



Engaging the mind. Engaging the world.

Desert Academy MYP Assessment Policy



Desert Academy
7300 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87505
p 505.992.8284, f 505.992.8270

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The IB publication: *MYP - From principles into practice (For use from September 2014/January 2015)* has been used during the development of this policy. Even though not specifically noted, this policy contains many direct and indirect quotations from that publication.

1. Purpose

The MYP assessment policy at Desert Academy is a working document developed by the MYP leadership team and Head of School at Desert Academy. It provides an overview of Desert Academy's beliefs and practices regarding the purpose and use of assessment within the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB MYP), and it is consistent with the standard and practices of the IB MYP.

2. Review and communication

The MYP Assessment policy is reviewed yearly by the MYP leadership team. Feedback from students, parents and teachers will be taken into consideration during the review. The MYP Assessment policy will be available to the entire school community on our website, and is also made available during parent conferences, open house and parent nights. Teachers are encouraged to discuss the assessment policies with their students at an age appropriate level, and it is an agenda item during the yearly all-faculty in-service in August.

3. Mission

Desert Academy Mission Statement

Desert Academy is dedicated to academic and personal excellence. We provide a quality college preparatory education in a diverse school community which values individuality, builds character, promotes self-confidence, and fosters global understanding.

The MYP Assessment Policy at Desert Academy is closely tied to our Mission Statement. We believe that teaching, learning and assessment of that learning are fundamentally interdependent. Assessment is an essential part of the taught curriculum; it is the means by which we analyze student learning and the effectiveness of our teaching, it is the foundation on which to base our future planning and practice, and it is integral to guiding students through the learning process. Therefore, since assessment plays a crucial role in the student's learning, this policy is important in helping Desert Academy achieve its mission.

4. Principles

At Desert Academy, assessment is ongoing, varied and integral to teaching and learning, and is an internal, school-based process. The MYP criterion-related grading system, where numbers are used to represent qualitative descriptions of achievement when assessing, is used.

Teachers in MYP make decisions about student achievement using their professional judgment, guided by MYP mandated criteria that are disclosed to and known by students in advance. This ensures that assessment is transparent. The assessment tasks, strategies and tools applied at Desert Academy meet the MYP requirements, which include the use of MYP subject-specific assessment criteria for each year of the program for summative assessments. The individual assessment tasks are designed, developed and applied by either the individual subject teacher or through a collaboration of teachers; this process is an integral part of the planning of a unit of learning.

MYP Assessment at Desert Academy aims to:

- Support and encourage student learning by providing feedback on the learning process that are positive and constructive
- Provide students and parents with information about student learning and achievement and identify areas of strengths and weaknesses
- Inform, enhance and improve the learning process and inform the planning of teaching and learning.
- Promote the development of critical- and creative-thinking skills
- Reflect the international-mindedness of the MYP by allowing assessments to be set in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts
- Support the development of the whole student
- Accommodate different learning styles
- Account for a variety of learning styles
- Promote reflection among teachers and students

The assessment practice including the awarding, recording and reporting of student achievement at Desert Academy is described in detail in the following sections.

5. MYP Assessment, formative and summative

At Desert Academy, both formative and summative assessments are used.

Formative assessment is typically used before and/or during a unit of study. Formative assessment is assessing for learning with the purpose of providing students opportunities to practice, self-assess and reflect. Formative assessment gives teachers and students insights into the ongoing development of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. Formative assessment will sometimes be criterion related, but can also take the form of informal observation, question-and-answer sessions, reflection, quizzes, written work, etc.

Summative assessment takes place as the cumulative assessment for a unit, term, or course of study. The summative assessment gives the teacher evidence for evaluating the student's achievement level against the assessment criteria and contributes to the determination of the student's achievement level in that specific criterion. The criterion and their descriptors are mandated by IB. The teacher can design and develop many different forms of summative assessment tasks. Examples of tasks:

- Compositions (musical, physical, artistic)
- Creation of solutions of products in response to problems
- Essays
- Examinations
- Questionnaires
- Investigations
- Research
- Performances
- Presentations (verbal, written, graphic through various media)

6. MYP Assessment Criteria and Assessment Rubrics

The MYP curriculum is organized through the study of eight subject-groups: language acquisition, language and literature, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, arts, physical and health education, and design. This is illustrated in the program model below:



Each subject-group has four learning objectives that directly correspond to four assessment criterion. The same is true for the Personal Project (year 5) and interdisciplinary units. The table shows an overview of the criterion for each subject, the personal project and interdisciplinary units.

The MYP assessment criteria across subject groups can be summarized as follows.

	A	B	C	D
Language and literature	Analysing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
Language acquisition	Comprehending spoken and visual text	Comprehending written and visual text	Communicating	Using language
Individuals and societies	Knowing and understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking critically
Sciences	Knowing and understanding	Inquiring and designing	Processing and evaluating	Reflecting on the impacts of science
Mathematics	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics in real-world contexts
Arts	Knowing and understanding	Developing skills	Thinking creatively	Responding
Physical and health education	Knowing and understanding	Planning for performance	Applying and performing	Reflecting and improving performance
Design	Inquiring and analysing	Developing ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating
MYP projects	Investigating	Planning	Taking action	Reflecting
Interdisciplinary	Disciplinary grounding	Synthesizing and applying	Communicating	Reflecting

Each of these criteria are divided into various achievement levels (numerical values from 0 to 8) that appear in bands, and each band contains general, qualitative value statements called level descriptors that define what students need to do to achieve that specific level. The levels 1 and 2 appear as the first band, levels 3 and 4 as the second band, and so on. Level 0 is available for work that is not described by the band descriptor for levels 1 and 2. All criteria have four bands and a maximum of eight achievement levels and each criterion in a subject is equally weighted. All summative assessments must be designed to allow the students to achieve all achievement levels.

Below is an example of a rubric for year 3 (8th grade) **Language and literature (English)**, criterion B

Criterion B: Organizing	
Achievement level	Level descriptor – Year 3
0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1–2	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. makes minimal use of organizational structures though these may not always serve the context and intention ii. organizes opinions and ideas with a minimal degree of coherence and logic iii. makes minimal use of referencing and formatting tools to create a presentation style that may not always be suitable to the context and intention.
3–4	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. makes adequate use of organizational structures that serve the context and intention ii. organizes opinions and ideas with some degree of coherence and logic iii. makes adequate use of referencing and formatting tools to create a presentation style suitable to the context and intention.
5–6	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. makes competent use of organizational structures that serve the context and intention ii. organizes opinions and ideas in a coherent and logical manner with ideas building on each other iii. makes competent use of referencing and formatting tools to create a presentation style suitable to the context and intention.
7–8	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. makes sophisticated use of organizational structures that serve the context and intention effectively ii. effectively organizes opinions and ideas in a coherent and logical manner with ideas building on each other in a sophisticated way iii. makes excellent use of referencing and formatting tools to create an effective presentation style.

An assessment task may provide evidence of achievement in all strands of a criterion, and more than one criterion can be assessed in an assessment task.

Given that the MYP-published assessment criteria are holistic, in that they offer general, qualitative value statements about student achievement, the teacher can develop task-specific clarifications when needed. Task-specific clarifications bring a level of specificity to the assessment criteria. However, each task-specific clarification will be based on the published MYP assessment criterion.

7. Achievement levels

IB has published the criterion and their descriptors for achievement levels in assessment rubrics as shown above. These rubrics are used at Desert Academy for all summative assessments. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that students have the relevant assessment rubric and clear task descriptions/directions for all summative assessments.

IB has published assessment rubrics for year 1 (6th Grade), year 3 (8th grade) and year 5 (10th grade). At Desert Academy, year 2 (7th grade) uses rubrics from either year 1 or 3 at the teacher's discretion. In year 4 the year 5 rubrics are used. However, in special circumstances a teacher who teaches year 4 may decide to use the year 3 rubric.

When applying the assessment criteria to a student's performance, the teacher will determine whether the first descriptor describes the performance. If the student work exceeds the expectations of the first descriptor, the teacher will determine whether it is described by the second descriptor. The teacher will continue until he/she arrives at a descriptor that does not describe the student work. The work will be described by the previous descriptor. In certain cases, it may appear that the student has not fulfilled all of the descriptors in a lower band but has fulfilled some in a higher band. In those cases, teachers will use their professional judgment in determining the descriptor that best fits the student's performance.

Where more than one teacher is teaching the same class standardization of assessment takes place. This process involves teachers meeting to come to a common understanding on the criteria and achievement levels and how they are applied for that particular course. In doing so, teachers ensure consistency and reliability of their judgments. Standardization is also required for teachers involved in the Personal Project.

For students with special needs or circumstances, the teacher will adhere to the Desert Academy Special Educational Need policy. Also, the Academic Honesty policy at Desert Academy will be followed, and if misconduct is suspected and/or detected, it will be acted upon according to the Academic Honesty school policy guidelines.

8. Awarding and reporting of student achievement levels

MYP students will receive two types of academic numeric marks.

- **During a semester**, students will receive subject-specific criterion-based marks for individual assignments and assessment tasks on a scale from 0 to 8. These marks will be communicated via ManageBac.
- At the **end of a semester**, the student will receive a final achievement marks on a scale from 1-7 for each subject studied. This final achievement mark is then 'translated' into a letter grade. The final achievement mark and letter grade will be communicated via report card and ManageBac.

The **subject-specific criterion-based** marks are awarded according to the process described above for each individual assessment task. For each subject, teachers are required to assess all four criteria twice in a semester. (All strands for each criterion must be assessed at least once.) However, teachers might choose to

assess each criterion more than twice. The only exception to this is quarter-long classes and PHE, where teachers are only required to assess all four criteria (all strands) at least once. The awarded mark for a summative assessment is recorded and communicated via ManageBac, where all summative assessments are logged. Decimals, percentages, or fractions are not consistent with criterion-related assessment and are not used as summative assessment marks at Desert Academy. Key formative assessments will also be logged on ManageBac.

The final achievement marks are awarded at the end of each semester. The teacher will, based on the evidence collected throughout the semester, use professional and informed judgment to award each student a final achievement level in each of the criteria. The achievement level is not an arithmetical average of the marks achieved throughout the semester; rather the student will be graded on where his or her skills fall at the end of the semester (i.e., what level of mastery of the subject matter has been achieved). This allows for the acknowledgment of growth where the student is not penalized for earlier work that might not reflect the current level of understanding.

The final achievement levels for each of the criteria are added together. The sum produced is used to translate the student's final achievement into the IB MYP 1-7 scale according to the official MYP published grade boundaries. (See below). For example, if the sum of the values awarded for each criterion in a Language and literature class is 25; the final achievement mark for that class will be MYP grade 6. Numeric scales are commonly used in educational systems around the world, and the IB 1-7 scale is one of the most widely recognized, both internationally and within the United States

The grade boundary guide is the same for all years and subjects in MYP.

Grade	Boundary guidelines	Descriptor
1	1-5	Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.
2	6-9	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.
3	10-14	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.

4	15-18	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.
5	19-23	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 real-world situations and, with support, some unfamiliar real-world situations.
6	24-27	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.
7	28-32	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.

Finally, the MYP grade awarded (1-7) will be translated into a letter grade. The scale used is developed, revised and approved by the Head of School with guidance from both teachers and administration.

Excellent	7	A+/A
Very Good	6	A/A-
Good	5	B+/B
Satisfactory	4	B-/C+
Acceptable	3	C/C-
Poor	2	D
Very Poor	1	F

Note: Teachers may use the lower letter grade at each level to reflect holistic factors **not** related to the level of student achievement in a class, e.g., a tendency to turn in late assignments, overall poor effort or attendance, etc.

9. Awarding of grade for Personal Project (10th grade)

The Personal Project in 10th grade is graded by the student's Personal Project advisor and/or Personal Project Coordinator. The student will be awarded a pass or fail. The pass/fail will be recorded on the student's transcript. This grade (pass/fail) is a Desert Academy awarded grade according to Desert Academy's pass/fail criteria. In the case where a student is awarded a fail, the student will be offered to complete a new Personal Project any time during his or her junior or senior year. In order to graduate from Desert Academy a student is required to complete and pass the Personal Project.

Student's Personal Projects are moderated by IB. This moderation is mandatory for all IB schools. As a result of the moderation, IB will award each student a IB MYP Personal Project grade. This MYP grade will be communicated to students when available, typically 6 months after the April moderation deadline. The IB awarded grade is not recorded on the student's Desert Academy transcript and will have no effect on the already awarded pass/fail.

10. Late assignment policy

There will be consequences for late submission of assignments. Our teachers, with their close interactions with students, are best placed to make decisions about the implementation of this policy. This will be determined by the professional judgment of the classroom teachers and may take into consideration the following factors:

- age of student
- previous occurrences
- student's academic history in that class
- other personal circumstances*

At all grade levels, no assignment will be accepted for credit after the given unit in which it was assigned.

For each individual **Middle School (grade 6 – 8) student** in a class, an assignment that is less than three school days late will be accepted and graded on the first incident. The second incident will result in a written notice sent to parents, at which point student and parents will be informed that a third occurrence will trigger a meeting with parents, student, teacher and Learning Advisor. At this meeting, parents and student will be informed that, beginning with this incident, there may be a reduction of one numerical value (e.g., from 5 to 4) for each criterion upon which the assignment is assessed, as well as a meeting that includes the Assistant Head of School. These consequences will be instituted at the discretion of the teacher, and no consequences above and beyond these will occur without consultation with the Assistant Head of School.

For **9th and 10th graders**, an assignment submitted late but before the completion of a given unit may result in a reduction of one numerical value (e.g., from 7 to 6) for each criterion upon which the assignment is assessed, at the discretion of the teacher. New deadlines will usually be given, and parents may be notified. Repeated occurrences will cause escalation to parents and Assistant Head of School, as appropriate.

* It should be noted, that for students with an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), the ILP will inform the process. Please see our Special Education Needs policy (SEN policy) for further details.

11. Glossary of MYP terms

Assessment criteria	Criteria against which a student's performance is measured as evidenced by work produced. Subject-group guides provide assessment criteria to be used for final assessment for each subject group and for the personal project.
Assessment task	The activity or series of activities with which students engage in order for assessment to take place.
Assessment rubric	A grid that contains levels and descriptors.
Bands	Each criterion is divided into four achievement levels (numerical values) that appear in bands on the assessment rubric. Each band contains general, qualitative value statements called level descriptors and represents two levels of achievement; 1-2, 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8.
Criterion	MYP objectives are described in terms of what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme. Each objective is aligned with its corresponding assessment criterion.
Criterion-related assessment	An assessment process based on determining levels of achievement against previously agreed criteria. MYP assessment is criterion-related.
Descriptors	Achievement level descriptors describe the differences in student accomplishment for each assessment criterion and correspond to the achievement level that should be awarded.
Formative assessment	Ongoing assessment aimed at providing information to guide teaching and learning and promote reflection to help improve student performance.
Internal assessment	The assessment of a student's work that is carried out by a student's teacher(s).
Levels of achievement	Each criterion is divided into various achievement levels (numerical values) that appear in bands. All MYP subject groups have four assessment criteria divided into four bands, each of which represents two levels of achievement.
Objectives	One of a set of statements for a subject or the personal project, describing the skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the course/project. The assessment criteria correspond to the objectives. Student achievement of the objectives is evaluated using the assessment criteria.
Subject group	A collection of related courses grouped into a common category, which together represent a broad and balanced curriculum. The MYP is organized into eight subject groups: arts, design, individuals and societies, language acquisition, language and literature, mathematics, physical and health education, and sciences
Summative assessment	The culminating assessment for a unit, term or course of study, designed to provide information on the student's achievement level against specific objectives.
Task-specific rubric/clarification	An assessment grid adapted by the teacher that better identifies how the general achievement level descriptors can be addressed by the students for a given task. Task-specific rubrics are useful in every year of the MYP. Task-specific rubrics are not meant to replace the subject-specific criteria so students should also have access to the originals. The task-specific rubric will help the students to gain further understanding of the generic descriptors
Unit	A series of lessons, focused through a statement of inquiry and inquiry questions, designed to enable students to achieve some of the objectives of an MYP subject group.