Northumberland Regional High School
Assessment Policy

Philosophy and Principles

Assessment is the process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the learning outcomes in a course. Assessment is used to communicate and support student learning and encourage student success. Evaluation is the process of analyzing assessment information to determine student achievement of the learning outcomes for the purposes of grading and reporting. The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning.

Effective assessment allows students to demonstrate a broad range of conceptual understanding and skills, and demonstrate critical thinking abilities. Assessment teaches students to analyze their own learning, reflect on their areas of achievement and areas for improvement, and set goals for their own learning. Assessment helps students develop effective learning skills and strategies.

Effective assessment allows teachers to identify individual student's strengths and areas of concern in relation to the curriculum outcomes. Teachers use assessments to guide instruction and to provide timely and clear feedback to improve future learning. Effective assessment provides parents and guardians with evidence of student learning and information about their children's strengths and areas of concern in relation to the curriculum outcomes. This information can be used to support student progress and achievement.

Teachers use a variety of assessment instruments to gather information about student achievement. The action that is taken in response to an assessment determines its formative or summative nature.

Formative and Summative Assessment

Formative assessment involves the ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence to monitor progress in student learning. Teachers use the data to provide feedback and to adjust instruction to enhance learning and achievement. An example of a formative assessment might be a homework probe or an assignment. It may also be as simple as a teacher asking a student a question in class to assess understanding of a concept. Formative assessments also provide opportunities for students to assess their own work, and that of peers, to help students identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop strategies for improvement. Formative assessments identify the learning needs of students, shape learning, and prepare students for summative assessments.

Summative assessment involves the process of gathering and interpreting evidence to assess a student's understanding of the course material. Summative assessments measure achievement based on established criteria used to assign a value to represent the quality of student learning at the end of a period of learning. For example, a unit test would be designed to assess how well a student has learned the material in the current unit, before moving on to the next unit. A final examination, which assesses a student's understanding of an entire course, is the example of a summative assessment. Summative assessments play an important role in the final grade a student earns in a given course. Summative assessments are used to communicate information on student achievement to students, teachers, parents and guardians, and others.

IB Assessments

IB teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments to support and encourage student learning. IB assessment is criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced. This means that student work is marked in relation to clearly defined levels of skill attainment rather than against the work of other students. The levels of skill attainment for each subject are derived from the aims and objectives of the course and established by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). They are designed to be fair to students all over the world. The criteria for achievement are explained to students in each course and are the focus of class and homework activities.

Internal Assessment

There are two types of summative IB assessment tools which are used in the determination of final IB grades: internal and external assessments. Detailed IB policies describe the conditions under which these tools must be administered.

IB internal assessments allow teachers to assess some of the students' work during the IB course. Examples include English individual oral commentary, language presentations, historical investigations, laboratory reports, and math projects. NRHS teachers mark the internal assessments and this grade counts as a percentage of the student's overall final IB score. The marks for the internal assessments are submitted to the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), along with a representative sample of the work marked by the NRHS teacher. This sample is then sent to an IB moderator who evaluates how the teacher has applied the IB grading rubric. IBO may then adjust the marks of the assignment.

Internal assessments provide students with opportunities to show mastery of skills outside of final examinations. Students receive significant instruction and practice throughout their courses in order to effectively prepare for these challenging tasks.

In each IB subject teachers are given a very specific list of criteria to assess and guidelines about how to mark each criterion. To determine a mark, the teacher chooses the level of achievement that best matches the work being marked. The criteria for achievement are clearly communicated to students well in advance of the internal assessments. IB assessments are graded on a scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high).

Northumberland Regional High School IB teachers use the NRHS IB calendar to maximize student achievement and minimize student stress. The due dates for IB internal assessments are established in consultation with other NRHS IB teachers in order to spread out the workload of the IB Diploma Programme over the two years and avoid overlap. The dates for internal assessments are posted on the NRHS IB calendar and copies of such are provided to students at the beginning of the school year.

External Assessment

IB external assessments are assessments that are completed by students at Northumberland Regional High while overseen by NRHS teachers, but are sent away to be marked by external IB examiners. Final examinations are the main means of external assessment, but work such as the Extended Essay, Written Assignment papers, TOK essays and Visual Arts exhibitions are also externally assessed.

The dates for IB examinations are set by the IBO and given to students a year in advance of their exams. IB exams are conducted in strict accordance with IBO regulations. Practice exams are conducted in January and June of year 1 and January of year 2. Practice exams are an important part of review and exam preparation. IB final exams typically make up about 75% of the students' final course mark, but the exact percentage varies from course to course.

School-Based Assessment

IB teachers also use school-based student assessment in addition to IB internal and external assessments. These school-based assessments are essential for student success and contribute to the students' report card marks. The report card grade each student earns in a particular IB class is not tied directly to the marks earned on formal IB assessments, but is reflective of work completed in preparation for those assessments. For example, the actual marks on IB final examinations will not be available until July. Report card marks during the course are based on unit tests using past IB exam questions, practice exams and in-class assignments modelled on IB assessments. Teachers evaluate school-based assignments using IB rubrics and then convert the marks to 1-7 scores based on mark bands available in the yearly subject reports provided by IB. All NRHS teachers have received specialized training in the use of IB grading criteria and mark bands. Where there are multiple teachers of a subject, there are practices in place to ensure standardization of school-based assessments. Teachers have collaboration time built into the school schedule to meet and will use some of this time to align their assessments. The use of IB mark schemes will form the

basis for major summative school-based assessments. These school-based assessments do not contribute toward the final IB grade, which is awarded by the IBO in July.

Reporting IB Grades

A variety of methods are used to communicate student achievement throughout the academic year. Curriculum outcomes and assessment practices are communicated through course outlines provided to students. Parent-teacher interviews are held each semester, providing parents and guardians with a time to meet teachers to discuss their child's progress in each course. As needed, teachers consult with parents and guardians on an individual basis.

Course grades, based on school-based assessments, are reported to students and their parents and guardians on an ongoing basis through the use of password-protected online accounts on Pearson PowerSchool. Grades are also reported to students and parents twice a semester using provincially authorized report cards according to the report schedule of the Nova Scotia Department of Education and the Chignecto Central Regional Centre of Education.

Marks in IB courses are reported using the IB 1 - 7 scale as described below. The 1-7 marks are based on the IB standardized criteria on levels of achievement in each course.

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

IB marks are also reported on the Nova Scotia Department of Education transcripts for students. Official transcripts are required to be submitted to universities for consideration of admission and scholarships. Nova Scotia IB students receive two official transcripts. The first and most important transcript is the IB transcript which displays the 1-7 grades based on school-based assessments marked according to IB standardized assessment criteria. These correspond to the 1-7 marks shown on report

cards. The transcripts show the marks recorded during the most recent reporting period, as required by the Nova Scotia Department of Education (November, February, April or June).

Nova Scotia IB students also receive a second Nova Scotia Department of Education transcript displaying percentage marks converted from the 1-7 IB scale. Achievement levels attained according to IB standards and criteria are translated into a percentage grade using a standardized conversion scale developed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

The percentage conversion is completed using the standardized DoE conversion scale.

IB Grade	Converted Percentage Grade
7	99-100
6	92-98
5	84-91
4	77-83
3	70-76
2	50-69
1	Failing Grade

A student who scores at the high end of the IB scale based on IB mark bands and assessment criteria would earn a corresponding percentage grade on the high end of the designated percentage range for that IB score.

Theory of Knowledge and Extended Essays are evaluated using a letter grade scale. The Nova Scotia Department of Education percentage conversions are:

IB Grade	**Converted Percent Grade**
A	96-100
B	91-95
C	80-90
D	70-79
E	Failure

Final IB scores are based on the IB internal and external assessments, not on school-based assessments. Students are notified of their final IB marks in early July through access to a secure IB website. Requests may be made at the school in May for

official IB results to be sent directly from the IBO to universities in July. Students may later contact IBO directly to request that transcripts be sent to universities.

Earning the IB Diploma

Students in the IB Diploma Programme must take one course in each of five academic groups: Studies in Language and Literature, Language Acquisition, Individuals & Societies, Experimental Sciences, and Mathematics. Students must also take a sixth course, either an Arts course or an additional course from one of the groups listed above. Students must also complete the Theory of Knowledge (TOK), Extended Essay (EE) and Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) requirements.

Each of the IB subjects is graded on a 1-7 scale. To determine diploma eligibility the marks in each of the six subjects are totalled. Combined performance in the Theory of Knowledge and the Extended Essay, which are marked on an A-E basis, contribute up to three additional points to a student's total, according to the chart below.

		Theory of Knowledge				
		A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
Extended Essay	**A**	3	3	2	2	1 + Failing Condition *
	B	3	2	1	1	0 + Failing Condition *
	C	2	1	1	0	0 + Failing Condition *
	D	2	1	0	0	0 + Failing Condition *
	E	1 + Failing Condition *	0 + Failing Condition *	0 + Failing Condition *	0 + Failing Condition *	0 + Failing Condition

*28 points overall will be required to be eligible for the diploma if a student attains an "E" grade in either the extended essay or theory of knowledge. Attaining a grade "E" in both the extended essay and theory of knowledge is an automatic failure.

The maximum total possible IB Diploma Program score is 45 (6 X 7 plus 3). In order to receive an IB Diploma, a student must complete all assessment components for each of the six subjects and complete the TOK, EE, and CAS requirements. A student must earn at least 24 points and meet the following additional rules and requirements.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma will be awarded to a student if they receive 28 points or above and they meet the following requirements:

- Numeric grades have been awarded in all six subjects registered for the IB Diploma.
- All CAS requirements have been met.
- Grades A (highest) to E (lowest) have been awarded for both theory of knowledge and an extended essay, with a grade of at least D in one of them.
- There is no grade 1 in any subject.
- There is no more than one grade 2 at a higher level.
- There are no more than two grades 2 at standard level.
- Overall, there are no more than three grades 3 or below.
- At least 11 points have been gained on higher level subjects
- At least 8 points have been gained on standard level.
- The final award committee has not judged the candidate to be guilty of malpractice.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma will be awarded to a student if they receive 24, 25, 26 or 27 points and they meet the following requirements:

- Numeric grades have been awarded in all six subjects registered for the IB Diploma.
- All CAS requirements have been met.
- At least grade D has been awarded for both theory of knowledge and an extended essay.
- There is no grade 1 in any subject.
- There is no grade 2 at a higher level.
- There is no more than one grade 2 at standard level.
- Overall, there are no more than three grades 3 or below.
- At least 12 points have been gained on higher level subjects (candidates who register for four higher level subjects must gain at least 16 points at higher level.).
- At least 9 points have been gained on standard level subjects (candidates who register for two standard level subjects must gain at least 6 points at standard level).
- The final award committee has not judged the candidate to be guilty of malpractice.

Successful IB Diploma candidates will receive an IB Diploma. An IB Diploma candidate who fails to satisfy the requirements for the IB Diploma will be awarded course results for individual subjects.

The Nova Scotia Department of Education has determined that a student who fulfills the graduation requirements for an International Baccalaureate Diploma will also be awarded a Nova Scotia Graduation Diploma.

Homework

Homework is designed to enhance learning and achievement. It is highly recommended that students spend some time each night working on each of their subjects. The amount of time will vary depending on course workloads at different times in the semester and the nature of the homework tasks.

Training of IB Teachers

All IB teachers attend specialized IB workshops which provide training in the teaching and assessing of IB courses. Copies of previous IB exams, mark schemes and annual IB subject reports are provided to teachers to guide their instruction. IB teachers consult IB subject guidelines and use the IB Online Curriculum Centre to share best practices with other IB teachers from around the world. Teachers of common IB subjects work together and collaborate on internal assessments.

Integration of IB Policies

Academic honesty is strictly enforced following the guidelines set forth in the Northumberland Regional High School IB Academic Honesty Policy. Students with identified learning needs will receive supports and accommodations based on their individual needs and guided by the NRHS IB Special Educational Needs and Language policies.

The Northumberland Regional High School assessment policy was written and compiled by a working committee of the NRHS IB faculty and administration. The Northumberland Regional High School IB Diploma Assessment Policy is available in written form and on the school's website.

Resources

The following assessment resources were consulted in the creation of this document:

Chignecto Central Regional School Board (2008), *Assessment, Evaluation, and Communication of Student Learning*, Truro: CCRSB.

International Baccalaureate Organization (2004), *Diploma Program Assessment Principles and Practice*, Cardiff: IBO.

International Baccalaureate Organization (2009), *General Regulations*, Cardiff: IBO.

International Baccalaureate Organization (2010), *Guidelines for developing a school assessment policy in the Diploma Programme*, Cardiff: IBO.

Nova Scotia Department of Education (2012), *Soft Landing Guidelines For Students Exiting the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program (Draft),* Halifax: DOE

This policy is reviewed yearly during an IB Team Meeting

Date of last review: January 2nd, 2024