

## **Assessment Policy**

### **Philosophy of Assessment**

The staff members of Old Mill High School continue to discuss assessment in order to align our philosophies and practices. Recent updates to our schools' mission statements verify our commitment to our students through:

- Setting high standards and appropriate instructional support for student success.
- Working collaboratively to design instruction that actively engages and appropriately challenges each student so that students will be academically prepared for the next grade level.
- Fostering critical thinking and application of meaningful knowledge through the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

As a staff, we believe the following principles of assessment to be true:

- Assessments must provide meaningful feedback on student achievement to students, parents, teachers, administrators, the community and the school system.
- Assessments should empower and encourage students to become lifelong learners and take ownership of their own learning.
- Assessments must align with the Anne Arundel County Public Schools curriculum.
- Assessments must be consistent within and among IB MYP/ DP schools in AACPS.
- Assessments must use a balanced range of strategies.
- Assessments must focus on the process of learning as well as the final product.

Assessment is primarily a communication tool for teaching and learning, from which the feedback should be the impetus for teacher and student reflection. Regular use of assessments provides evidence of student learning, and our staff members use a variety of learning activities and assessment tools to ascertain students' level of understanding. Ultimately the aim of all assessment is to assist students in improving their learning, to instill in students the ability to think critically, and to encourage students to strive to work to their full potential and become life-long learners.

### **Characteristics of Assessment**

While the design of assessments may take a variety of forms, all effective assessments should possess the following characteristics:

- Assessments must include a range of strategies and task types to meet course objectives.
- Assessments address the needs of students who have reached different stages in their development and those who have different learning styles.
- Assessments engage students as critical thinkers.
- Assessments, including self-assessment, are an integral and continuous part of the teaching and learning process.
- Assessments feedback is timely, specific, and frequent.
- Assessments are utilized to measure achievement against specific criteria.

- Assessments criteria correspond to IB MYP objectives for each subject. These will be adapted by staff members to create appropriate assessments at each grade level.
- Assessments produce meaningful evidence of student learning.
- Assessments differ according to the subject area.
- Assessments and their results can be easily understood by staff, students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community.
- Assessments require students to explore multiple points of view.
- Assessments are continuously reviewed and improved.

### Types of Assessment

In order to measure student mastery of course objectives, teachers must first agree upon an acceptable range of holistic assessments, tailored toward each subject area and its targeted objectives. Our staff has agreed that both formative and summative assessments must be utilized collectively to truly assess students' understanding. *Formative assessment* allows teachers to monitor student progress towards meeting IB standards. Students receive meaningful, detailed, and timely feedback that supports improvement. Teachers use data from such assessments to modify instruction to promote learning. Formative assessment serves as the foundation for learning and prepares students for the "higher-stakes" nature of *summative assessments*, which measure achievement and are used to evaluate student knowledge and/or skill level.

***Formative assessments*** Formative assessments are all those activities undertaken by teachers and students that provide information to be used as feedback to enhance learning and achievement. IB teachers use a variety of formative assessment strategies to gather evidence of student progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and abilities towards specific learning targets. These provide the opportunity for students and teachers to take manageable risks in the learning process, and, therefore, these assessments play a lesser role in the calculation of the final course grade than do summative tasks. Additionally, IB teachers are encouraged to separate performance from behavior when factoring course grades and work towards the development of a fairly-weighted grading policy, working closely with department colleagues and guided by researched best-practices and IB subject guides.

***Summative assessments*** comprise an important role in the final letter grade a student earns in a given IB course. Teachers must translate achievement levels attained on an IB rubric into point totals that can be entered into the grade book. The letter grades recorded in the grade book as a result of the use of these rubrics correlates reasonably to the IB mark bands for each assessment. [For example, a student who scored at the high end of the IB scale based on the rubric and mark band for such an assessment (a raw score equivalent to a mark band of 6 or 7) would earn a letter grade in the range of A to A+ in the grade book for that assessment. Similarly, a student who scored at the mid-range of the IB scale based on the rubric and mark band for such an assessment (a raw score equivalent to a mark band of 4-5) would earn a letter grade in the range of C to B+ in the grade book for that assessment.]

## Assessment Reporting

IB Diploma Internal assessments allow for fair representations of a student's performance on a variety of measures over time while providing consistently high expectations of all students across all courses and programs. We recognize that students must be provided with the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of course expectations outlined in the curriculum through a variety of methods.

We realize that grades are an essential way to communicate student progress. As such, a clear and timely communication to parents and students as to the grading criteria and their components is necessary. In order to familiarize students with the IB Diploma criteria, teachers will deliver lesson plans that:

- Explain the purpose of assessment
- Introduce the IB Diploma Programme rubrics
- Allow students to practice writing rubrics and scoring sample assessments

## Use of IB Rubrics and Mark Bands

IB assessment is criterion-referenced (rather than norm-referenced). This means that a rubric is used to judge student work in relation to clearly-identified levels of skill attainment. For some components, assessment is measured through mark schemes aligned to the relevant IB subject's formal aims and objectives. Summative assessments in individual courses often model, in both format and subject matter, the formal IB assessments. Teachers employ IB assessment criteria (rubrics) to assess student achievement on such assignments, which are considered preparation for formal IB assessments. IB teachers have received specialized, intensive training in the use of IB grading criteria and mark bands. Whenever practical, teachers provide samples of work that have been marked so that students can internalize the assessment standards and understand what is expected. Such samples may be 1) actual work of former MVHS students that have been marked or moderated by the IB, 2) models generated personally by instructors, and/or 3) samples provided by the IB in official "Teacher Support Material" or through formal training.

## IB Scores and IB Class Grades

In IB courses (grades 11-12), students are asked to demonstrate learning through formal, IB-required assessments that result in final IB marks ranging from 1 (low) to 7 (high). [Some formal IB assessments are *external*, such as the official exams at the end of courses that are submitted to IB examiners for grading. Others are *internal*, meaning that teachers mark the assessments and submit scores and student samples to IB for moderation.] Students are notified of their final, official IB score for each course in mid-July after the year they complete the course; they are assigned log-on IDs and passwords to access their IB scores online over the summer. Official scores for each IB course are sent to the college or university designated by the student at the time of final testing for

the course. Students may later contact IB to request that score reports be sent to additional colleges/universities.

In addition to official IB scores, students are also assessed in other ways throughout their coursework and receive class grades reported in accordance with Anne Arundel County Public Schools policies (see AACPS Grading Scale, to follow). In high school, semester grades become part of the students' transcripts that are reported to colleges, employers, and others. The grade each student earns in a particular IB class is not directly tied to the scores earned on formal IB assessments, but is reflective of work completed in preparation for those assessments.

**OMHS Grading Scale**

All Old Mill High School courses employ the official Anne Arundel County Public Schools grading scale (as follows), including IB courses. An additional quality point will be awarded to students in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses, as determined by the Superintendent, who earn grades of A, B, or C. No additional quality points will be added for grades of D or E. A system of grading, including weighted grades for honors, advanced placement, and International Baccalaureate courses, will be applied for all school system activities and situations, such as ranking in class and extracurricular eligibility. This system will be designated on all student transcripts.

**For determining a course grade, the following scale shall be used:**

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Honors / Unweighted Quality Points towards GPA</b>	<b>IB Quality Points towards GPA</b>	<b>AP Quality Points towards GPA</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>100%-90%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>89%-80%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>79%-70%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>69%-60%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>59% or less</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

High school semester grades are determined by averaging three percentage grades. The student must receive a passing grade for two of the three grades or an E is earned regardless of numerical average

<b>First marking Period</b>	<b>Second Marking Period</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>
<b>40%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>20%</b>

## Special Assessment Needs

OMHS, in accordance with IB policies, “believes that all students should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard assessment conditions could put a student with special educational needs at a disadvantage by preventing him or her from demonstrating his or her level of skill and knowledge attainment, special arrangements may be authorized.” Such arrangements follow the principles and guidelines of the IB Diploma Programme as set forth in the IB document entitled “Candidates with Special Assessment Needs” (May 2009). Special assessment need policies are available to parents in the document entitled “Diploma Programme: General Regulations,” available in its entirety on the OMHS web site. The excerpt from that document pertaining to special needs assessments appears here:

### **Article 21: Definition of special needs**

*A special need is any permanent or temporary diagnosed need that could put a candidate at a disadvantage and prevent him or her from being able to demonstrate skills and knowledge adequately.*

### **Article 22: Applicable procedure**

*22.1 Before candidates enroll in the Diploma Programme, the school is responsible for verifying whether the programme includes any requirements that are incompatible with any known diagnosed special needs.*

*22.2 Special needs must be reported by the candidate or his/her legal guardian to the school’s Diploma Programme coordinator when the candidate enrolls in the programme, with appropriate professional documentation. Temporary special needs, resulting from illness or accidents, should be reported to the Diploma Programme coordinator as soon as possible after they arise, together with supporting professional documentation and other relevant information.*

*22.3 If a candidate with a special need requires special assessment arrangements, the Diploma Programme coordinator must request the arrangements according to procedures stated in the current handbook. Special assessment arrangements can only be authorized by the IB Organization.*

## Earning the IB Diploma

Students in the full IB Diploma Programme must take one course in each of the six academic groups: Language A, Second Language, Individuals & Societies, Science, Mathematics, and Art or Elective. Performance in each IB subject is graded on a scale of 1 to 7 points. A maximum of 3 additional points is awarded for combined performance in the two additional Diploma Programme requirements: Theory of Knowledge and Extended Essay. Therefore, the maximum total possible Diploma Programme score is 45. All assessment components for each of the six subjects and the additional IB diploma requirements must be completed in order to qualify for the award of the IB diploma. A student must earn at least 24 points to earn a diploma, with other rules and

requirements associated (see following). The final Theory of Knowledge project and the Extended Essay are graded on an A-E basis. The matrix below outlines how 3 additional points toward the diploma are earned for these combined components:

		Theory of Knowledge				
		A	B	C	D	E
Extended essay	A	3	3	2	2	1 / fail
	B	3	2	1	1	0 / fail
	C	2	1	1	0	0 / fail
	D	2	1	0	0	0 / fail
	E	1 / fail	0 / fail	0 / fail	0 / fail	fail

A zero (0) indicates that the student didn't earn any additional points toward the diploma, but has not necessarily failed to earn a diploma. The word (fail) indicates that diploma has not been earned. The denotation (\*fail) means that effect of this score depends on the student's overall score in all other classes. [If the student's overall score is lower than 28 points, he or she cannot earn a diploma with a score of E on either the EE or TOK assessment.]

**Candidates who earn a total of 24-27 out of the 45 possible Diploma Programme points must also meet the following requirements:**

- Numeric grades have been awarded in all six subjects registered for the IB diploma.
- All CAS requirements have been met.
- Grades A (highest) to E (lowest) have been awarded for both theory of knowledge and an extended essay, with a grade of at least D in both of them.
- There is no grade 1 in any subject.
- There is no grade 2 at higher level.
- There is no more than one grade 2 at standard level.
- Overall, there are no more than three grades 3 or below.
- At least 12 points have been gained on higher level subjects (candidates who register for four higher level subjects must gain at least 16 points at higher level).
- At least 9 points have been gained on standard level subjects (candidates who register for two standard level subjects must gain at least 6 points at standard level).
- The final award committee has not judged the candidate to be guilty of malpractice.

**Candidates who earn a total of 28 points or above out of the 45 possible Diploma Programme points must also meet the following requirements:**

- Numeric grades have been awarded in all six subjects registered for the IB diploma.
- All CAS requirements have been met.
- Grades A (highest) to E (lowest) have been awarded for both theory of knowledge and an extended essay, with a grade of at least D in one of them.
- There is no grade 1 in any subject.
- There is no more than one grade 2 at higher level.
- There are no more than two grades 2 at standard level.
- Overall, there are no more than three grades 3 or below.

- At least 11 points have been gained on higher level subjects (candidates who register for four higher level subjects must gain at least 14 points at higher level).
- At least 8 points have been gained on standard level subjects (candidates who register for two standard level subjects must gain at least 5 points at standard level).
- The final award committee has not judged the candidate to be guilty of malpractice.

*Successful IB diploma candidates will receive an IB diploma and a document listing the total IB diploma point score, the subject grades, the completion of all CAS requirements and any points awarded, and individual grades for the combination of theory of knowledge and the extended essay. An IB diploma candidate who fails to satisfy the requirements for the award of an IB diploma will be awarded a certificate indicating the grades obtained in individual subjects, together with results in theory of knowledge and the extended essay and the completion of all CAS requirements, as appropriate.*

### **Resources**

*Old Mill High School would like to gratefully acknowledge fellow IB World School, William J. Palmer High School and Mountain View High School, both of whose published IB Assessment Policy served in large part as a model. The following assessment resources were also consulted in the creation of this document:*

*IB Diploma Programme: General Regulations (2009)*

*Guskey, Thomas R., Ed., The Teacher as Assessment Leader (2009)*

*Marzano, R., What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action (2003).*

*O'Connor, K. How to Grade for Learning: Linking Grades to Standards (2002).*

*Popham, J. Classroom Assessment: What Teachers Need to Know (2010).*

*Popham, J. Transformative Assessment (2008).*

*Saphier, J. The Skillful Teacher: Building Your Teaching Skills (2008).*

*Wiggin, T. and McTighe, J., Understanding by Design (2004).*

*Wormeli, R. Differentiation: From Planning to Practice (2007).*