

International Scholars Academy Primary Years Assessment Policy

Philosophy of Assessment

The ISA mission is to enable scholars to excel academically while maintaining the values of Islam and proficiency with the Arabic language. The Academy endeavors to provide a caring, challenging and supportive learning environment where our scholars achieve their highest potential while exhibiting civic responsibility and multicultural appreciation. ISA's mission statement is in alignment with the IB mission. Our philosophy on assessment is that we follow the IB PYP standards and practices at ISA to ensure that all scholars are engaged in a meaningful educational experience. The assessment cycle at ISA provides opportunities for scholars to develop and refine voice, choice, and ownership during their educational experiences. Although we are a private IB World School and we are not required to follow the state standards, our scholars at times may attend local schools therefore our curriculum is aligned with the Common Core state standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and the Virginia Standards of Learning. We believe in including scholars, teachers, and parents in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress toward learning outcomes.

The Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of assessment at International Scholars Academy is to improve student learning, to provide information on student learning, and to respond to the needs of our scholars. Assessment is the ongoing process of gathering evidence for and of learning. This evidence will be used to give recognition and timely feedback to the learners and all stakeholders. Stakeholders will be informed about the assessment policy through our school website, information sessions, the school newsletter, the annual student handbook, and parent teacher conferences. Assessments will reflect best practices that support the learner and the teacher in the promotion of student achievement.

Objectives of Assessments

The aim of assessments is to provide a supportive and positive mechanism that helps scholars to improve their learning, teachers to improve their teaching and contribute to the efficacy of the program. It also provides information on student learning to parents, administrators, and stakeholders.

Assessment is planned at the start of the unit and demonstrates clear links between the assessment tasks and all components of the planner (central idea, lines of inquiry, key concepts), teacher and student questions, learning activities as well as alignment to PYP scope and sequence and standards.

Assessment is an integral part of all teaching and learning. It is central to the PYP goal of thoughtfully and effectively guiding scholars through the five essential elements (the acquisition of knowledge, the understanding of concepts, the mastering of skills, the development of Learner Profiles, and the decision to take action).

International Scholars Academy recognizes the importance of assessing the process of inquiry as well as the products of inquiry. Scholars and teachers are actively engaged in assessing the scholars' progress as a part of the development of their wider critical thinking and self-assessment skills.

Effective assessments for scholars address:

- The five essential elements: knowledge, concepts, approaches to learning, learner profile, and action.
- Scholars as an active part of their learning giving them voice, choice, and ownership
- Scholars reflecting on their actions and self-regulating
- Scholars applying their understanding of concepts at a higher level through the construction of their projects and at play
- Scholars know in advance the criteria for producing a quality product or performance
- Scholars engaged in various stages of learning including thinking, planning, modifying, and creating including the development of some of the assessment activities and tools (such as rubrics).
- Scholars analyzing and understanding their learning and what needs to be improved
- Scholars initiating action by reflecting on their own learning and planning.
- Scholars involvement in active discussion, questioning, and being self-directed
- Scholars creating as opposed to passively receiving
- Scholars mastery and expertise

Effective assessments for teachers address:

- The need for a written assessment policy practiced in school that will be constantly evolving to reflect the assessment needs of the school and to understand and develop appropriate assessment criteria
- Ongoing assessments of every stage of the teaching and learning process
- Scholars performance and progress which can be reviewed collaboratively
- The use of varied strategies and tools including pre and post assessment tasks, ongoing formative assessments leading to an action to determine what scholars know and understand
- Inclusion of peer and self-assessment where appropriate
- The use of evidence provided by the teacher that can be effectively reported and understood by the whole school community
- Differentiation needs
- Child's learning and development, while supporting the child's learning needs

Effective assessments for stakeholders' address:

- The standards of the IB
- The standards set by the Common Core, Next Generation Science Standards, Virginia Standards of Learning, and ACTFL Standards.
- The use of assessment as a measure to determine the effectiveness of curriculum delivery
- Building a community of teachers and learners striving for excellence

The assessment components in the school's curriculum can itself be divided into three closely related areas:

- Assessing how we discover what the scholars know and have learned
- Recording how we choose to collect and analyze data
- Reporting how we choose to communicate information

Assessing: How we discover what the scholars know and have learned

The assessment of student development and learning is an essential component of the curriculum, and helps to inform continued development, learning and teaching. Scholars are observed in a variety of situations and a wide range of assessment strategies are implemented through on-going formative and summative assessments.

At International Scholars Academy our scholars are assessed through many different types of formative assessments throughout the unit or learning process. Formative assessments are interwoven with daily learning. These assessments provide information that is used in order to plan the next stage of learning. It helps teachers and scholars find out what the scholars already know and can do.

Formative Assessments

Formative assessments aim to promote learning by giving regular and frequent feedback throughout the learning process. The process helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding, to foster self-motivation and enthusiasm for learning, to engage in thoughtful reflection, to develop a capacity for self-assessment, and to recognize criteria for success. There is strong evidence that increased use of formative assessment particularly helps those scholars who are low achievers make significant improvements in their understanding

Summative Assessments

Summative Assessments aim to give teachers and scholars a clear insight into scholars' understanding. Summative assessment is the culmination of the teaching and learning process, giving the scholars opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned. When scholars are given the opportunity throughout the unit to be actively engaged in the various stages of learning through formative assessment and are given the freedom to overcome challenges through trial and error or experimentation, then summative assessment can provide a real measure of mastery. It can assess several elements simultaneously therefore informing and leading to improvement in student learning and the teaching process.

Recording: How we choose to collect and analyze data

Assessments in the classroom include:

- collecting evidence of scholars' understanding and thinking through checklists, inventories, and narrative descriptions.
- documenting learning processes of groups and individuals
- engaging scholars in reflecting on their learning
- scholars assessing work produced by themselves and by others
- developing clear rubrics
- identifying exemplary work
- keeping a record of tests/task results
- performance/project assessment which include role-play, presentation, demonstration, problem solving, response to challenges, action or service to others
- written test performance
- oral test performance
- quiz response
- behavior over time (i.e. multiple observations)
- approaches to learning (social, research, thinking, communication, and self-management skills)
- open-ended tasks

Assessment Tools

Rubrics

A rubric is an established set of criteria for rating scholars in all areas. The descriptors tell the assessor what characteristics or signs to look for in scholars' work and then how to rate that work on a predetermined scale. Rubrics at times are developed by scholars. The rubrics are used in all formative and summative assessments.

Exemplars

Exemplars are samples of scholars' work that serve as concrete standards against which other samples are judged. Generally, there is a benchmark for each achievement level in a scoring rubric. Teachers are encouraged to set benchmarks that are appropriate and usable within the unit context.

Checklists

These are lists of information, data, attributes or elements that are presented.

Anecdotal Records

Anecdotal records are brief notes based on the observation of students. “Learning stories” are focused, extended observations that can be analyzed later.

Continuums

These are visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show the progression of achievement or identify the scholar’s current developmental stage in the learning process.

Reporting: How do we communicate information?

Reporting on assessment at International Scholars Academy includes communicating what scholars know, understand, and can do. Reporting involves parents, scholars and teachers as partners, and is honest, comprehensive, and understandable to all stakeholders.

International Scholars Academy reports to parents throughout the year: two report cards, two written reports (one for each semester), and two conferences. The first conference held, in November, is a three-way or parent teacher conference used to establish goals for the scholars and the second one that is held in February is a student-led conference to highlight the scholar’s development through their individual growth portfolio.

Reporting to parents, scholars, and teachers occur through:

- Parent Information Sessions
- Newsletters and emails
- PowerSchool (on-line grading system)
- On-line ongoing reporting to parents (see below)
- Report Cards
- Three Way Conferences (formal meeting sessions led by scholars with the support from teachers to share their learning with their parents).
- Student-Led Conferences (a meeting in which the scholar displays and explains their portfolio taking the parent through the entire learning process in the unit).
- Parent-Teacher Meetings (meetings between parent and teachers to report on the learning of the student. PYP Approaches to learning are reported through a continuum, while all the other components may be covered through written comments or communicated through other ways.
- Class Assemblies
- School Events (Throughout the school year many events like the Science Exhibition, Art Exhibition, Field Day, National Spelling Bee, Arabic Poetry Competition, Quran Competition and other events demonstrate a scholar’s journey through the PYP and also depict the knowledge they have acquired in all disciplines.
- Portfolios (A portfolio is a collection of work selected by scholars and teachers and is a record of scholar’s involvement in learning. It is designed to demonstrate growth, thinking skills, creativity, assessment strategies, and reflection. Portfolios celebrate scholars’ learning through the PYP showing the holistic development of the child, both within and

outside the Program of Inquiry in all disciplines. Portfolios enable scholars to reflect with teachers, parents, and peers in order to identify their strengths and areas of improvement throughout the year).

- MAP Growth Report-computer adaptive test that is used to determine what the scholar knows and is ready to learn next.
- The PYP Exhibition (see below)

Online Ongoing Reporting:

- Learning objectives should be planned at the start of each unit and should demonstrate clear links between the assessment tasks and all the components of the planner including the central idea and lines of inquiry, key concepts, teacher and student questions, and learning activities
- Teacher comments should be written to inform and direct future learning
- Where possible teacher comments should include learner profile and Approaches to Learning
- Parents need to be informed when new assessment criteria are posted or go live. This can be communicated through email, newsletter, or through notifications on PowerSchool .
- Collaborative grade level teams discuss and decide when learning objectives and comments should be posted for each unit.

The PYP Exhibition

Scholars in the final year of PYP carry out an extended, collaborative inquiry approach-the PYP Exhibition. This will take place at the end of the school year. One of the purposes of the PYP Exhibition is to provide a forum for student driven reporting. Other key purposes include the following:

- For scholars to engage and report on an in-depth, collaborative inquiry
- To provide scholars with an opportunity to demonstrate independence and responsibility for their learning
- To provide scholars with multiple perspectives of their topics
- For scholars to synthesize and apply their learning of previous years, and to reflect on their journey through the PYP.
- To provide authentic process of assessing scholars understanding
- To demonstrate how scholars can take action as a result of their learning
- To unite the scholars, teachers, parents, and other members of the school community in a collaborative experience that incorporates the essential elements of the PYP to MYP education

School Plan for Reporting Assessment Cycle

| | Semester 1 Report | Semester 2 Report |
|--------------|---|--|
| KG | Report Card Portfolios PowerSchool on-line Gradebook ATLs Three Way Conferences Report on UOI/PYP Learner Profile DRA | Report Card Portfolios PowerSchool on-line Gradebook ATLs Student-Led Conferences Report on UOI/PYP Learner Profile DRA |
| First Grade | Report Card PowerSchool on-line gradebook DRA Portfolios Three Way Conferences Report on UOI/PYP ATL's Learner Profile MAP Growth | Report Card PowerSchool on-line gradebook DRA Portfolios Student-Led Conferences Report on UOI/PYP ATL's Learner Profile Map Growth |
| Second Grade | Report Card PowerSchool on-line gradebook Portfolios Student-led Conferences Report on UOI/PYP ATLs Learner Profile DRA MAP Growth | Report Card PowerSchool on-line gradebook Portfolios Student-led Conferences Report on UOI/PYP ATLs Learner Profile DRA MAP Growth |

| | | |
|--------------|--|---|
| Third Grade | Report Card PowerSchool on-line gradebook Portfolios Student-Led Conferences Report on UOI/PYP ATLs Learner Profile DRA MAP Growth | Report Card PowerSchool on-line gradebook Portfolios Student-Led Conferences Report on UOI/PYP ATLs Learner Profile DRA MAP Growth |
| Fourth Grade | Report Card PowerSchool on-line gradebook Portfolios Student-Led Conferences Report on UOI/PYP ATLs Learner Profile DRA MAP Growth | Report Card PowerSchool on-line gradebook Portfolios Student-Led Conferences Report on UOI/PYP ATLs Learner Profile DRA MAP Growth |
| Fifth Grade | Report Card PowerSchool on-line gradebook Portfolios Three Way Conferences Report on UOI ATLs Learner Profile DRA MAP Growth | Report Card PowerSchool on-line gradebook Portfolios Student-Led Conferences Report on UOI/PYP ATLs Learner Profile PYP Exhibition DRA MAP Growth |

Grading Scale

Elementary School Division K-5th Grade

| Rating | General Description |
|--------|--|
| 4 | Demonstrates understanding beyond grade level standards consistently and independently. The scholar can teach others with confidence and competence; or provide demonstration-quality work products. |
| 3 | Demonstrates understanding of grade level standards consistently and independently. The scholar products demonstrate understanding of the concepts or perform skills without coaching, mentoring or other supervision. |
| 2 | Demonstrates partial understanding of grade level standards with or without support. The scholar products demonstrate understanding of the concepts or perform skills only with support or mentoring. |
| 1 | Demonstrates minimal (or no) understanding and does not meet grade level standards even with support. The scholar participates but demonstrates no understanding; or ability or willingness to perform skills. |

Revision and Re-Submit Policy

Scholars and parents can request the opportunity to redo an assignment or test within 5 school days of receiving notification of the grade.

Learning Support Needs

Learning Support Needs are identified with the various assessments in collaboration with the homeroom teachers and special education department. The inclusion model is used at International Scholars Academy, so the learning support staff works in collaboration with the homeroom teacher to differentiate instruction and provide support. External referrals may be made when necessary.

The Special Education Department at International Scholars Academy operates on ethical principles, practice standards, and professional policies in ways that respect the diverse needs and characteristics of our student body and school community.

Our aim is to provide tailored, individualized, and culturally responsive learning environments. We use culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments and procedures which accurately measure scholars' aptitudes and abilities to maximize the outcomes of individuals with learning difficulties and special needs. We use periodic assessments and strategic interventions to monitor our scholars' progress on a quarterly basis identifying tangible, evidence-based goals.

The Special Education Department works in close cooperation with parents, informing them of their educational rights and safeguards as well as advising them of available resources. Special Education at ISA actively seeks parent/guardian knowledge about their children when planning and evaluating special education services empowering families as partners in the educational process.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty means that scholars engage in the inquiry process as principled learners and critical thinkers who respect the ideas of others.

Scholars will learn:

- The importance of crediting different sources when exploring a range of perspectives
- The use of key words to research efficiently
- How to highlight, take notes, paraphrase, and summarize
- How to think critically about the validity of sources
- How to cite sources
- The difference between fact and opinion
- What constitutes plagiarism

Scholars should take initiative in being academically honest and pride in their own accomplishments as they apply their understanding, knowledge, skills, and approaches to learning into an action or project. In confirmation with the school's Academic Honesty Policy, the policy defines academic dishonesty as the following:

1. Plagiarism-Intentional or unintentional presentation of another person's intellectual property or work as your own, without crediting the source or material. Even material that has been paraphrased in the scholar's own words is considered plagiarized material unless proper credit or explicit reference is given.
2. Self-plagiarism, double dipping, dovetailing-Submission of one's own work that has been prepared for another course without fair citation of the original work prior approval of faculty. This work will have had to have been previously submitted for a grade.
3. Fabrication-Falsification or invention of any information, citation, data, or document

4. Unauthorized Assistance-use of materials or information not authorized by the faculty member to complete an academic exercise, or the completion of an academic exercise by another student
5. Copyright Infringement-use of copyrighted works without appropriate legal license or permission
6. Collusion -involves supporting malpractice by another student, as in deliberately allowing your own work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another student.

Consequences to Academic Dishonesty

*First step for all infractions is for the teacher and scholar to discuss the infraction

- First infraction: The scholar will sit with their teacher to better understand plagiarism and reinforce the understanding of academic honesty. The scholar will need to re-submit/ redo assignment or assessment work.
- Second Infraction: The scholar will sit with their teacher to better understand plagiarism and reinforce the understanding of academic honesty. Scholars will need to re-submit/ redo assignment or assessment work for half credit. The scholar's parents will be notified of the infraction.
- Third Infraction: The scholar will meet with the assistant principal, parents, and teacher to discuss the infraction along with academic honesty concerns and will receive no credit for the assignment.