

ASSESSMENT

Secondary School Assessment Grading and Reporting Manual

Table of Contents

Assessment

- Overall Philosophy about Assessment
- Assessment Planning: The UBD Process
- Assessment Methods
- Assessments: Quality Expectations

Grading

- The Purpose of Assessment
- Grading Terminology
- Process of Grading
- Grading Methodology

Reporting

- Habits and Attitudes toward Learning (HATL)
- Narratives
- Grading Scale
- Reporting Timeline
- Reporting: Specific Issues

Assessment

Overall Philosophy about Assessment

The designing of assessments is an integral part of the overall curriculum design process. Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making expectations explicit and public, setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality, systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches expectations and results and using the resulting information to document, explain and improve performance. At ECA, we endorse following the eight Big Ideas about assessment (Damian Cooper, 2007):

1. Assessment serves different purposes at different times: it may be used to find out what students already know and can do; it may be used to help students improve their learning; or it may be used to let students and their parents know how much they have learned within a prescribed period of time.
2. Assessment must be planned and purposeful.
3. Assessment must be balanced including oral, performance, multi-modal, digital and written tasks, and be flexible in order to improve learning for all students.
4. Assessment and instruction are inseparable because effective assessment informs learning.
5. For assessment to be helpful to students, it must inform them in words, not just provide numerical scores or a letter grade. Guidance must be provided as to what they need to do next in order to improve.
6. Assessment is a collaborative process that is most effective when it involves self, peer, and teacher assessment.
7. Performance standards are an essential component of effective assessment.
8. Grading and reporting student achievement is a caring, sensitive process that requires teachers' professional judgment.

Assessment Planning: The UBD Process

Philosophy about Assessment: The Starting Point of Planning

Units of study are developed around the principles of Understanding by Design (Wiggins and McTighe) and include enduring understandings, essential questions and assessments that are aligned to the ECA standards and benchmarks. By identifying the desired results for a unit of study as the first step in the process of unit design, teachers know that the unit will be aligned to the identified standards and benchmarks for the particular course. Enduring understandings and essential questions are created to focus the learning and achieve the desired results. Once the results are identified, appropriate assessments are created to gather evidence that the targeted learning has been met. Finally, teaching and learning activities are crafted to lead students to the enduring understandings and the desired results. We believe that this “backwards” planning model promotes quality instruction, and facilitates quality learning for our students.

Assessment Planning Expectations

1. Prepare key assessments before you begin each unit including assessment criteria and exemplars of work.
2. All key assessments need to use criterion-referenced marking instruments which clearly outline the difference between each level.
3. Assessments are varied in form to address different learning styles and support a range of skill development.
4. Students and parents have access to assessment dates, clearly defined assessment criteria, and exemplar models at the start of the assessment process.
5. The use of a pre-assessment is required. It is expected that this assessment will provide evidence of the student's baseline knowledge and inform subsequent teaching and learning.
6. Mid-unit, the use of formative or ongoing assessments are part of daily instructional practices. These assessments are designed to provide important data for the student and teacher to reflect on the learning process.
7. The main purpose for formative assessment is provide students with opportunities to take action in order to improve their learning.
8. Summative assessments require higher order thinking (applications, synthesis, evaluation) and, whenever possible, are contextual.
9. Students are regularly provided an opportunity to self assess and reflect on their learning. Student self assessment and reflection is part of every unit of study.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Teachers are expected to align their assessments with standards and the variety of learning data needed to assess the learning in their classes. They are expected to give diagnostic assessments to determine what students know. A balanced assessment system requires assessments for learning (formative assessment) and assessments of learning (summative assessments).

ASSESSMENT FOR PLANNING (DIAGNOSTIC)

Diagnostic assessment is used to identify a student's needs and abilities and the student's readiness to acquire the knowledge and skills outlined in the curriculum expectations. Information from diagnostic assessment helps teachers determine where individual students are in their acquisition of knowledge and skills, so that instruction can be personalized and tailored to provide the appropriate next steps for learning.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING (FORMATIVE)

Assessment for learning (formative) happens while learning is underway. It can be simplified as "practice" towards achievement of a skill/concept (learning outcome/standard). It does not need to be assigned a grade but rather the focus is on recording progress using descriptors with accompanying specific feedback. They are conducted frequently throughout teaching and learning to diagnose student needs, and results are used to plan next steps in instruction. They provide students with frequent feedback that is used to improve the quality of their work and help students set goals and have greater ownership in their learning. Formative assessment should not be included in the academic grade.

Assessment for learning is a process of developing and supporting metacognition for students. It focuses on the role of the student as the critical connector between assessment and learning. When students are active, engaged, and critical assessors, they make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and use it for new learning. This is the regulatory process in metacognition. It occurs when students monitor their own learning and use the feedback from this monitoring to make adjustments, adaptations, and even major changes in what they understand.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING (SUMMATIVE)

Assessments of learning (summative) happen after a period of instruction to determine what learning occurred. They are conducted periodically, and information is used to evaluate student progress, and communicate the attainment of a learning outcome at the end of a learning period. Summative assessments are always preceded by in-class instruction, student practice, and formative feedback. Summative assessments are varied throughout the year with examples such as end of course tests, end of unit performance project, a learning exhibition, visual display, or a dramatic or musical performance. The focus of teaching should be on the formative assessment not the summative assessment. We also use external assessments that are evaluated outside of our school, such as the IB Diploma exams, PSAT and MAP adaptive tests.

For more information, please refer to the sections on differentiated learning, modification, and accommodations in the ECA Secondary School Student Support Manual.

ASSESSMENT: QUALITY EXPECTATIONS

Accurate and meaningful grades rely on quality teaching and assessment. One can not assess the skill or knowledge unless it has been taught in class and feedback has been provided. Teachers must ensure that every assessment that is used to determine level of achievement is a quality assessment. Quality assessments have the following five attributes:

1. CLEAR TARGETS

Teachers must have a clear understanding of both what is to be learned (the learning outcomes) and how well students are expected to demonstrate their learning (the performance criteria). These need to be communicated in understandable ways to students early in the learning process.

2. CLEAR PURPOSE

The purpose (for, as, and of learning) of every assessment must be clear and must be communicated to students.

3. APPROPRIATE TARGET-METHOD MATCH

This involves choosing the “right” assessment for the learning outcome(s) being assessed. For example, when assessing knowledge-level outcomes, selected response methods are both efficient and effective, but to assess skills or the application of knowledge, some method of performance assessment should be used. Primarily rote memorization assessments should be avoided.

4. APPROPRIATE SAMPLING

A critical principle is that overall achievement level should never be determined on the basis of one assessment or one type of assessment. There must be enough evidence, in quantity, variety, and validity, for teachers to provide the feedback students need and to make the judgements they need to make (i.e., determine grades). Teachers will have sufficient evidence when they are confident that one additional piece of evidence would simply confirm what they already know.

Sampling also involves drawing from a variety of assessment approaches. Assessment evidence should also be gathered by observations and conversations with students during the learning process, as well as from work samples and other products of learning.

5. AVOIDANCE OF BIAS AND DISTORTION

A number of variables can cause assessment results to be distorted. There may be concerns about student-specific issues (e.g., low reading skill, physical health, emotional setback), disturbances in the assessment setting (e.g., noise, lighting, temperature), and concerns with the assessment itself (e.g., clarity of wording of directions and questions, time available to complete). Teachers must be conscious of all the factors that can interfere with quality assessment, and attempt to avoid or mitigate them. If that is not possible, an alternative assessment opportunity should be provided.

GRADING

GRADING TERMINOLOGY

COMMON ASSESSMENTS

Assessments that are administered by more than one teacher to multiple students groupings.

CRITERION-REFERENCED ASSESSMENTS

An assessment designed to provide a measure of performance that is interpretable in terms of a clearly defined and delimited domain of learning tasks.

MARK SCHEME

A mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the assessment. It establishes set of parameters for scoring or rating students' performance on specific tasks.

Good mark schemes consist of a fixed measurement scale, a set of clear criteria, performance indicators for each criterion at each point on the scale, and sample responses that illustrate various levels of performance.

MODELS/ANCHORS

Samples of student work that clarify for the student what is required to be at to meet various levels of the assessed criteria.

MODERATION

Assessment moderation is a quality assurance process that ensures appropriate standards. It is a process for increasingly the probability that grades are awarded appropriately and consistently. It involves checking and reviewing mark schemes and the assessor judgments as well as cross-checking judgements across multiple examiners.

THE PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

The main purpose of any assessment is to allow students, teachers and administrators to reflect on student learning in order to set or maintain a direction that will promote student progress.

TEACHERS ARE EXPECTED TO USE ASSESSMENT RESULTS TO:

1. Provide regular and frequent feedback to students to improve their performance
2. Determine student's prior knowledge and skill level, strengths and weaknesses and adapt/differentiate instruction to match student needs
3. Determine which students require additional support or extension
4. Provide specific evidence to inform recordkeeping and reporting

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO USE ASSESSMENT RESULTS TO:

1. Develop the critical faculties to recognize quality work
2. Reflect about their level of skill and knowledge
3. Set goals about next steps in their learning
4. Develop positive and realistic appreciation

PARENTS ARE EXPECTED TO USE ASSESSMENT RESULTS TO:

1. Understand the purpose of various assessments
2. Understand their child's strengths, areas for growth and short-term goals
3. Recognize the performance of their child with grade level expectations
4. Understand evidence of their child's learning across disciplines

ADMINISTRATORS ARE EXPECTED TO USE ASSESSMENT RESULTS TO:

1. Collect data over time to examine trends within subjects and across grades
2. Evaluate current programs, consider the introduction of new programs, discontinue or deemphasize practices that are no longer productive or have proven ineffective
3. Plan for future professional development to build increased knowledge of effective practices and strengthen teaching repertoire
4. Compare the performance of students with those in other comparable schools

Process of Grading

1. Assessments and corresponding mark schemes are required to be developed in grade or subject teams. Summative assessments should be common assessments.
2. Students are provided access and instruction regarding the grading criteria. This step should also include access to models/exemplars.
3. Assessments, corresponding rubrics, and target completion date of the assessment must be communicated to students, parents, and administrators in designated areas (Google Drive, Assessment calendars, Schoology).
4. Peer moderation of summative assessments should occur within all subject/ grade teams.

Grading Methodology

Teachers will measure student learning by using criterion-referenced assessments, and aligned criterion referenced rubrics.

With criterion-referenced assessments, a student's performance is measured against a fixed set of predetermined criteria or learning standards. The criteria is explained with concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage. Criterion-referenced assessment and grading requires teachers, students, and parents to think differently about reporting symbols and what they communicate about achievement. Criterion-referenced assessment focuses on outcomes that describe what students are expected to know and be able to do at the end of a given unit and/ or grade level.

Use of Percentages By definition, criterion assessment does not include the use of percentages when grading. While a particular mark band in a criterion assessment may be converted into a percentage grade; the opposite does not occur.

Positive Grading Teachers are expected to grade by trying to determine what the student knows or is capable of doing rather what they are not.

REPORTING

Assessment and communication are part of the same process, with assessment arising from and leading naturally to communication. The root of the word “assessment” is from the Latin *assidere*, which means to sit beside. As teachers and students sit and work together, communication about the ongoing learning and thinking naturally occurs.

Habits and Attitudes toward Learning (HATL)

In the Secondary School, we provide feedback in two areas; the students’ approach to learning and their performance against standards-based criteria. Both sets of information are equally important. By separating HATL’s from academic performance reporting, we wish to communicate the high value we place on learning habits and at the same time increase clarity on students learning performance compared to learning habits. We also strive to provide explicit instruction and develop a clear understanding about the learning process. Our goal is to develop student independence so they will have the skills to take ownership over their own learning. To communicate these values, Habits and Attitudes toward Learning are featured predominantly on all ECA MS / HS report cards and are reported on in all assigned classes in the following areas: Organization, Engagement, and Collaboration. Teachers will “unpack” the HATLs rubric with students at the beginning of the school year, and then allow students to self-assess against the rubric periodically over the course of each semester. Teachers will then use the same rubric to assess students. Any major discrepancies between student self-assessment and teacher assessment of HATLs should be discussed in a teacher-student conference.

In addition to the HATLs, secondary students are encouraged in all classes to embody the IB Learner Profile. While this is not formally assessed, this language is used school-wide.

THE IB LEARNER PROFILE

INQUIRERS

They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

THINKERS

They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

PRINCIPLED

They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

OPEN-MINDED

They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take respon-

sibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

CARING

They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

RISK-TAKERS

They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

BALANCED

They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

REFLECTIVE

They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Narratives

Three times a year, students and parents will receive written narratives regarding academic and HATL learning.

Report Card Narratives (Habits and Attitudes toward Learning) Comments regarding habits and attitudes toward learning should be positive, constructive, and evidence based. Use of information from recorded observation or observational checklists are encouraged. Please avoid ambiguous statements such as “needs to try harder” or “more effort is required”.

Report Card Narratives (Academic): This section of the report card narrative is not designed to communicate information about students habits and attitudes toward learning. Report card narratives are designed to report on student growth and progress.

The narrative must have the following:

- The name of the student
- Student Growth (how much student improved)
- Student Progress (how much further student has to go to reach the performance criteria)

Growth: Growth is the increase in learning that has occurred from the beginning of an instructional period to the current reporting event. Growth is measured in terms of the gains made by a student from a baseline assessment to the most recent assessment. Report card narratives focus on the improvement that has occurred rather than how far short of the assessment criteria or standard that student has fallen.

For example, if we describing a child’s height, we might say that Chris is now 135 centimetres and that he has grown five centimetres in the past year. When describing the growth in Chris’ height, we are not concerned with a “standard” height that we expect him to reach.

In the classroom context, using developmental continua can facilitate a description of a student’s growth. For example, in an ELL class, the teacher might have observed in October that Jose was able to use letter sounds to read unfamiliar words in texts. In December, the teacher noted that Jose was now able to recognize these words (increased vocabulary) and has increased in fluency. When communicating these observations to the parents, the teacher would be focusing on the growth that has occurred.

Progress: Progress is measured backwards from a desired end point, such as end-of-year outcomes. Just as we describe our progress on a journey in terms of how far we are from our destination (e.g., “We’re 100 kilometres away from Vancouver now”), we measure progress in relation to an agreed-upon or known standard. When describing Chris’ height, we would say he is 135 centimetres and needs to grow another five centimetres before he can ride in the car without a booster seat. In a non-Native Spanish class, if one of the known end-of-year outcomes in a writing is that the student can choose language (word choices and sentence patterns) that has a definite impact on the reader, the teacher might report to the parents in March that their child is now able to choose language that has some impact on the reader. This kind of information helps the student and parents understand what needs to be done in order to reach the standard.

Report Card Narrative (Format): Narratives must be written in professional English or Spanish (Spanish Native Language Classes) and be positive in nature. Full sentences must be used, and grammar and punctuation must be accurate. Total length of the narrative should not exceed 1000 characters. Goals must be specific and provide guidance to students and families regarding student growth and progress. Report Card narratives may include a brief summary of the class’s learning focus for the term; this is optional at the teacher’s discretion. If a summary is included, it must be no longer than one sentence. Comments must be reviewed by a peer editor before the final report card is reviewed by the divisional principal.

HATL CATEGORIES:

HATL DESCRIPTORS:

Organization
Engagement
Collaboration

HATL PROFICIENCY LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

EXEMPLARY: Consistently demonstrates this habit/attitude

PROFICIENT: Usually demonstrates this habit/attitude

DEVELOPING: Sometimes demonstrates this habit/attitude

EMERGING: Rarely demonstrates this habit/attitude

Please note that if a student is likely to have receive an EMERGING on the progress or report card, parent communication and interventions should have occurred.

Grading Scale

The Secondary School will use criterion-referenced assessments to determine the descriptor that best matches the student academic performance for the report period. Teachers will construct specific descriptors for individual assessments and after marking, determine what best represent student performance against these grade descriptors. **Therefore, the general descriptors below represent characteristics of performance used for final reporting only.**

ECA Grade Scale, grades 6-10:

The following descriptors are from the IB MYP program

Grade	Descriptor
7	<p>Always produces work of an excellent quality by fully meeting specific subject criteria</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation where appropriate.</p> <p>The student consistently demonstrates originality and insight and always produces work of high quality.</p>
6	<p>Always produces work of high quality and meets subject specific criteria.</p> <p>A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them in a wide variety of situations.</p> <p>Consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation where appropriate.</p> <p>The student generally demonstrates originality and insight.</p>
5	<p>Usually produces work of a high quality and meets most specific subject criteria.</p> <p>A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them in a variety of situations.</p> <p>The student generally shows evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation where appropriate and occasionally demonstrates originality and insight.</p>
4	<p>Usually produces work of a satisfactory quality and meets some of the specific subject criteria.</p> <p>A good general understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them effectively in normal situations.</p> <p>There is occasional evidence of the skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation.</p>
3	<p>Produces work of an inconsistent quality but there is some attempt at meeting specific subject criteria.</p> <p>Limited achievement against most of the objectives, or clear difficulties in some areas.</p> <p>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.</p>
2	<p>Generally produces work of poor quality and does not meet specific subject criteria.</p> <p>Very limited achievement against objectives.</p> <p>The student has difficulty in understanding the required knowledge and skills, and is unable to apply them fully in normal situations, even with support.</p>
1	<p>None of the standards above have been reached</p>

**Each academic discipline has elaborate descriptors that further define each level of performance relative to their courses. This information can be found on the ECA website or the School Google Drive.

Reporting Timeline 2017-2018

Semester 1

August 14, 2017	Semester 1 Begins.
October 16, 2017	ALL REPORTS ARE DUE BY 4:00 pm.
October 20, 2017	Progress Reports published.
October 26, 2017	Student - Parent- Teacher Conferences.
December 15, 2017	Semester 1 Ends.
January 8, 2018	ALL REPORTS ARE DUE BY 11:59 pm. Gradebook frozen.
January 12, 2018	Report cards issued.

Semester 2

January 8, 2018	Semester 2 Begins.
March 12, 2018	ALL REPORTS ARE DUE BY 11:59 pm. Gradebook frozen.
March 16, 2018	Progress Reports published.
March 20, 2018	Student - Teacher - Parent Conferences.
June 1, 2018	ALL Grade 6-8 REPORTS ARE DUE BY 11:59 pm. Gradebook frozen.
June 6, 2018	All HS grades due by noon.
June 9, 2018	Report cards issued.

Reporting: Specific Issues

ECA Grade Scale, grades 6-10:

Bonus marks or extra credit is defined as providing individual students the opportunity to improve grades by engaging in additional assignments that are not aligned to the unit assessment criterion. Teachers engaging in this practice will be reminded that this is against ECA's understanding of best practice in regards to assessment. Repeated use of this practice would indicate a lack of professional ability/willingness to adhere to a vital professional duty at ECA.

Homework

Homework should be considered practice (formative assessment) to support the instruction and learning occurring in the classroom. All homework needs to be aligned with [ECA Homework policy](#):

- The assignment is directly tied to and is an outgrowth of classroom instruction.
- The assignment is clear and well-defined.
- Homework is meaningful and has a purpose such as practice or review.
- The assignment is able to be completed by the student independently.
- As per ECA school policy, homework is not assigned over holidays.
- Homework will not be counted as a part of the academic grade.

ECA Group Work (Assessing)

The assessment of individual members contribution to a final group product is difficult. If the group work is assessed for grading, it does not seem fair/accurate if all the members are awarded the same grade without considering their individual input. If evidence is not gathered about the learning and contribution by individual students, individual performance is not known and cannot be assessed. Careful consideration and planning must be undertaken before awarding performance grades to a group project.

Missing Evidence/Assessments

We do not average grades at ECA, and do not assign zeros for missing work. The alternative to the use of zeros is to simply leave a blank space in the grade book for missing or tainted evidence. When it is time to determine grades, decide whether there is enough evidence to make the necessary determination of a grade. If there is sufficient evidence, the grade should be determined on the basis of the available evidence. If there is insufficient evidence, then the grade should be recorded as an "I" for "Incomplete" or "Insufficient evidence."

If it is determined that there is insufficient evidence in order to make a professional judgment regarding academic performance, then there is a withholding of course credit until sufficient assignments are complete. Both teachers and students work together to develop an understanding that academic work must be completed and students cannot "just take a zero".

Parent Teacher Student Conferences (Grades 6 - 8)

Conferencing is an important part of the communication and report process. Grades 6 - 8 conferences involve students as a way to improve communication and to have students understanding their responsibility as learners. A Student led conference will occur each spring.

Submission of Late Work

When assessing work, the teacher needs to distinguish between performance and habits and attitudes towards learning. Penalizing students for submission of late work can lead to false reporting of a student's academic performance. It is not appropriate to use assessment feedback as a discipline tool or to "teach responsibility".

However, assessments should be done in a controlled, authentic environment that is consistent for all students. Therefore, assessments that are given extensive time extensions can also lead to an inaccurate reporting of a student's academic ability. If the aim of the assessment task is to gauge performance of a skill at a moment in time (usually as part of a formal exam or with work that is otherwise concluding before moving on to subsequent units of study), only what work is completed by the due date may be considered for purposes of assessment feedback.

The critical question to ask when determining how to deal with late work is if the deadline is an organizational or assessment consideration. In most cases, submitting late work would be included in the HATLs grade.

Use of Mark Bands or Fractions

When assessing work, the teacher or group should look to find the holistic best fit rather than create fractions between the mark bands. For example, three out of four criterion was best described by mark band 5 and one of the four as best described in mark band 3. The overall mark should be a 5 not a fraction or percentage grade.

Most Recent Performance

When using your professional judgement in determining a final report card grade, preference should be given to the most recent performance, particularly when this corresponds to progress.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

In the high school only, a grade point average will be calculated for the purposes of university reporting and honor rolls. GPAs will be calculated with final semester marks only and are cumulative. GPAs are calculated

Grade	GPA equivalent
7	4.33
6	4.00
5	3.00
4	2.00
3	1.00
2	0.67
1	0.00

** For year 11 and 12 students, an additional weight of 1.00 will be added to up to three courses maximum when taken as IB Higher Level subjects.



Final Calle La Cinta
Las Mercedes
Caracas | Venezuela

www.ecak12.com
+(58)-212-993-3922

© 2016 Escuela Campo Alegre. All Rights Reserved.