



LAMAR ACADEMY ASSESSMENT POLICY

PHILOSOPHY

The Lamar Academy recognizes that teaching, learning and assessment are fundamentally interdependent. A fair and consistent assessment policy will effectively reflect student progress, will help students improve habits and performance, and will promote confidence in the standards and curriculum objectives of the program. Assessment is designed to improve student learning through a comprehensive and academic rigorous program of studies.

- Assessment is anchored in authentic tasks.
- Assessment utilizes a balanced range of strategies for formative and summative tasks.
- Assessment will be formative (for learning) to assist students in building understanding, skills and knowledge to become lifelong learners.
- Assessment will also be summative to evaluate student knowledge and application.
- Timely, specific, and supportive feedback is central to all learning and level of achievement.
- Students should have a wide variety of different authentic assessment opportunities (written assignments, oral presentations, field work, practical work, exhibitions, performances, tests and examinations, research papers, peer and self-assessment) utilizing technology and community resources.
- Students should have an active role in peer and self-assessment.
- Reflection is an essential process of self-assessment and enhances global understanding.

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Formative Assessment

Through a variety of methods, ongoing and regular assessment will be used during the teaching and learning process to inform teachers and students about how the learning is developing. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked and provide feedback that is responsive to student needs and informs teaching practice.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment happens at the end of the teaching and learning process or experience and is planned for in advance. The summative assessment should inform approaches to teaching and learning, and is designed so that students can demonstrate their learning in authentic contexts and apply it in new ways. Assessment tasks should reflect the objectives and assessment criteria of the Middle Years Programme or the Diploma Programme and may take a variety of forms: tests, examinations, projects, lab reports, essays, presentations, etc.

ASSESSMENT AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The curriculum cycle begins and ends with assessment, and it is used as one measure to determine the effectiveness of curriculum delivery. Assessment in conjunction with teacher and student reflection is one of many curriculum development tools used to review the effectiveness of teaching strategies and materials.

Standardized Tests

Students at Lamar Academy take all state and local mandated tests.

Assessment Guidelines

The school district requires that teachers have a minimum of seven (7) assessments per six week grading period to constitute the student's course grade for that grading period. These assessments must minimally be composed of three major grades (valued at 60%) and four minor grades (valued at 30%). For every 3 week progress report period, teachers must report at least three assessments, with at least one of them being a major grade. Examples of assignments used per category include the following:

| Major Assessments (60%) | Minor Assessments (30%) | Separate Category (10%) |
|--|---|---|
| exam test project term paper presentation portfolio | quiz journal lab state benchmark | homework class work participation |

Grade Reporting

The school district requires that progress reports be sent out three weeks into each six week grading period, at the end of each six week grading period, and at the end of each semester. Semester grades are calculated by averaging the three six weeks' grades and the final exam grade. The passing standard is 70% and ½ credit is given for each semester passed by the student.

Assessment Re-takes

McAllen ISD requires a student earning a failing grade in a major assessment to be given a reasonable opportunity for re-taking or re-submitting the assessment in compliance with the following guidelines:

Exams

- The student must attend tutoring or re-teaching classes prior to making up an exam.
- The student will earn a maximum grade of 70 on the re-test.

Other Major Assessments

- The student will be given three additional days to re-do a failing major assessment.
- The student will earn a maximum grade of 70 on the re-done assessment.
- If an assessment is not submitted by the specified deadline, the student will have three days to submit the assessment, with a 10 point/day penalty assigned.
- If an assessment is not submitted by the specified deadline due to excused absences, the student will have up to three days, based on number of days absent, to submit the assessment without any penalties assigned.

Minor Assessments and Daily Home work and Class work

Because McAllen ISD specifies re-takes only for Major Assessments:

- Failing minor assessments are not included in these provisions.
- Failing daily home work and class work assignments are not included in these provisions.

Final Examinations and Exemptions

Lamar Academy follows all district guidelines and policies in regard to final examinations and exemptions. Exemptions from final examinations are based on student attendance and course grades. The purpose of the exemption regulation is to motivate students to maintain passing grades and attend school on a regular basis.

Core courses include: English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies. Courses other than those listed as core subjects are considered to be Electives.

Exemption Qualifications:

| Grade Level | Cohort (Year student entered 9 th Grade) | Exemptions Allowed by Semester | |
|------------------|---|--|--|
| | | FALL | SPRING |
| 9 th | 2017-2018 | 1 Non-EOC Core 1 Elective (Except AP Courses) | 1 Core (Including AP Courses) 1 Elective |
| 10 th | 2016-2017 | 1 Non-EOC Core (Except AP Courses) 2 Electives | 1 Core (Including AP Courses) 2 Electives |
| 11 th | 2015-2016 | 2 Core (Except EOC U.S. History and AP/IB/DE courses) All Electives | 2 Core (Including AP Courses) All Electives |
| 12 th | 2014-2015 | All Core (Except AP/IB/DE Courses) All Electives | All |

| Semester Average | | Attendance |
|------------------|-----|---------------------|
| 70-74 | AND | 0 absences |
| 75-79 | AND | 0 - 1 absences |
| 80-89 | AND | 2 or fewer absences |
| 90-100 | AND | 3 or fewer absences |

GRADING IN THE MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME

Assessment in the Middle Years Programme is criterion referenced, which means that teachers measure students' achievement against specified subject criteria rather than against other individuals in the class. For each criterion there is a range of points awarded, based on student performance at the time of assessment. Each criterion has a descriptor that explains as clearly as possible what each student has been able to achieve. When the points for each criterion are added up, the student's overall score falls within a point range, which equates to an IB grade that may range from 1-7.

GRADING SCALES AND DESCRIPTORS

Subject group guides include information on assessment according to the subject group objectives and the use of the corresponding assessment criteria.

Grade Reporting

Middle Years Programme grades (1-7) are reported to students and parents through a separate grade report mailed out at the end of each school year. This report indicates the grade obtained for each MYP subject, which is based on assessed criteria, and reflects achievement based on the descriptors that accompany the 7 point scale.

| Grade | Descriptor |
|-------|--|
| 7 | Produces high-quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations. |
| 6 | Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence. |
| 5 | Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom, and, with support, some unfamiliar real-world situations. |
| 4 | Produces good quality work. Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations. |
| 3 | Produces work of an acceptable quality. Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally significant misunderstandings or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking. Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations. |
| 2 | Produces work of limited quality. Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills |
| 1 | Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and skills. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills. |

Additionally, to accommodate state and local requirements, traditional percentage grades, 0-100, will be given on all assignments and student averages are reported at three week, six week and semester intervals.

MYP Assessment

Students and parents are made aware of the IB assessment criteria by:

- New Student Orientation during the fall of the 9th grade
- Mail-out to 9th grade parents during first semester of the 9th grade year
- Presentations to 10th grade parents on the Personal Project in the fall of the 10th grade.
- Mail out to 10th grade parents at midpoint of the Personal Project.
- Teacher produced syllabi explaining specific course requirements and assessments
- Teacher provided information regarding requirements for specific assessments
- Postings on the Lamar Academy website

GRADING IN THE DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

Assessment in the IB Diploma Programme is guided by the IB goals and the guidelines specified in the course guides for each specific subject. Additionally, to accommodate state and local requirements, traditional percentage grades, 1-100, will be given on all assignments and student averages are reported at three week, six week and semester intervals.

IB Assessments

IB assessments are criterion related which means that the method of assessment judges each student in relation to identified standards and criteria for each subject area, not against other students' performance.

Students and parents are made aware of the IB assessment criteria by:

- New Student Orientation during the summer before 11th grade
- New DP parents and students meeting at the beginning of the 11th grade year
- Mail-out to 11th grade parents during first semester of the 11th grade year
- Teacher produced syllabi explaining specific course requirements and assessments
- Teacher provided information regarding requirements for specific assessments
- Postings on the Lamar Academy website

Internal Assessments

Prior to the beginning of the school year, Diploma Programme teachers meet to create the annual assessment calendar to ensure that the various Internal Assessments are spread throughout the year, giving students ample opportunity to complete all Internal Assessment requirements within the specified timelines.

Internal Assessments are required components that make up a percentage of the student's overall IB score in each subject. Teachers instruct students on proper procedures regarding completion of the Internal Assessment, including determining whether or not group work is permitted.

Teachers mark individual pieces of work using specific mark bands and the practice of "best fit" against the criteria in the mark bands.

Teachers submit their Internal Assessment grades to the IB Coordinator no later than April 1 so that they can be sent to IB. IB then selects a sample of the Internal Assessments to moderate. This sample is uploaded on IBIS so that the assigned moderator will mark the Internal Assessments, evaluating the teacher's application of the grading rubrics. The level of agreement between the moderator and the teacher regarding grade assignment determines the grades for all students submitting an Internal Assessment for the course.

External Assessments

External Assessment refers to work that is conducted and overseen by teachers or proctors, and then graded externally by IB appointed examiners. IB exams in May of the junior or senior year are the primary means of external assessment.

IB Exam dates are determined by IB every year. These dates are adhered to by Lamar Academy and are set. Students taking other examinations, such as AP exams, must schedule those exams around the set IB exam schedule.

The IB Exam schedule is shared with students at the beginning of the year so that they can begin to plan, with the counselor, any alternative testing arrangements for other exams.

The IB Exam schedule is published on the Lamar Academy website to inform parents and students.

External Assessments also include work such as the Extended Essay, Studies in Language and Literature and Language Acquisition written assignments and the TOK essay. Dates for these external assessments are included in the annual assessment calendar and are determined through agreement by DP teachers and consideration of IB established deadlines for submission of these components.

Predicted Grades

The Predicted Grade is the teacher's prediction of the grade the candidate is expected to achieve in the subject, based on all of the evidence of the candidate's work and the teacher's knowledge of the IB standards.

Individual teachers may, but are not required, to inform students of their predicted grades for the course. The IB Coordinator or Head of School at Lamar Academy will not release predicted grades to students or parents. Teachers are required to submit Predicted Grades to the IB Diploma Programme Coordinator no later than April 1.

Predicted Grades may be used:

- by the IBO in grade award meetings when considering a subject's grade distributions and the performance of individual candidates
- by the IBO as a basis for review of student work if the awarded grade varies significantly from the predicted grade
- by Lamar Academy as an evaluation tool of teacher comprehension of the requirements and standards of their course

GRADING SCALES AND DESCRIPTORS

IB Grading Scale

The grade descriptors across subjects are quite similar, but are specific to the requirements of each subject. The grade descriptors are intended to help teachers explain the academic requirements of the IB diploma programme to students, undertake formative assessment, report progress and prepare predicted grades. The specific grade descriptors for each subject group and the core can be found on the IBO website: IB Diploma Programme Grade Descriptors (for use from September 2014/January 2015).

The URL is <http://ibo.org/contentassets/0b0b7a097ca2498ea50a9e41d9e1d1cf/dp-grade-descriptors-en.pdf>

Sample Grade Descriptors for Group 1: Studies in Language and Literature

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| 7 | Demonstrates excellent understanding and appreciation of the interplay between form and content in regard to the question or task; responses that may be convincing, detailed, independent in analysis, synthesis and evaluation; highly developed levels of expression, both orally and in writing; very good degree of accuracy and clarity; very good awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; very effective structure with relevant textual detail to support a critical engagement with the thoughts and feelings expressed in the work(s). |
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| | |
|---|---|
| 6 | Demonstrates very good understanding and appreciation of the interplay between form and content in regard to the question or task; responses that are, mainly, convincing, as well as detailed and independent to some degree, in analysis, synthesis and evaluation; well-developed levels of expression, both orally and in writing; good degree of accuracy and clarity; good awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; effective structure with relevant textual detail to support a critical engagement with the thoughts and feelings expressed in the work(s). |
| 5 | Demonstrates good understanding and appreciation of the interplay between form and content in regard to the question or task; responses that offer generally considered and valid analysis, synthesis and / or evaluation; good levels of expression, both orally and in writing; adequate degree of accuracy and clarity; awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; clear structure with relevant textual detail to support an engagement with the thoughts and feelings expressed in the work(s). |
| 4 | Demonstrates adequate knowledge and understanding of the question or task; responses that are generally valid in analysis and / or synthesis; satisfactory powers of expression, both orally and in writing; only some lapses in accuracy and clarity; some awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/ reader; a basic structure within which the thoughts and feelings of the work(s) are explored. |
| 3 | Demonstrates some knowledge and some understanding of the question or task; responses that are only sometimes valid and / or appropriately detailed; some appropriate powers of expression, both orally and in writing; lapses in accuracy and clarity; limited awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; some evidence of a structure within which the thoughts and feelings of the work(s) are explored. |
| 2 | Demonstrates superficial knowledge and understanding of the question or task; responses that are of generally limited validity; limited powers of expression, both orally and in writing; significant lapses in accuracy and clarity; little awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; rudimentary structure within which the thoughts and feelings of the work(s) are explored. |
| 1 | Demonstrates very rudimentary knowledge and understanding of the question or task; responses that are of very limited validity; very limited powers of expression, both orally and in writing; widespread lapses in accuracy and clarity; no awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; very rudimentary structure within which the thoughts and feelings of the work(s) are explored. |

Lamar Academy Internal Grading Scale

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|---|---------------|
| A | 90-100 % |
| B | 80-89 % |
| C | 75-79 % |
| D | 70-74% |
| F | 69% and below |

IB DIPLOMA PASSING REGULATIONS

Performance in each of the six Diploma subjects is graded on a scale of 1-7, with 7 being the highest. A maximum of 3 bonus points is awarded for combined performance in Theory of Knowledge and on the Extended Essay. The maximum possible score is thus 45 points. The minimum score for a candidate to earn their IB Diploma is 24 points.

The IB Diploma will not be awarded to a candidate unless certain requirements have been met.

A Diploma candidate will receive an IB Diploma if

- CAS requirements have been met.
- The candidate's total points are 24 or more.
- There is no "N" awarded for Theory of Knowledge, the Extended Essay or for any contributing subject.
- There is no grade E awarded for Theory of Knowledge and/or the Extended Essay.
- There is no grade 1 awarded in any subject/level.
- There are no more than two grade 2s awarded (HL or SL).
- There are no more than three grade 3s or below awarded (HL or SL).
- The candidate has gained 12 points or more on HL subjects (candidates who register for four HL subjects, the three highest grades count).
- The candidate has gained 9 points or more on SL subjects (candidates who register for two SL subjects must gain at least 5 points at SL).
- The candidate has not received a penalty for academic misconduct from the Final Award Committee.

IB EXAMS

IB exams at Lamar Academy are conducted during the month of May in strict accordance with IB specified schedules and regulations.

The IB Coordinator, Campus Testing Coordinator, and Head of School collaborate at the beginning of the year to plan the logistics for examinations given the number of candidates testing in a given year for each course. Exams are conducted on the Lamar Academy campus using the Staff Development Building, the Lamar Academy library, and isolated portable classrooms. Exam invigilation is performed by staff and community members. All invigilators must undergo a training exercise to review exam procedures and policies. Teachers whose exam is being conducted are not allowed to invigilate that specific exam. Security for exams is the responsibility of the IB Coordinator and Head of School.

The Conduct of Examinations Notice to Candidates is posted in the school building before and during testing and at testing sites during examinations. Students are given a copy of the Notice prior to examinations so that students and parents are aware of the procedure for IB Examinations. The Notice is also reviewed with students through their classes prior to examinations.

OTHER POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Academic Malpractice

Lamar Academy offers quality education that not only ensures knowledge, but also cultivates the virtues of honor, courtesy, and perseverance. Of these virtues, honor is of great importance, for it is personal integrity that will influence and finally determine many of our actions and beliefs. Students shall be honor bound to submit their own authentic work that reflects their own language, expression and ideas. Students shall be honor bound to refrain from cheating of every kind, including plagiarism. Students shall be honor bound to take actions to stop any and all instances of academic malpractice which they see. Such actions include speaking directly to the offender, speaking privately to an adult (teacher, counselor, administrator), or filing an Honor Code complaint in the IB office. Inaction implies condoning the inappropriate behavior. Living in a manner that is consistent with this honor code will produce an atmosphere of trust, freedom, and integrity rarely found on American high school campuses.

The School's Expectations of the Student

The teacher can expect students to:

- be fully prepared for class work and assessments
- exercise regular access to their Skyward account for information on course progress
- sign up for and engage in the Google Classrooms set up for their specific courses
- submit any required work (homework, class work, assignments, projects, IB assessments) on time and with due diligence

- submit authentic work that reflects the student’s own language, expression and ideas
- present work neatly and appropriately, meeting all requirements as clearly identified by the teacher
- follow specified rules and procedures with respect to IB assignments and assessments

Should the student fail to meet any or all of these requirements the teacher **may**:

- ask the student to re-do any work that is not presented to the required standard
- enter a reduced grade or a zero for work that is submitted after a deadline, in accordance with school board policy
- solicit help from parents and staff in setting up internet accounts for the student and explaining their use

The Students’ Expectation of the Teacher

The student can expect that:

- assessments will be marked rigorously and returned to the student in timely manner
- rubrics for assessment are made available to better understand expectations
- the “rule of best fit” will be applied when rubrics are used to mark student work
- assessments will be genuine and will give students the opportunity to achieve up to the highest levels of the assessed criteria
- teachers will be equitable with all students
- adequate time and resources will be given to complete long-term or complex assignments, such as projects, essays, and research papers

The School’s Expectation of the Parent

Lamar Academy encourages parents to offer constructive and positive support as students complete their school work. However, this support should not go so far as to compromise the authenticity of the student’s work. Parents should also keep in mind that the programme of study that the student has undertaken is very demanding and will require more time and effort than they may have previously experienced.

Lamar Academy recommends that:

- the student is provided with a quiet space at home and adequate time to complete their school work

- the student has access to a computer with adequate word processing facility and printing capability*
- the student has internet access and/or access to a library*
- the parent ensure activation of the student’s Skyward account for information on student progress and ease of communication with teachers
- the parent encourage students to attend their classes regularly and on time, and respect school schedules when arranging for appointments or vacations

**Internet access and printing is available on campus.*

Working with Assessment

To ensure the Assessment Policy is a working document, the following practices are in place:

- The Steering Committee for the IB Programme meets once per semester to consider changes and evaluate the program, including policies. Any proposed changes to policy will be shared with the IB faculty and administration before changes are made.
- Teachers, new to the MYP/DP faculty, will receive training at the beginning of the year on the assessment policy. New faculty will be sent to IB training as soon as possible to help develop an understanding of the relationship between IB and Lamar Academy assessment requirements.
- Subject teachers across the DP and MYP are given common planning time to ensure appropriate assessment, creating a smooth transition between both programs.
- Subject teachers in the DP and MYP are given common planning time and/or professional development time to standardize assessment procedures.
- DP and MYP teachers meet to standardize assessment procedures for Extended Essays and Personal Projects. Assistance is provided to teachers to ensure adherence to the rubrics used in marking these assessments.
- The DP faculty receives subject reports and candidate reports every year so that teachers may evaluate their marking and understanding of the IB criteria and mark bands. The faculty is also reminded to visit the PRC to give feedback on the IB examinations and to see IB subject reports for the examination session.
- DP and MYP faculty receive Personal Project results every year so that teachers may evaluate their marking and understanding of the IB criteria.
- Announcements for subject review from the Coordinator Notes are given to the appropriate teacher to encourage participation in the process.

REVIEW OF THE ASSESSMENT POLICY

The Assessment Policy is reviewed annually at the beginning of the year by the Lamar Academy staff and administration. Amendments to the policy will be considered especially based on IB policy changes, school district policy changes, changes in the school community, or changes in community needs.

References:

McAllen ISD Exemption Regulation (2017)

International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme award (2016)

McAllen ISD Grading Policy (2014)

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Grade Descriptors (2014)

General Regulations: Diploma Programme (April 2014)

Guidelines for developing a school assessment policy in the Diploma Programme (2010)

Adaptations from Scotts Valley High School Assessment Policy

Handbook of Procedures for the Diploma Programme

IBO.org