

# Curriculum & Assessment Policy

This policy is available from our website ([halcyonschool.com](http://halcyonschool.com)) and in hard copy on request.

This policy should be considered alongside and in conjunction with Halcyon's Reporting Policy.

## Halcyon students and community

The Halcyon London International School community is comprised of internationally-minded families, based in or transferring to London. These families will move from country to country several times in the course of their children's school years. They require schools not only to have a high quality curriculum but also one which will enable their children to move with minimum disruption to their education. The International Baccalaureate programmes fit these requirements, with high academic standards that lead to university entry worldwide. With an international school offering the IB curriculum in virtually every major city in the world, a continuity of education can be achieved for families moving between countries and schools.

## Halcyon and the International Baccalaureate (IB)

Halcyon reflects and honours the Mission Statement of the IB, which states:

*"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 organisation works with schools, governments and international organisations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right."*

Halcyon offers the IB Middle Years Programme (IBMYP) for students in Grades 6 to 10 (UK Years 7 to 11) and the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) for Grades 11 and 12 (UK Sixth Form/Years 12 and 13). Halcyon is an IB World School, subject to rigorous and regular compulsory programme evaluations for both IBMYP and IBDP. The curriculum meets all the requirements of the IB with regard to the curriculum structure, the pedagogical methods and the assessment procedures.

Halcyon is committed to ensuring that the curriculum on offer is broad and balanced, in order that the needs of all students are provided for, whatever their gifts and talents. We make provision for academic achievement and spiritual, social, moral, cultural, physical and creative development of our students allowing them to become lifelong learners. All students follow the IB Diploma Programme courses at the start of Grade 11 (UK Year 12) and this includes the possibility of achievement of a bilingual diploma at the end of Grade 12 (UK Year 13) for native speakers of languages other than English. Diploma Programme students may take one of their six main subjects as an online course.

## Halcyon - Learning Definition

Learning at Halcyon aims to draw out the unique potential of all learners of all ages in our community. Learning is contextual, offers frequent opportunities to create and collaborate and construct individual meaning and understanding of the world, and is an open-ended process that takes hold over time. Learning at Halcyon is

internationally-minded and holistic, based on a cycle of inquiry, action and reflection. Learning and teaching at Halcyon is focussed on the development of the personal attributes of the IB Learner Profile.

## **ManageBac**

Halcyon uses ManageBac (an electronic IB-specific curriculum and assessment system) to

1. record, track and develop IBMYP and IBDP schemes of work and unit planners
2. to provide an assessment calendar for students, teachers and parents
3. to record achievement levels for student summative assessments
4. to produce reports, Grades 6-12, with final summative assessment grades
5. to produce student transcripts
6. to record progress in the IBMYP Personal Project<sup>1</sup>
7. to record progress in IBDP Theory of Knowledge (ToK) course and the Extended Essay<sup>2</sup>
8. to record students' participation in IBMYP Service as Action and IBDP CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service)<sup>3</sup> activities
9. to archive student learning in student portfolios.

## **IB curriculum developments**

Halcyon has an IBMYP Coordinator and IBDP Coordinator who oversee the day-to-day development and implementation of the IB programmes. The Coordinators ensure that the school is aware of programme changes and is compliant with staff training expectations.

## **Assessment Practice**

Assessment is the gathering of information about student performance and is used as a tool to identify what students know, understand, and can do, at different stages in the learning process. Assessment monitors the progress of student learning and achievement; produces coherent feedback for parents and external institutions; and informs curriculum and assessment review.

Assessment, teaching and learning are interdependent, embedded in engaging and authentic tasks. Learning outcomes, which include knowledge and understanding of a subject as well as cognitive, personal and academic skills, should be explicitly stated and be the pivot around which learning and teaching strategies are developed.

Assessment is:

- holistic and flexible, taking into account different learning styles, abilities and aptitudes

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<sup>1</sup> a significant piece of work that is a product of the student's own initiative and creativity; it involves planning, research and a high degree of personal reflection

<sup>2</sup> an independent, self-directed piece of research into a topic of special interest, culminating in a 4000-word essay; it acquaints students with the research and writing skills required at university

<sup>3</sup> involves students in a range of activities that take place alongside their academic studies; CAS enhances students' personal and interpersonal development as well as their social and civic development through experiential learning

- comprehensive, using a balanced range of strategies and methods, and formative and summative approaches
- fair and reliable (moderated) in drawing conclusions based upon a range of evidence from a wide range of tasks and activities
- based upon what has been taught or covered in class or what can reasonably be assumed of the students
- an ongoing, continuous process, spread at reasonable intervals extending over the course of the year or of the programme
- transparent, based upon objective criteria which are made clear to the student in advance
- analysed to provide information about the individual needs of students and to modify learning strategies appropriately
- used to inform the evaluation and subsequent modification of units, courses, programmes, and learning and teaching strategies.

#### Assessment aims to:

- understand students' current knowledge and experience before embarking on new learning
- make strategies and learning expectations clear to students and parents
- allow for meaningful reporting to parents about student progress
- provide students with regular and meaningful opportunities for reflection on their own learning
- support and encourage student learning by providing regular and prompt feedback during the learning process
- promote students' self-knowledge, resilience and self-efficacy
- inform, enhance and improve the learning and teaching process
- promote positive student attitudes towards learning
- promote deep understanding of subject content by supporting student inquiry set in real-world contexts
- promote the development of higher-order cognitive skills by providing rigorous final objectives that value these skills
- reflect the international-mindedness of the programme by allowing for assessments to be set in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts
- support the holistic nature of the programme by including in its model, principles that take account of the social, emotional and physical development of the students as well as their academic development.

### **Assessment in the IBMYP**

Assessment in the IBMYP is school-based, as the tasks, strategies and tools are designed by the teachers. The IBMYP assessment model is criterion-related with the criteria determined by the IB. The IBMYP also prescribes final objectives that are to be used in conjunction with the final criteria to determine student grades at the end of the programme.

#### **Formative and summative assessment**

Formative assessment is used to give students specific feedback about the progress of their learning throughout the unit. Summative assessment is completed at the end of a unit or a course of learning, and teachers must ensure that evidence of achievement comes from the performance of the student over the duration of the units taught. Semester grades reflect the student's achievement level at the time of the reports based on a best-fit approach using evidence in ManageBac.

### **Assessment, marking and reporting procedures in IBMYP**

Teachers must aim to have a valid and reliable assessment of student achievement against each of the subject criteria in each semester.

- To ensure validity, tasks must be carefully designed according to IB guidelines so that students have the potential to reach the highest levels in each criteria.
- To ensure reliability, students should be given several opportunities to demonstrate achievement against each criteria over the course of the semester.
- Where a single assessment task must be used to determine a summative grade in any criteria (eg: in a technology portfolio), students should be provided with detailed feedback on drafts and other methods of formative assessment.

#### **Formative assessment**

- Peer and self-assessment as well as teacher feedback on student work is encouraged.
- Feedback can be in the form of written comments, audio or video recording, etc., making full use of the school's digital learning platforms.
- Records of formative assessment should be included in student's electronic notebooks in Google Drive and teachers should monitor and advise students on the organisation of these records so that they can inform student progress.
- Formative assessment can also be included in ManageBac either in the form of comments or, when appropriate to the subject, as a criterion level. Formative comments or criterion levels must be entered in ManageBac if summative assessment results are not available by the end of the first week in October of the first semester.

#### **Summative assessment**

- All summative assessment tasks must be recorded in the ManageBac calendar.
- Task specific rubrics should be created in ManageBac to give students clear guidance about the application of the criteria to the task. Teachers are encouraged to design some shorter, less complex tasks assessing fewer strands in the early years of the IBMYP or at the beginning of the course.
- Longer-term projects should be scaffolded to support student organisation and time management. Summative assessment tasks should be completed in class time although supporting homework assignments are sometimes assigned. It is not appropriate for students to complete summative assessments unsupported at home.
- Summative tasks must be designed to allow students full access to all levels of the criteria. It may be necessary to adapt rubrics to assess only some strands of the criteria. Students upload their work as a pdf into their ManageBac portfolio where teachers can access it for marking and annotation.
- Teachers record marks using the ManageBac Gradebook and communicate marks to students using the rubrics in ManageBac.
- Marking of summative assessment tasks must take place in a timely fashion (not exceeding 10 days from the submission of a student's work) to maximize student learning.

## Reports

- Student progress is reported to parents in narrative progress reports in November and April and two semester grade reports in January and June.
- Semester grade reports show student achievement against the criteria and include a best-fit summative achievement level in each criteria. The best-fit achievement level is not an average but indicates the level that the student can consistently achieve by the end of the term.

A final grade on the IB scale of 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest) sums up student achievement at the end of each semester. Final grades are determined using the 1-7 mark bands set by the IB.

## External assessment in the IBMYP: Records of Achievement

At the end of Grade 10, IBMYP students submit a Personal Project, sit an external interdisciplinary exam and receive a Record of Achievement and results from the IB.

## ACER International Schools' Assessment (ISA) tests

Students sit the [Australian Council of Education Research](#) (ACER) International Schools' Assessment (ISA) tests in Grades 6-10. The [ISA](#) assessment programme is designed especially for students in international schools and is based on the internationally endorsed reading and mathematical literacy frameworks of the OECD's (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Programme for International Student Assessment ([PISA](#)).

Students sit the ISA tests in English and mathematics and science in February. Assessment information from these tests is used to check individual student progress against both their previous test results and the international norms for students of their age. Statistical data resulting from these assessments is also used to inform the school of its collective progress in relation to other similar international schools and against all schools world-wide who participate in the testing programme.

## The IB Diploma Programme (IBDP)

Students take six courses, one taken from each of Groups 1-5 (Studies in Language and Literature; Language Acquisition; Individuals & Societies; Experimental Sciences; and Mathematics) plus an additional course either taken from Group 6 (the Arts) or an additional course from Groups 1-4. The Environmental Systems and Societies course fulfils the requirements for both Groups 3 and 4, thus allowing a student to take two arts subjects.

In addition to six subjects, students must successfully complete the three elements of the **core**: an Extended Essay (EE) of approximately 4000 words, a course in Theory of Knowledge (ToK), and a programme of activities entitled Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS).

Grades are awarded for each of the six subjects on the IB scale of 1(lowest) to 7 (highest) and up to three further points can be awarded for the combined results of ToK and EE.

### **Assessment in the IBDP**

IB Diploma Programme assessment supports curricular goals and meaningful student learning by offering a wide variety of learning experiences and assessment approaches to students.

Summative assessments directly contributing to the final IB Diploma qualification are presented in two formats: internal assessments and final external examinations. Internal assessments (IA) are marked by teachers before external moderation by IB examiners. External assessments are carried out by means of examinations, coursework, a portfolio submission or exhibition (for Visual Arts) marked by external examiners. Students have informal and formal experiences with official IB internal and external assessments throughout the course of study to prepare them for success on these.

### **Assessment, marking and reporting procedures in IBDP**

IB Subject Guides provide the syllabus and the information on assessment in relation to the course objectives; the guide explains how to conduct and grade the internal assessments and how to prepare students for the external examinations. The IBDP utilises rubrics and criterion-based assessment in order to determine a best-fit 1-7 grade based on the IB's subject-specific grade descriptors.

Subject-specific criteria are used for best-fit 1-7 current achievement levels. Assessment opportunities must provide students with access to all 1-7 achievement levels, throughout the course, so that they can demonstrate current knowledge and skills. ToK and the Extended Essay assessments are assessed through criteria-based rubrics with grading scales of A-E. These two scores are combined into a matrix for the award of 1-3 bonus points for the IB Diploma.

Marking criteria should be clearly communicated to students when planning any task or assessment. Ongoing and end-of-course assessments and mark schemes should be adapted to be relevant to expectations of what students are able to understand and do at that point in their learning. Semester report grades should reflect the current level of achievement and are not predictive. Assessment should reflect the fact that school-based semester grades are official school transcript grades and so the basis for university entrance in USA.

### **Internal examination reporting**

Grade 11 year-end exam grades are reported in June but are not included in the semester grade.

### **Internal Assessment**

For each IBDP cohort, a school-wide two-year IBDP assessment calendar of internal and external IB deadlines is created by the IBDP Coordinator, in collaboration with the IBDP faculty and school administration, in order for students and teachers to manage and pace the many assessments across the Programme. This IBDP Assessment Calendar is communicated with students, teachers and parents. These IB deadlines are formal 'due dates' to support the students in their timely progress: very rarely, they may be changed but only in consultation with the IBDP Coordinator. IB deadlines will appear on the ManageBac calendar, entered by the IBDP Coordinator.

### **Earning the IB Diploma**

Grades are awarded for each of the six subjects on the IB scale of 1(lowest) to 7 (highest) and up to three further points can be awarded for the combined results of ToK and EE.

The maximum number of points that a student can be awarded is 45. The Diploma is awarded to those who achieve at least 24 points, subject to minimal levels of achievement in individual subjects across the three Higher Level (HL) subjects and three Standard Level (SL) subjects, and a satisfactory completion of CAS.

There is also a requirement to pass the Extended Essay and ToK based on a prescribed matrix of points, with a minimum grade of D for each component. A failing grade in either the EE or ToK results in failing the Diploma.

A bilingual IB Diploma is awarded to a student who earns a full IB Diploma and has taken two Group 1 language courses.

If the school or a family wishes to request re-marks of official IB assessments, IB policy allows for requesting re-marks on official IB assessments, and allows for students to retake IB examinations and internal assessments in a subsequent examination session. The IBDP Coordinator is responsible for advising on and managing IB re-mark and retake processes as per the details, including fees, set out in the annual IBDP Coordinator's Handbook.

### **Internal standardisation**

To ensure that assessment results are reliable, fair and consistent with the learning objectives in IBMYP and IBDP courses, internal standardisation is a regular, required practice for IB teachers. The IB Coordinators facilitate the systematic organisation of internal standardisation for externally assessed and moderated tasks amongst qualified teachers, where assessment decisions are mutually agreed based on clear evidence and the IB assessment criteria and grade descriptors.

### **Communication with parents**

- Parents can view the student portfolios, including annotated tasks, grading rubrics and achievement levels in ManageBac at any time and should be encouraged and supported in doing so by the subject teacher.
- Initial evidence of student progress must be entered in ManageBac no later than the end of the first week in October. This evidence may be in the form of completed summative assessment tasks or formative assessment comments or criterion levels on work in progress.
- A grade of 4 represents satisfactory work against IBMYP or IBDP objectives. If students are not consistently achieving at a level 4, an academic log must be made to inform both the Coordinator and the mentor. The mentor will contact parents so that they can support their child in a plan for improvement.
- Teachers are encouraged to communicate with parents directly with positive feedback.
- Communication can take the form of an email, meeting or telephone call.
- Concerns about student progress should be logged in the Academic and Wellbeing Log so that mentors, the Wellbeing Leader and IB Coordinators are kept up to date in support of student learning.

## **Student accountability**

Students are expected to meet deadlines and take the initiative to make up work in case of absence. If assessment tasks are not submitted on time the following steps should be taken:

1. The teacher should first discuss the problem with the student to ascertain the reason for the problem and offer support.
2. If the issue is not immediately resolved and the work is not submitted by the next day or next lesson, the teachers should make an Academic log.
3. The mentor receiving the Academic log should discuss the problem with the student and the student should attend lunchtime or after school Learning Space to complete the work with support. If the problem is not resolved, the mentor will contact parents to make a plan to support the student.
4. In the case of repeated instances of missed deadlines or work not submitted, the mentor and the IBDP Coordinator and/or Wellbeing Leader will meet with the student and parents to create and monitor a Student Learning Agreement.

It is not appropriate to reduce the student's grade if work is late or give a zero if work is not submitted. However, if work is not submitted by the end of the semester, the best-fit achievement level in the semester grade may be lower as students may not have evidence of consistent high achievement.

## **Benchmarking and tracking students' progress**

Results of ISA Maths and English tests taken every October, form the backbone of a tracking system that meets both national and international norms for Grades 6 through 10. The ISA assessment results are then utilized, along with the school's internal IBMYP assessments, to measure individual students' progress and to set targets.

Student progress and performance meetings are held regularly, to analyse individual students' progress.

Although the school does not produce annual RAISE reports, as in the UK maintained sector schools, student attainment grades for every subject included in the termly reports are recorded and analysed, building up cumulative grade records for every student from their point of entry to the school. These assessments are recorded and analysed and help inform subject and level choices for the IBDP. Students in Grades 10, 11 and 12 can take other externally assessed tests (eg: PSAT, SAT, ACT and TOEFL tests from the USA) in addition to their internal and external IBDP assessments. Scores from these tests are also recorded on individual transcripts.

## **Bibliography**

- Handbook of procedures for the MYP: moderation and monitoring of assessment (2015)
- Approaches to Teaching and Learning across the Diploma Programme (August 2014)
- Further guidance for developing MYP assessed curriculum (May 2014)
- MYP: From Principle into Practice (May 2014)
- Diploma Programme: From Principle into Practice (January 2014)
- Handbook of Procedures of the Diploma Programme (2014)
- Guidelines for developing an Assessment Policy - IB Diploma Programme (2010)
- The Diploma Programme: A basis for Practice (January 2009)

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*This policy will be reviewed annually, or more regularly in light of any significant changes in  
statutory requirements and legislation.*