



# ASSESSMENT POLICY

*The policy is annually reviewed and revised – current version January 2023*

### **International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) Mission Statement**

“The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.”

### **Pierce - The American College of Greece Mission Statement**

“The mission of Pierce is to provide a holistic education to form intellectually independent, morally responsible, socially engaged global citizens. “Non ministrari sed ministrare” (“Not to be served but to serve”) defines our institutional character and our aspiration for our students.”

## Purpose of the School's Assessment Policy

The Assessment Policy of the American College of Greece (PIERCE) aims at recording the school's principles and practices that relate to assessment. It is communicated to all members of the School community (students, faculty, administration staff, parents) and should be read together with other relevant material and school documents, such as the IB DP handbook. This policy is reviewed on a regular (yearly) basis.

## Principles of assessment

Assessment is a continuous process and an integral part of teaching and learning. Assessment aims at monitoring student achievement relative to learning outcomes. For assessment to be effective, students are clearly informed what the purpose of the task is, and what the expectations are. The tasks assigned are manageable and appropriate and they are assessed accurately and fairly, following specific assessment criteria provided by the IBO and using past assessment data (mark schemes). Feedback to students is related to predefined learning outcomes and is made available in a timely manner to enhance the learning process and improve their performance. The outcome of assessment is communicated to students and parents regularly.

There is a variety of formative and summative assessment tools that are used, including peer- and self-assessment methods. The School recognizes that different assessment methods may be appropriate for different learning styles, which is why it encourages teachers to use a diversity of assessment methods (consistent with the predefined learning aims of each course) to allow all students to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills.

The IB DP at PIERCE welcomes students with special educational needs, provided that the nature and severity of their difficulties allow them to complete the Diploma requirements. Inclusive access arrangements are available to eligible students, following the procedures stipulated in the School's 'Special Educational Needs' policy.

The IB Diploma is awarded upon external and internal marking of formal assessment tasks. Students that are Greek nationals are additionally required to attend a Greek history course and a Modern Greek Language and Literature course, so that their IB Diploma may be recognized as equivalent to the Greek Apolytirion. These two courses are graded according to the grading system used by the Greek Ministry of Education for students attending the Mainstream Greek Lyceum programme.

## Assessment practices

**Teachers** have to ensure that the students have access to and have understood the learning aims and objectives of the subjects they have selected. The command terms and the assessment criteria for different tasks have to be clarified and discussed, early in the programme. The predefined assessment criteria have to be applied to formative or summative tasks, internally or externally assessed. To ensure the above, teachers are encouraged to use various approaches, including past papers with mark schemes, peer and self-assessment. Formative assessment includes questioning, discussion, homework, peer and self-assessment, as well as presentations. Summative assessment strategies used include short chapter quizzes, end of unit (or chapter) tests, homework, portfolios, essays, presentations, group

projects, end-of-term exams, mid-term tests and mock exams, depending on the subject. The results of all types of assessment are analyzed, discussed, and taken into consideration by the teachers to reflect on what worked or did not work in their instruction in order to adjust, change and improve their teaching practices.

**Students** are expected to attend all lessons to ensure they engage in all in-class processes. They are also expected to study on an almost daily basis all of their selected subjects by way of reading, taking notes, completing research assignments, reviewing class work, and revising previously taught material. Depending on the subject, formative tasks are assigned with varying frequency, but on average on a weekly basis, and include preparation of a presentation, writing an essay, preparing a lab report, drafting a report etc. Summative assignments have a frequency of about 2 per term (one mid-term and one at the end of the term), apart from quizzes and end-of-chapter tests. All assignments are announced to the students both orally in the class but also electronically on ManageBac, the platform that is used for academic purposes in our programme. To ensure that students have a reasonable workload, there is an effort to not assign more than 2 summative tasks on the same day or more than 3 in the same week. Taking into consideration that the IB Diploma programme is a high-quality demanding programme, effective time-management, and continuous engagement of students in the different components of the programme are expected of all students.

Oral and written **feedback** on formative or summative tasks is regularly given to the students. This is an integral part of the learning process, as it allows students to understand their mistakes, appreciate the specific predefined assessment criteria that different subjects apply and improve their performance. Feedback may be qualitative or quantitative, as a percentage or using the IB scale 1-7. The assessment criteria and the boundaries that teachers apply are the official instructed by the IBO, but may be adjusted to take into consideration the phase of the learning process. For example, at the start of the programme, teachers may decide to be more lenient, to account for the not-yet developed skills or understanding for the programme that the students may have. Mid- or end-of-term report cards with descriptive evaluation of the students' progress also gives insight on how each student performs, what the areas identified for growth are and what she/he should do in order to improve. For Greek History and Modern Greek Language and Literature assignments, grading is out of 20, following the instructions of the Greek Ministry of Education.

## Grading scale

Summative assignments, as well as term and examination grades are awarded using the IB 1-7 scale. The grade boundaries and grade descriptors are subject-specific and dictated by the IBO. General descriptors of the grades on this scale are given below.

**Grade 7:** Students demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding of the syllabus. They speak and write clearly, fluently, accurately, using a varied and idiomatic range of language and have a great command of subject-specific vocabulary and complex structures. They provide independent work that is fully developed and well-structured in a logical and coherent manner. They solve quantitative and qualitative problems proficiently, they are able to integrate knowledge, understanding and skills from different areas of various courses and are effective in research, investigation, and critical thinking.

**Grade 6:** Students demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of the syllabus. They speak and write clearly, fluently, accurately, using a range of language tools, and have a very good command of

subject-specific vocabulary and complex structures. They provide independent work that is well developed, has good structure, and is prepared in a logical and coherent manner. They solve quantitative and qualitative problems very well and, with little difficulty, are able to integrate knowledge, understanding and skills from different areas of various subjects. They are effective in research, investigation, and critical thinking.

**Grade 5:** Students demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the syllabus. They speak and write mostly clearly, fluently, accurately, using a basic range of language skills, and have a good command of subject-specific vocabulary and structures. They solve most basic or familiar quantitative or qualitative problems, and show some ability to integrate knowledge, understanding and skills from different areas of various subjects. Research, investigation and critical thinking are evident and sometimes well developed.

**Grade 4:** Students demonstrate an adequate knowledge and understanding of the syllabus. They speak and write generally clearly, sometimes hesitantly, with some mistakes, using a basic range of language skills. The command of subject-specific vocabulary and structures is adequate. They solve most basic or routine quantitative or qualitative problems, but show some limited ability to integrate new knowledge, understanding and skills from different areas of various subjects. Research, investigation, and critical thinking are evident and but not developed.

**Grade 3:** The student demonstrates partial knowledge and understanding of basic concepts of the syllabus. The student speaks and writes hesitantly and sometimes unclearly, although with some structure and has difficulties with easy questions. The command of subject-specific vocabulary and structures is limited. Solving basic or routine quantitative or qualitative problems is challenging, and shows some reduced ability to integrate new knowledge, understanding and skills from different areas of various subjects. Research, investigation, and critical thinking are undeveloped.

**Grade 2:** The student demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of basic concepts of the syllabus and has difficulties in answering most questions. The student speaks and writes unclearly with a limited command of vocabulary and terminology. Research, investigation and critical thinking are very limited.

**Grade 1:** The student demonstrates very limited knowledge and understanding of basic concepts and has many difficulties in answering most questions. The student speaks and writes unclearly with a very limited to none command of vocabulary and terminology. Research, investigation, and critical thinking are not evident in the work produced.

## Examinations

Students are assessed regularly through in-class assessments that are modeled after the IBO official exams and may include the following:

- essays
- structured problems
- short-response questions
- data-response questions
- text-response questions
- case-study questions

- multiple-choice questions
- oral exams
- presentations

The school also holds three official examination sessions:

- IB1 End-of-term exam (January)
- IB1 Final exam (June)
- IB2 Mock exams (March)

In-school examinations are formulated based on the IB final exam papers with questions based on past papers and with the same time allocation as in the final IBDP exams. Each exam includes material covered in class by that time. This means that in IB1 the exam is more limited in scope while in IB2 mock exams, students have gradually covered more material and are now assessed on essentially the same content as in the official IBDP final exams. Each subject and subject level (HL/SL) has a specific number of papers with specific time allocated, which the in-school examinations strictly follow. Additionally, the IB2 mock exam schedule mirrors the final IBDP exam schedule in order to better prepare the students.

In terms of grading, IB mark schemes are used, where the student responses are graded against specific assessment criteria developed for each subject and each paper assessed. Grade boundaries are used to determine the final score on a 1-7 scale. Different papers and components of a subject have different weightings on the final grade, and this is calculated and reflected in the final score, where a weighted average is awarded. Most faculty members are official IB DP examiners who are trained and qualified in assessment standardization. In subjects taught by more than one teacher, teachers collaborate closely to formulate exam material and standardize marking between them, by reviewing mark schemes, subject reports and marking a sample of each other's exams.

Following each in-class assessment and in-school examination, feedback sessions are scheduled in order to review and reflect on performance and provide feedback to students. Students are also encouraged to seek further individualized feedback to resolve their queries and ask for other clarifications needed.

Following the IB2 Mock exams, students take part in the official IBDP examinations in May in which:

- Exams are sat in school following IBO rules and regulations (see References)
- Examination papers and student scripts are marked externally
- Results are available to the school and students on July 5<sup>th</sup>

Students have to register to sit for the final IBDP examinations in May. Depending on the circumstances students may:

- Retake subjects in November or May of the next academic year, following IBO registration deadlines
- IBO regulations allow students to take part in a maximum of 3 examination sessions (see References)
- The school reviews exceptional cases for registration in November exams (instead of May exams) after consulting with the faculty, the student, and guardians. This is approved by the IBDP coordinator.

## Internal Assessment

Each subject has an internally assessed assignment to be completed, which the subject teacher marks, and is externally moderated by an IB moderator. Each subject may have different types of internal assessments with different weightings on the final grade. Examples include:

- oral work in languages
- laboratory work in the sciences
- explorations in mathematics
- artistic performances
- portfolios
- essays

The purpose of Internal Assessments (IAs) is to allow students to pursue their interests and apply their skills and knowledge towards a subject of their choice without time restrictions imposed during written examinations. Teachers explain the requirements (including academic honesty) and assessment criteria for their subject and teach the necessary skills required to complete it throughout normal classroom teaching. Typically, IAs are to be completed in stages and internal school deadlines are in place for this. Deadlines are decided well in advance during faculty meetings to ensure workload is fairly distributed. Deadlines for all IAs are shared with students and guardians through the school calendar provided at the beginning of the academic year. Students are responsible to adhere to deadlines in order to receive feedback and have sufficient time to implement it effectively. When students deliver their final work to be submitted to the IBO, they need to verify the authenticity of their work, by reviewing it with their teacher. Their work is checked through Turnitin, to ensure that there is no plagiarism. In terms of marking IAs, teachers use IBO mark schemes and assessment criteria and in cases where a subject has more than one teacher, they collaborate closely to standardize marking between them, by marking a sample of each other's exams.

## Recording and Reporting

Parents are informed on student's progress in the following ways:

- IB1:
  - **Optional weekly meetings** with teachers, upon scheduling an appointment, throughout the year.
  - **IB1 mid-term progress reports** in November, including descriptive evaluations.
  - **Midterm parent-teacher meeting** in December to discuss student progress
  - **End of term progress reports** in February, including both a representative grade for the student and descriptive evaluations.
  - **End of term parent-teachers meeting** in February to discuss student progress.
  - **End of summer term progress reports** sent to parents in June.
  - **End of summer term parent-teacher meeting** in June to discuss student progress.
  - **Individual communications**, mostly by email or by telephone, when either party (teacher or parent) find this necessary.

- IB2:
- **Optional weekly meetings** with teachers, upon scheduling an appointment, throughout the year.
  - **Midterm parent-teacher meeting** in December to discuss student progress
  - **End of term progress reports** in February, including both a representative grade for the student and descriptive evaluations.
  - **End of term parent-teacher meeting** in February to discuss student progress.
  - **Mock exam grades report**
  - **Individual communications**, mostly by email or by telephone, when either party (teacher or parent) find this necessary.

Progress reports at the end of each term include: descriptive evaluations regarding the student's participation, homework completion, effort and overall performance, their grade in the official in-school examinations (1-7), alongside an overall grade (1-7) awarded based on both formative and summative assessment for each subject.

Each teacher is responsible for keeping track of the student's progress in order to provide a holistic grade by keeping a record of results on both formative and summative assessments. These are used to complete the report cards and to inform teaching and learning practices.

Additionally, throughout the term the student's personal tutor gathers feedback from teachers in order to further advise students and parents. Parents can schedule an appointment with tutors via telephone throughout the year.

## Predicted Grades

Predicted grades are determined by the overall performance of the students, including consistency and compliance with the requirements of the programme, but mostly by their average achieved in formative and summative assessments. Predicted grades are reported to Universities usually early in the first term of IB2. The overall predicted score is announced to the students for application purposes and any specific predicted grades are only discussed with the University Counsellors and the IB Coordinator, but not with individual teachers.

## Final IB Diploma Grades

The student's final IB Diploma grade is awarded by the IBO. The final grade for each subject is determined by the weighted average of their performance in externally assessed papers in the final IBDP examinations and their internally assessed components (see References). Additionally, their final score depends on their grades in the core components, the Extended Essay and Theory of Knowledge (see References). Creativity, Action, Service – the remaining element in the DP core – does not contribute to the points total but authenticated participation is a requirement for the awarding of the diploma.

Following the release of the official IBDP results, on July 5<sup>th</sup>, students and parents receive a copy of their final grades in school or they communicate with the IB DP Coordinator to be informed of the results. Alternatively, 24h later, students and parents can access their grades using the IBO website. Detailed component grades are available from the IBO a few days later. Finally, students/parents can receive a hard copy of their Diplomas in early September after they are sent to the school.



## Academic Awards

After the official IBO results are announced, the School offers a *Valedictorian* award to the student with the highest overall IB DP score. If more than one student have the same highest score, then the award is shared. Additionally, the Pierce International Baccalaureate Award is offered to the graduate that best reflects the qualities of the IB Learner Profile. The student selected for this award is nominated by the teaching faculty in an official IB DP meeting, by reviewing the student's performance and presence in the program throughout the 2-year period, holistically.

## Assessment Policy Revision

The assessment policy is reviewed annually to determine if any changes or updates are deemed necessary. The IB Coordinator and Group Representatives are responsible for reviewing the policy and proceed with policy changes in rotation. The latest draft of the revised policy is shared to all faculty members for them to review. Any comments and suggestions are taken into consideration and the final version is published upon consensus between all members involved. IB students and parents receive copies of the policy at the beginning of the academic year within the Handbook of Procedures of our School. IB prospective students and parents, as well as other stakeholders may view the policy any time online on the school's IB DP website. Questions, comments, or concerns may be emailed to the IB Coordinator.

*Latest review: January 2023*

### *References*

1. Diploma Programme Grade Descriptors, Published September 2017, Updated September 2021, IBO
2. Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures, Published September 2021, Updated February 2022, IBO.