be used for identifying students and teachers requiring intervention strategies.
- A student would be seen to be making the expected progress should they achieve their MEG.

- Importantly, it is expected that all SISD students aspire to excellence and the MEG is the grade upon which to build. A student who continually improves beyond the average rate of progress will see their grades rise.
- As an inclusive school, SISD students will have different MEGs.
- Individual MEGs will be reviewed each year.

## Why?

- All students have different starting points and thus we should celebrate all individual progress made.
- Teachers set the standard of excellence expected – this reinforces our high standards through achievable and aspirational targets.
- Students are not given feedback such as ‘you’re a 4’ – but focused on formative constructive feedback that makes students think about **how** to develop their understanding and make progress.
- MEGs are not for labelling students and minimising expectation, rather they are to establish a growth mindset that they can aspire to excellence.

## When?

- Initial CAT4 testing is conducted for all new students on entry to SISD (See Table 1). This provides a consistent baseline against which we can monitor student attainment and value added. As cognitive ability is not particularly curriculum related, the results are not significantly influenced by previous schooling or subject knowledge.
- Subsequent MEG adjustment is considered in Term 3 or earlier depending upon the individual, teacher, SubCo, Grade Leader and advisory teacher.

**Table 1**

Grade	Baseline	When?	Review
3	CAT4 (mandatory)	Aug / September	April
4			April
5	CAT4 (mandatory)	Aug / September	April
6			April
7	CAT4 (mandatory)	Aug / September	April
8			April
9	CAT4 (mandatory)	September	April
10			April
11	CAT4	September	April
12			April
			April

## How?

- Curriculum is organised to allow students to be presented with new knowledge and skills, as

well as revisiting and reinforcing previous learning.

- Students are tracked using Toodle and GO4Schools and underachieving students are identified and additional departmental support is enabled as required.
- At several points during the year, individual MEGs may be adjusted in line with assessment data. Any adjustment must be made after appropriate analysis and discussion (Table 2).

## WRITTEN FEEDBACK

All departments are required to use the SISD method when providing written feedback to students

Strength (teacher)

Improvement (teacher)

Student Development (student comment and action)

The Purpose of marking must be clear. It should:

- Recognize achievement
- Improve learning
- Monitor progress against attainment targets
- Provide feedback to students and teachers
- Improve student motivation and self-esteem
- Help teacher and student to identify strengths and weaknesses, be constructive
- Be set against clear criteria, focused, and shared with students
- Be frequent, though not weekly
- Be consistently applied across a school/department
- Not used to make (overt) comparisons between students
- Be standardised within the department

It is expected that departments carefully judge the frequency with which they provide written feedback. It is unrealistic to assume that it can happen on each piece of work. Detailed feedback every 2-3 weeks is probably sensible and is much more likely to result in improvements in learning. Each piece of summative work must have written feedback.

It is expected that the comments a teacher gives direct the students towards completing a new task. It could be in the form of a question that further challenges the student, or a request for the student to find out more about a particular topic. This dialogue between the teacher and the student PERSONALISES the assessment experience. It is acting upon comments that lies at the center of successful assessment.

At SISD, assessment results are communicated to students in a sensitive, constructive and personal manner.

Comments given to the students are to be:

- Clear and concise
- Focused on the assessment criteria – **avoiding** “Good work” or “Good effort” – what has the student done that has led to success?
- Motivating
- Informative – areas for improvement should be clearly highlighted
- A starting point – teachers should use the assessment process to extend the learning experience for the student

## RECORDING

### How do we use assessments?

We use and analyse the data from assessments for different stakeholders including learners, parents, teachers and the school governing and academic boards.

#### For learners

Assessment data from summative assessments, formative assessments and learner reflections can help our learners measure their progress against the required objectives and to identify where they need to target their efforts to improve. Learners can identify how well they have achieved across different subject areas which can in turn lead to actions to strengthen their understandings or to address areas of development.

#### For parents

Assessment data from formative assessments and summative assessments can provide a broad picture of where their children’s strengths and weaknesses lie and what they need to do to improve. This reinforces the partnership between parents and the school in supporting children’s education. For our external assessments (e.g. GL testing), these allow parents to compare the progress of their child against national averages. The assessment data we collect is also used as our evidence to show the progress of learners.

#### For School

The collecting and analysis of assessment data provides a level of assurance. If staff are carrying out effective formative assessment, the school can be assured that problems will be identified at the individual level and that every child will be supported to make progress and meet expectations.

The use of external assessment enables school leaders to benchmark their school’s progress against other similar schools elsewhere and to make informed judgements about the school’s effectiveness. In sum, this enables school leaders to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, to identify where interventions may be required and to work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and expected attainment.

The use of external tests helps our teachers compare our expectations in a broader context and make comparisons between the performance of our learners and their peers elsewhere. In sum, this enables teachers to evaluate their own teaching of particular learning and to plan future lessons accordingly.

At SISD we use CAT4 data to produce end of Phase baseline grades for phase 2 and 3. SubCos are expected to use these to calculate value-added. Value added takes account of expected and actual attainment data where each student started from and the progress, they made relative to other, similar students. Students should know whether they are below, on or above their target

## RECORD KEEPING

Effective record-keeping must be ongoing, cumulative, accessible, and informative, easy to interpret and based upon evidence drawn from the learning process. At SISD we have introduced **Toodle and Go4Schools** which allow all mark books to be accessed online. ALL data is accessible to all stakeholders.

Departmental records are the responsibility of individual teachers and departments. They must follow the following principles:

- Enable the department to be aware of students' progress
- Enable SubCos to identify patterns and trends of individuals and groups
- For use in formative assessment and to assist with curriculum adaptation, personalisation and future planning
- To be able to pass on information to other staff, parents and the student
- To assist with target setting

## Ensuring Progression

Measuring progress can be a fluid approach, our robust systems are used to track progress against minimum expected grades and thresholds. In conjunction, challenge and expectation is progressive through their learning journey.

Each half term, students will be presented with new knowledge and skills, as well as revisiting and reinforcing previous learning. Sometimes, they will be successful and grasp these concepts and ideas with relative ease, at other times it will be more challenging, and they will not be successful straight away and further work and study will be required. This is expected as part of the learning journey and should be embraced by all. Feedback, discussion, and reflection are essential to success and development. Resilience is an expectation explicated developed and reflected on. Students are to understand that learning requires commitment, deliberate practice and continuous reflection

Crucially, these numbers do not form a ladder. Students making the minimum expected progress will retain the same grades throughout the year. There is no limit to anyone's progress or attainment. Students who continually improve beyond the average rate of progress will see their grades rise.

## Target Setting:

After each of the parental reporting periods teachers need to spend dedicated time with each student in their homeroom or form to discuss the outcomes of the report. This REVIEW session follows the REPORTING session at each point; the aim is to evaluate the positive and negative aspects of the report. At the end of the conversation, students should produce a set of targets for the next period of learning time. This should not be a long list of targets – it should be restricted to no more than 3 personal targets. In the Secondary School students have an achievable and aspirational IB Grade target which is above their CAT4 potential and is reviewed after AF3, 4 and 5. Individual targets are also set based around a student's learning and skills.

Targets should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time based.

## **REPORTING**

### **How do we report on assessment?**

The school provides regular updates to parents on the progress of students. There are currently 3 reports per year. In Secondary, examination cohorts' results are also communicated to parents at AP4. There are two parent/teacher meetings per year for each grade to discuss the progress of their child with the subject teacher. Whole School Reporting here. In secondary school throughout the year, all summative assessments are posted on Managebac within 2 weeks of the assessment and parents have access to this.