



# PaRK IS Policies

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ASSESSMENT

**PaRK** INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL

# PaRK IS | Assessment and Feedback Policy - Senior School

2023|24

<b>OUR VISION AND MISSION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. OUR ASSESSMENT PHILOSOPHY</b>	<b>2</b>
WHY DO WE ASSESS?	2
WHAT DO WE ASSESS?	3
HOW DO WE ASSESS?	3
<b>4. MONITORING STUDENT PROGRESS</b>	<b>5</b>
Grading	5
Recording and Tracking	6
Reporting	7
<b>5. SUPPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6. SELF-REFLECTION AND SELF-REPORTING</b>	<b>8</b>
Ongoing Self-Reflection and Metacognition	8
Subject Self-Reflection	8
Learner Profile Self-Reflection	9
<b>6. FEEDBACK AND MARKING</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7. ASSESSMENT AT IB LEVEL</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8. BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>10</b>

## 1. OUR VISION AND MISSION

At PaRK International School (PaRK IS) we teach children the skills and give them the tools to become bilingual, curious, autonomous and agile learners while achieving their personal best in a fast moving World.

The mission of PaRK IS is to educate and inspire students and provide them the skills to be happy and succeed in their individual chosen path.

We work to:

- Educate our children in an international environment, achieving fluency in reading, writing, comprehension and speaking in both Portuguese and English
- Cultivate an environment in which children/students are happy and acquire a passion for learning; where each student is monitored individually and has the opportunity to create his/her own educational path
- Facilitate a high quality programme appropriate to the age and developmental stage of each child, offering a rigorous but dynamic teaching approach
- Implement innovative and up-to-date academic, artistic, sports and technology programmes
- Safely utilise the latest technology in order to encourage its integration as an educational tool
- Encourage curiosity, creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving;
- Adapt to a changing world to prepare students to confront challenges and seize opportunities
- Promote "learning to learn" and the art of thinking needed for continuous learning throughout life
- Promote excellence and the capacity of each student to give their best
- Teach students to learn how to properly communicate in various ways
- Build a safe and welcoming environment for students and families
- Cultivate pride in the collective experience of the PaRK IS community
- Promote a good sporting attitude, knowing how to win and lose with dignity and respect while also taking care of health.
- Create persons of integrity, who respect the diversity of others while also having an active role in society
- Encourage autonomy and responsibility in all aspects of the student's life
- Promote collaboration and interactivity between families, peers and between the educational community
- Promote fellowship programmes to involve children in worldwide social problems and have an active role in trying to make ours a better world
- Have partner companies that best serve today's youth

## 2. OUR ASSESSMENT PHILOSOPHY

### WHY DO WE ASSESS?

At PaRK IS we believe that assessment is an essential part of what we do as a school. We have created this policy with three key stakeholders in mind - all of which have differing assessment needs:

Assessment enables **students** to:

- recognise their achievements
- identify their strengths and areas of development; and from this, set targets for improvement
- take responsibility for, and make informed judgements about, their learning
- know how they have done after a period of study and make informed decisions about their future

Assessment enables **teachers** to:

- consider how far learning objectives have been met
- plan for continuity and progression for individual students
- diagnose student strengths and weaknesses
- adjust and evaluate their teaching, and plan accordingly

Assessment enables **parents** to:

- be informed of their child's development and learning
- be actively involved in supporting their child's progress
- support their children in making informed decisions about their future

Not only does assessment mean different things to different groups of people, the way that it is carried out changes as students get older. Our Assessment Policy in Senior School aligns in many ways with Early Years and Junior School, but also has characteristics particular to our phase of study and the exams that occur within it. This document outlines what and how we assess in Senior School.

### WHAT DO WE ASSESS?

#### 1. **Academic Assessment** - Subject-specific Knowledge, Understanding, and Skills

The majority of assessment at PaRK IS focuses on student subject knowledge, understanding, and skills. Our following of both the IGCSE and IB curricula dictates the grading scales we use from Grade 6 to 12, and is outlined below. The primary focus of our assessment framework in Senior School is based around giving subject guidance, targets, and grades.

#### 2. **Aptitudinal Assessment** - The PaRK IS Learner Profile

Great schools do not just focus on the academic quality of their students, but also the aptitudes, behaviours, and dispositions their students develop. At PaRK IS we believe that we can engender improvements in personal characteristics through teaching and assessing them in class. To this end, we use the characteristics embedded in our Learner Profile to support student growth and development.

### 3. **Literacy Assessment** - Reading Age

At PaRK IS we believe that students who read well often benefit not only from a love of reading, but also from an improvement in their learning. To support the emphasis we put on literacy development, we work with GL and CEM assessments to run ongoing Reading Age assessments throughout Grade 6, 7 and 8. This assessment data is used to support classroom practice, but also to push students to read challenging and interesting books through our Accelerated Reader programme.

### 4. **Cognitive Assessment** - CEM Tests

At PaRK IS we use CEM tests to assess students' cognitive ability. These are tests of intelligence in key cognitive domains (verbal, non-verbal, spatial). Cognitive data will be gathered on the students in Grades 6, 7, 9, and 11 (or soon after they arrive at PaRK IS in other Grades) and used to guide classroom practice and academic support.

## HOW DO WE ASSESS?

At PaRK IS we believe in the power of continuous and ongoing formative assessment (Black and Williams, 2010). [Assessment for Learning](#) is prioritised in our lessons and curriculum to ensure all students receive regular and quality feedback on their learning.

We also believe that periodically it is important for students to get a fair and valid snapshot of what they have achieved in any given subject. We follow the evidence provided by the vast quantity of research that points to the power of infrequent, broad-domain summative testing to arrive at the valid grading of what has been learnt (Christodoulou, 2017). We thus try to avoid assessing performance in the moment, and focus on assessing the learning of subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills.

Below we outline our model of formative and summative assessment.

#### - **Formative Assessment:**

At PaRK IS, we believe the continuous use of formative assessment in lessons is the single most useful form of assessment to ensure deep and visible learning (Williams, 2016). To us, quality formative assessment should be:

- Immediate, actionable, and for everyone
- Varied, using a wide range of different strategies
- Enhanced through the use of technology (non-digital technologies like mini-whiteboards, and digital technologies like G Suite)

The majority of formative assessment will be in-the-moment and immediately actionable, but when giving feedback on tests or performance tasks we ensure that feedback:

- Is given the next lesson or within 72 hours (depending on subject)
- Is centred on clear targets for further learning
- Allows for opportunities of student engagement and/or action

Teachers at PaRK IS utilise a range of strategies to build up a nuanced picture of each student's strengths and areas for development. These include:

**Formative Testing and Quizzing:** Tests and quizzes are used in classes primarily as a means of formative assessment or retrieval practice, and not as a way of arriving at summative grades contributing to the Grade Round.

**Hinge Questions:** Questions in the middle and end of lessons that allow teachers to adapt their teaching to how much progress students have made.

**Quality Questioning:** Good questioning should: be planned into the lesson; call on any student through cold-calling; tend to be high order rather than low order; should be used to assess learning or initiate thinking (and not much else).

**Self and Peer Assessment:** Allowing students to assess each other's and their own work against a rubric or mark scheme to identify strengths and areas for development.

#### - **Summative Assessment**

As mentioned above, summative assessment provides a moderated snapshot of student attainment i.e. what students know and understand at a particular moment in time. It should be used infrequently and should cover either a large knowledge domain or assess the performance of a student in controlled conditions (Christodoulou, 2017).

To this end, at PaRK IS summative assessment:

- Will only be given to students twice a Grade Round per subject\*
- Be subject-specific
- Involve one exam per Grade Round (known as a Cycle Test)
- Is communicated with students using Google Calendar and Google Classroom
- Is designed to include reasonable time for student preparation (at least one week)
- Must be recorded in the global data tracker
- Will be weighted according to the Assessment and Reporting Calendar document produced at the beginning of every school year

\*except in the case of the first term of IB Grade 11 where students receive a "progress check" grade halfway through the term.

Teachers at PaRK IS must ensure all summative assessment is of high quality and carefully assesses the knowledge, understanding, and skills learnt throughout the course of study. The methods we use to summatively assess in Senior School are:

**Cycle Tests:** These are tests run in controlled conditions. They can run in any week for grades 6-12 (except for the first three weeks of school). Cycle Tests will be fed back in class to ensure students understand where they went wrong and how to improve. All Cycle Tests must be at least 45 minutes in length, with 25% extension time for those with specific learning needs. All Cycle Tests should have clear mark schemes.

**End of Year Exams:** All grades except Grades 6 and 7 will have an end of year exam period. During this period all students are on a special exam timetable. The week before must involve lessons of exam preparation and all home learning for the two weeks before must be revision. In Grade 10 and 12 students will have a Trial Exam period in Term 2 to prepare them for their IGCSE and IB exams. All EOY exams should have clear mark schemes.

**Performance Assessments:** Outside of the controlled assessment of Cycle Tests and Exams, many subjects run Performance-based assessments such as extended written pieces, compositions, and project work. These should have clear rubrics to support them.

Important Exam and Test Guidelines:

- All grade 9 and 10 summative tests and trial exams should be taken from iGCSE papers or syllabi Multiple choice tests can be a powerful indicator of subject knowledge, but they should be well-designed and not include options that are way too easy or humorous (this does not test a student's learning)
- Teachers should be fair and reasonable with test setting
- Students must be informed what is on the test at least a week before the test date via Google Classroom

## 4. MONITORING STUDENT PROGRESS

### Grading

Each teacher only awards grades for the summative assessments in their subject. Each department uses subject-specific criteria (embedded in rubrics, moderation, or conversion tables) to determine the grades for these summative assessments.

In the Senior School, the following grade ranges are used:

- Grades 6 - 8: Cambridge International Assessment Scale - G (lowest) to A\* (highest)
- Grades 9 - 10: Cambridge International Examinations (English, Maths, Portuguese, all Options except Music) - G (lowest) to A\* (highest); or Pearson Edexcel (Science, Music, and Portuguese Second Language) - 1 (lowest) to 9 (highest)
- With grade 6 - 9, this is given as a 'leading to' grade i.e. this piece of work is commensurate to an eventual \_\_ at iGCSE. With grade 10 this is a 'working at' grade.
- Grades 11 - 12: IB Diploma - 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest)
- In Grade 11, this is given as a 'leading to' grade. In Grade 12, this is given as a 'working at' grade. TOK will always be assessed by A-E scale. CAS will always be a qualitative statement. Extended Essay will be a qualitative statement in DP1 term 2, and will then be assessed by the A-E scale.

### Recording and Tracking

Teachers are responsible for keeping records of ongoing formative assessment and giving student feedback. They are also responsible for entering the two summative grades in the centralised data tracking system across each Grade Round.

Summative grades are tracked by the Head of Department, Head of Student Progress, and Deputy Head (Academic). Our Grade-Round Trackers are used to identify and act upon both under-attainment and under-achievement.

*Under-achievement* occurs when students are not making the progress they should be towards their CEM most likely grades. PaRK IS uses CEM data and other historical student-specific data to determine most likely outcomes for students, and then uses these outcomes as benchmarks to track student progress.

*Under-attainment* occurs when our students do not reach the minimum grades required by the Portuguese Ministry of Education to pass the year.

Once either of these is identified through the data trackers, the Head of Student Progress works with subject teachers to plan for in-class intervention to help students make accelerated progress. Severe under-attainment occurs when students are not passing in 3 or more subjects, or if they are not passing in 2 or more core subjects (English, Portuguese and Maths). In these cases, an Academic Action Plan is created and shared with the student, Parent/Guardian and subject teachers.

A “*final recuperação*” exists to address the needs of students who are in danger of failing at the end of the year.

If a student is absent for a summative assessment for any reason we follow the following procedures:

1. **Short-term Absences:** Students that miss summative assessments must catch them up on return to school (within three days of their return). They must organise this with their teachers. Teachers are welcome and encouraged to use the staff hour or detention time after school to set the missed tests in controlled conditions (the member of SLT running the detention will monitor the test). If the student misses this opportunity and does not communicate their absence with the teacher, they may receive a fail in this assessment task.
2. **Medium to Long Term Absences:** If it is a medium to long term issue, they will be given an “M” for that assessment if it is a Medical issue, or an “NA” if it is an authorised absence. These will not count in the termly weightings (the other assessment and teacher judgement will make up the Grade Round grade).

### Reporting

Reporting provides relevant, summarised information concerning the curriculum and the students’ personal and academic progress, and their future targets. At PaRK IS we produce an academic and pastoral report three times a year. Each report uses around 10 weeks of curriculum time (known as a Grade Round) to assess students in their individual subjects and in their tutor and co-curricular time. Each report contains subject grades and targets, qualitative statements on students’ Approach to Learning, a pastoral comment from the tutor, and a self-reflection comment from the student themselves. This report is issued through iSAMS.

For Grades 8 to 10, parents are invited into school once a year to speak with subject teachers and tutors about the progress of their child. For Grades 6 and 7, the Parent/Guardian is invited into school twice a year. Parent-Student Conferences (PSC) are generally organised for the end of the first Grade Round; thus giving teachers enough time to form an accurate picture of their students and enough time to discuss with parents concrete ways for the students to make progress in the following two Grade Rounds. Grade 10 will have a further optional PSC after the Trial Exams if any final discussions are needed before the iGCSE exams.

For Grade 11 and 12 there are three PSCs over the two years; the first in term one of Grade 11 to review progress early on in the year, the second in term one of Grade 12 to review progress across Grade 11, and the third after the Trial Exams in Grade 12.

At the beginning of every academic year the Assessment and Reporting Calendar is produced and sent to the Parent/Guardian with key dates of all PSCs, reports, and End of Year exam periods. The structure and weightings of the Grade Rounds are also issued in the calendar.



## 5. SUPPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

As mentioned above, PaRK IS identifies and supports students that are both under-achieving and under-attaining. We mainly do this through the provision of planned in-class interventions that are identified and recorded after each Grade Round. Teachers are also asked to provide one-to-one and/or small group support for students that need it outside of class time.

In all grades, subject-specific support sessions are put on for students outside of class time and there is extra emphasis on targeted support sessions and workshops for students in Grades 10 and 12.

Students with significant under-attainment are supported through the implementation of Academic Action Plans. After identification of these students through the data tracking process, *Conselhos de Turma* are called to create Academic Action Plans for the next assessment cycle. These Action Plans are shared with the student, Parent/Guardian and subject teachers.

## 6. SELF-REFLECTION AND SELF-REPORTING

The work of [John Hattie](#) and the [Education Endowment Foundation](#) have helped schools identify which strategies help students learn best. At the top of their list in terms of effect size is self-reporting, self-reflection, and metacognition. PaRK IS has thus developed a system to ensure our students are regularly reflecting on their learning:

### Ongoing Self-Reflection and Metacognition

Ongoing Self-Reflection is encouraged through curriculum design and individual lesson planning. When designing curriculum, teachers are asked to:

- Plan into the curriculum times for Self-Reflection
- Follow up all large formative and summative assessments with student Self-Reflection - this should use mark schemes and rubrics to ensure students compare their own work to model answers

When designing individual lessons, teachers are asked to:

- Give task-based success criteria to support cognition
- Use mini-plenaries to foster self-reflection and metacognition

### Learner Profile Self-Reflection

During the final week of the Grade Round, students will also be asked to reflect on their engagement with the Learner Profile in Social Skills time.

There will be a Learner Profile Self-Reflection form put on their Tutor Group Google Classroom and administered by the Tutor.

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This form will be the same for all students in Grade 6-10 and 11-12. It will focus on a qualitative self-assessment of a student's meeting of the Learner Profile or IB AtLs. It will also involve a section where students can write a general self-reflection statement that will be inserted into the end of term iSAMS report.

## 6. FEEDBACK AND MARKING

[Elliot et al](#) (2016) outline a wide variety of strategies to ensure quality feedback. We incorporate those here into our guidelines for teachers on how to give quality feedback:

- Teachers must only give grades for the key summative assessment tasks in a term; grading erodes the positive effect feedback has on progress
- Teachers should avoid traditional forms of “tick-and-flick” marking, and concentrate their time on the “deep marking” of performance tasks. In this sense, PaRK IS supports a “selective approach” to marking.
- Marking should give tangible written targets for improvement
- Time in class should be given for students to read these targets, reflect on them, and act on them in a new context e.g. redrafting, another practice task, etc
- Marking can involve looking through students’ work and making a list of the common “errors” the majority of students are making - teachers can then share with the students at the beginning of a lesson these errors and ask students to correct them
- Feedback should focus on “errors” in understanding, not “mistakes” students are unintentionally making
- Feedback on a performance or composition task should be given as soon as possible - verbal feedback is a great way to give instantaneous feedback, but written feedback too should aim to be quick and actionable
- Students should receive recorded feedback (usually in written or typed form but it could be audio or video) at least once every 2 weeks in subjects for which they receive 3 or more hours of teaching per week, and once every 3 weeks for subjects for which they receive less than 3 hours of teaching per week. Feedback related to grade round summative assessments is included in this.

## 7. ASSESSMENT AT IB LEVEL

In Grade 11 and 12 we follow the IB Diploma Assessment Guidelines.

All subjects have both Internal and External Assessment.

All IA and Core Programme related assessments are set and monitored using ManageBac, as well as all key summative assessments that are not completed in test form. Turn-it-in is used to ensure academic integrity during the process (see the Academic Honesty part of our Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum Policy for more details).

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# An **inspired** school

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Embracing **Individuality**. Preparing **Leaders**.