Academy for Discovery at Lakewood
IB Middle Years Programme
Assessment Policy

Philosophy: Why does assessment matter?

The Academy for Discovery at Lakewood staff believes that meaningful learning occurs when teachers and students aim for purposeful and appropriately challenging learning goals. Assessment plays an important role in the achievement of those goals. Clearly defined objectives establish those goals while success criteria describe the evidence needed to justify that these goals were met. Effective assessment informs instructional decisions, provides feedback to guide improvement efforts and prompts the self-reflection of students and teachers who use the information assessments generate. The decisions fostered by assessment can help to make next steps more likely to result in progress toward targeted goals. Strategically used assessment also supports the realization of Lakewood's mission.

> *Academy for Discovery at Lakewood Mission Statement*
> *In partnership with students, families, and community, the Academy for Discovery at Lakewood will inspire in its students a lifelong passion for learning in a global society. With a commitment to academic excellence and personal integrity, students will demonstrate independent and reflective thinking, creativity, as well as a sense of social responsibility and intercultural understanding.*

A *lifelong passion for learning* and a *commitment to academic excellence* requires that students are knowledgeable and possess the skills for inquiry, creative thinking, critical thinking and self-reflection. This policy strives to help all Lakewood students in the development of those IB learner profile attributes. Assessments serve a valuable role in the development of every learner's ability to use feedback to progress when they also possess the disposition to do so. Lakewood's staff is committed to helping all students develop the skill and the will to become assessment-capable learners and thoughtful decision makers.

Purpose: Assessment to serve learning now and into the future.

Traditional report card grades can represent achievement attained, but frequently fail to drive learning or support progress for ALL students. This policy establishes goals and practices to enable Lakewood students, teachers and parents to use the information assessments provide to improve learning and instruction as they collaborate to ensure that ALL students are prepared to meet future challenges with success. Within the Middle Years Programme Lakewood has the opportunity to utilize the assessment practices required by IB in ways which provide the greatest chance for every individual student to experience significant growth as a learner prepared to meet future learning experiences.

Assessment Principles: What are the characteristics of effective assessment?

I. Assessments are authentic, rigorous and student-centered when:
- Assessment tasks are clear and communicate effectively.
- Students' abilities to self-assess are supported.
- Assessments are appropriately challenging.
- Assessments provide reliable evidence of progress toward targeted goals.

II. Assessment is transparent and shared when:
- Students are aware of and understand assessment criteria prior to summative evaluations.
- Assessments promote discourse between students and teachers.
- Assessment practices clarify communication between teachers and parents.

III. Assessments provide meaningful, useful feedback to support learner progress when:
- Assessments support students <u>as</u> they are learning.
- Students are able to use assessment feedback to continually progress as a learner.
- Student outcomes evidenced in assessments are aligned to MYP objectives and Virginia Standards of Learning.

IV. Assessments are used to inform, enhance and improve the teaching process when:
- Teachers are able to use assessment in-the-moment to drive instructional decisions.
- Assessment data promotes collaboration between teachers when planning for instruction.

V. Assessments enable all students to become stronger, more self-regulated learners when:
- Instruction in Approaches to Learning skills builds students' abilities to use assessment results to inform their next steps toward improving outcomes.

Assessment Practices: How do we assess?

Formative assessments are used as tools *for learning* where summative assessments provide evidence *of learning*. Teachers use the information from these assessments to adjust their instructional strategies and to provide specific feedback to promote students' progress toward mastery of targeted understandings, knowledge, and skills. Formative assessments can also be used by students for peer- and/or self-assessment. Involving students in the assessment process increases their awareness of the MYP objectives and assessment criteria. When students are aware of expectations, they are able to take ownership of their learning. As they practice how to give, receive, and use meaningful feedback, they develop the ability to reflect and set goals, so they are able to move to the next level of achievement.

The "just-in-time" feedback provided students on formative assessments is the most critical assessment practice available to Lakewood students, teachers, and families.
> *After reviewing 7,827 studies on learning and instruction, researcher John Hattie . . . reported that providing students with specific information about their standing in terms of particular objectives increased their achievement by 37 percentile points* (Wormeli. 2006, p. 28).

Summative assessments provide evidence *of learning* and are part of every MYP unit. These assessments indicate student progress in the MYP subject-group assessment criteria. Students' current levels of achievement related to these specific targeted objectives reflect their abilities to use the knowledge, understandings, and skills they were taught. These include facts, concepts, procedures and metacognition (a student's ability to recognize what they do know, what they do not know, and what to do when they do not know.)

Success Criteria clearly identify achievement levels for each objective on all formative and summative assessments. Their use with formative assessments helps students answer three basic questions: What are my learning goals? Where am I now? What do I need to do to close the gap between where I am now and where I need to go? The success criteria found on the MYP Criteria rubrics are shared with students and families in advance and serve to clarify objectives for learning. These criteria, four for each subject group, remain the same even as unit content changes.
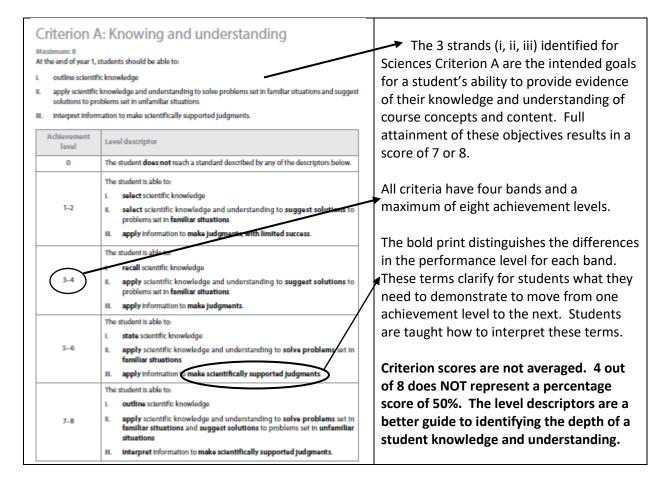
Teachers use these criteria to assess student progress and to collaborate in subject-group teams to standardize their use. These criteria have the greatest impact on achievement when students are able to reflect on their progress and develop their own personal strategies to become more effective learners.

***Approaches to Learning (ATL)* skills** provide valuable support in developing the learning skills and behaviors students will use throughout their lives. ATL skills help students "learn how to learn." Lakewood teachers embed instruction related to these skills within every unit they teach, working with colleagues to identify which specific skills in their subject group are critical to student success. Strategies for developing these skills are shared with students and feedback on their progress is communicated formally and informally. Growth in ATL skills strengthens the very behaviors which contribute to student achievement.

Approaches to Learning (ATL) Skill categories:

Communication		
Exchanging thoughts, messages and information effectively through interaction	*Reading, writing and using language to gather and communicate information*	
Social		
Collaboration - Working effectively with others		
Self-Management		
Organization - Managing time and task effectively	*Affective - Managing state of mind*	*Reflection - (Re)considering the process of learning; choosing and using ATL skills*
Research		
Information Literacy - Finding, interpreting, judging and creating information	*Media Literacy - Interacting with media to use and create ideas and information*	
Thinking		
Critical Thinking - Analyzing and evaluating issues and ideas	*Creative Thinking - Generating novel ideas and considering new perspectives*	*Transfer - Using skills and knowledge in multiple contexts*

Assessment Results: How is assessment information reported?

Effective use of assessment results requires the collaborative efforts of teachers, students and families. To that end it is imperative that all parties understand what every assessment communicates regarding student progress. MYP assessment criteria will be used by Lakewood teachers to report student progress towards the related objectives prescribed for each subject-group (see chart on next page). These criteria assess *the factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive dimensions of knowledge* taught within each subject ("MYP: From principles into practice," 2014). Students will receive direct instruction in the use and interpretation of rubrics used to assess their work. Additionally, Lakewood's MYP coordinator offers assessment information sessions to parents via Zoom in the fall of each school year. The rubrics for each subject-group at all grade levels are shared with families in meetings and through ParentVue in Synergy. An example of the MYP Sciences assessment criteria for Criterion A for Year 1 (grade 6) is included below with explanations.

The 3 strands (i, ii, iii) identified for Sciences Criterion A are the intended goals for a student's ability to provide evidence of their knowledge and understanding of course concepts and content. Full attainment of these objectives results in a score of 7 or 8.

All criteria have four bands and a maximum of eight achievement levels.

The bold print distinguishes the differences in the performance level for each band. These terms clarify for students what they need to demonstrate to move from one achievement level to the next. Students are taught how to interpret these terms.

Criterion scores are not averaged. 4 out of 8 does NOT represent a percentage score of 50%. The level descriptors are a better guide to identifying the depth of a student knowledge and understanding.

Course	Criterion A Summative 25%	Criterion B Summative 25%	Criterion C Summative 25%	Criterion D Summative 25%	ATLs 0%	Other 0%
Languages and Literature	Analyzing	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 Design	Processing and Evaluation	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 Performing	Reflecting and Improving Performance		
Design	Inquiring and Analysis	Developing Ideas	Creating the Solution	Evaluating		

Academy for Discovery at Lakewood MYP Assessment Criteria Across Subjects

Please Refer to the Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills section on page 3

Please Refer to the " Other " section on page 4

What is reported in Synergy ParentVue and StudentVue?

Student scores are reported and inform in the following ways:

Category	Purpose
Criterion A Summative	Evaluation for a letter grade – contributes to Current Progress A
Criterion A Formative	Information – indicates readiness for Summative A*
Criterion B Summative	Evaluation for a letter grade – contributes to Current Progress B
Criterion B Formative	Information – indicates readiness for Summative B*
Criterion C Summative	Evaluation for a letter grade – contributes to Current Progress C
Criterion C Formative	Information – indicates readiness for Summative C*
Criterion D Summative	Evaluation for a letter grade – contributes to Current Progress D
Criterion D Formative	Information – indicates readiness for Summative D*
Approaches to Learning	Reports student progress on targeted ATLs or Learning to Learn skills important to academic success.
Other	Updates Current Progress in every criterion – letter grades indicated on progress reports are the sum of all four Current Progress scores.

How are student grades determined?
Summative assessments evaluate knowledge and understanding at the end of a unit and are used to determine a student's grade. The letter grade reported on progress reports is a sum of all four Current Progress scores for Criterions A, B, C, and D. The General Grade Descriptors and Grade Equivalency Chart on the next page converts that sum into a letter grade.

A student's Current Progress score is updated after every new summative assessment. Since students are evaluated using the same criteria throughout the year, progress is likely and expected. However, there are times when student effort impacts that progress. The following process is used to update Current Progress. Student scores following each new summative assessment can:
1. Improve up to 2 points or
2. Remain the same or
3. Decline by 1 point.

*Formative assessments are sometimes used to update a student's Current Progress. This occurs only when a formative assessment evaluates a student on all strands in a rubric. Formative assessments never cause a student's Current Progress to go up or down more than 1 point.

Approaches to Learning scores do not contribute to a student's grade, however they are an important indicator of a behavior which may contribute to or hinder a student's progress.

The chart on the next page shows how criteria totals are translated to a letter grade. Even though letter grades communicate in familiar ways, the descriptor column in this chart provides a clearer explanation of a students' actual achievement and how improvement gains could be achieved in the future.

General Grade Descriptors and Grade Equivalencies

Grade	Boundary guidelines	GPA	Descriptor
A	28-32	4.0	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.
A-	24-27	3.7	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.
B+	21-23	3.3	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 classroom and real-world situations, often with independence.
B	19-20	3.0	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.
B-	16-18	2.7	
C+	14-15	2.3	Produces work of 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.
C	12-13	2.0	
C-	10-11	1.7	
D+	8-9	1.3	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.
D	6-7	1.0	
E	1-5	0.0	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.

Monitoring Student Progress

Utilizing MYP Criteria to determine student progress and grades means student achievement is determined by the same objectives in a subject group throughout their MYP experience. This is challenging and rewarding. The challenge is greatest in Year 1 as students and families acclimate to this form of reporting student progress. It takes time to recognize how learning behaviors as outlined in the approaches to learning can facilitate that progress when practiced and can hinder progress when not implemented. ATL skills are not inherently possessed by every learner and require targeted instruction to support student progress. That support is planned in every unit taught and contributes to student achievement over time. Those skills also transfer to subsequent grades, schools, and lifetime experiences.

Lakewood's assessment policy regarding letter grades includes a commitment to reward progress made over a school year. This helps to ease the anxiety grade 6 students and families feel when receiving scores based on an 8-point scale and when behaviors such as completing assignments on time are encouraged, but not part of computing a student's letter grade. That commitment is to change students' earlier letter grades to match a stronger grade earned at year's end. Students in grades 7 & 8 are accustomed to Lakewood's assessment practices and know how and why their progress is reported using common standards.

	Student	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Final
1	Lisa learning	C	C	B	A	A
2	Lisa earned	A	A	A	A	
1	Tom learning	C	D	C	B	B
2	Tom earned	B	B	B	B	

The table above shows how Lakewood meets the commitment made to MYP students and their families. Rows 1 show the letter grades Lisa and Tom received while they were <u>learning</u> over one school year. Those grades are transformed to reflect what they <u>earned</u> academically over the same year and are the grades which remain a part of their academic record.

The best analogy we have to explain the reasoning for this practice and our grading philosophy is the process used to earn a driver's license. When an individual takes a driving test the score they receive is not averaged with all of their performances behind the wheel as they learned how to drive. During the school year, Lisa and Tom were learning how to learn. Does every student make steady progress from quarter 1 to quarter 4? No. Some lose drive in quarter 4 and their grade drops. That does not mean Lakewood will change all previous grades to match the later lower one. The sample below shows how that scenario ends.

	Student	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Final
1	Ben learning	B	B	B	C	B
2	Ben earned	B	B	B	C	

Individual Student Progress: How is evidence of progress shared with families?

Progress reports communicate current grades. Opportunities to discuss progress with individual families will be provided in two ways: parent conferences and student-led conferences in grade 6. Parent Conferences take place twice each month after school. These conferences are initiated by parents and are scheduled through school counselors. All of a student's teachers attend these conferences to discuss student progress and answer parent questions.

Student-led conferences are developed at Lakewood in grade six through Design classes. Student-led conferences *are part of a system of student-engaged assessment that involves students in analyzing and investing in their own growth, changing the primary role of assessment from evaluating and ranking students to motivating and equipping them to learn* (Berger, Ron. 2014). Lakewood students are supported in reflecting upon their strengths and weaknesses and in assembling portfolio evidence to clearly communicate that reflection. Additionally, students will collaborate with a teacher and peers to practice leading a conference with their parent or other student-selected adult.

Communication of Policy

The Assessment Policy is shared with all faculty new to Lakewood in a formal meeting with the MYP coordinator. It is accessible to all staff on the shared drive. Parent meetings led by Lakewood's coordinator or a member of the instructional leadership team are held upon request over Zoom or in groups in person. Families of incoming grade 6 students are introduced to the MYP assessment practices during evening commitment presentations. Additionally, copies of the policy are available upon request from Lakewood's media specialist and are posted on the school's website.

Lakewood staff also realizes that using a standards-based form of evaluation to report student progress requires a great deal of support for students and their families. A tutorial YouTube video is available on Lakewood's blog (https://adlmyp.edublogs.org/) which families are encouraged to follow.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if a student fails to turn in an assignment?

In traditional grading tasks which are not completed are recorded as a zero and averaged into a student's final grade whether or not the tasks were formative (practice) or summative. Within Lakewood's MYP grading practices zeroes are recorded as M or missing in Synergy. Failure to complete assignments is a behavior and represents no evidence of progress towards mastery. If a student frequently fails to complete assignments, that is represented in the Approaches to Learning category in Synergy as a reflection of the student's ability to self-manage. Failure to complete assignments will naturally impact a student's progress as the tasks themselves provide practice. Additionally, students lose an opportunity to receive valuable feedback on their progress when they fail to complete an assignment. Without a sufficient pattern of evidence to interpret a student's progress a failing grade may result. Efforts will be made to seek family support to prevent such outcomes.

When is the work a student submits for grading not considered as evidence of progress?

The simplest way to answer this is: when the work varies greatly from the student's own usual effort. This is not always easy for a teacher to determine and at other times it is clear. Plagiarism is usually clear. Cheating is often clear. Work which is significantly stronger than any past evidence received from a student is not as clear, but will raise a red flag for a teacher. In those cases, teachers will share their concern with the student and may not record a score for that work. Tasks completed in class represent the clearest examples of student progress. Students are not given a zero when any of the above examples occur. Instead, they receive no grade for that task as there is no credible evidence representing their effort. Lakewood staff is committed to helping students understand the impact of all forms of academic dishonesty. Students who plagiarize or cheat will receive consequences, but not in their academic achievement grade. Lakewood's Academic Integrity Policy, available on the school website, serves to clarify our school's philosophy and practices regarding academic honesty.

What happens when a student's grades are high because they are interested in the content and later they do poorly because they find the content uninteresting? Will that not impact progress shown and therefore a grade?
It is true that a student's own motivation can influence success in the classroom. Quite often students do better in some units because they have some prior experience or background knowledge of the content to support their learning. Those earlier experiences often serve to ignite interest or attention and thus support performance. But we all know what it's like to be confronted with learning something we know nothing about and have little interest in exploring. A student may be totally intrigued by a unit on astronomy and deeply bored with the study of rocks and minerals. These experiences also occur in different disciplines also. "I'm not good at math," a student may believe and through that reasoning poor performance is reflected in grades earned. Every student faces these experiences. The difference in their performance is determined by how they approach the task of learning something when they are not interested in doing so. Lakewood's policy for assessment will help to arm all students with the ability to muscle through those units or courses when their personal interest is simply not enough to do so. This support is especially needed now, when our children's brains are often over-stimulated with new technologies. So the most honest answer to the question, is yes, it will impact their progress. Hopefully that impact will be short-lived and they will bounce back because they learned how to examine why this happened and how to fix it. Learning these lessons now, when there is a system in place that will not penalize them for the dip in their performance, will provide them with the skills needed later in high school and beyond to manage those times when they are tasked with learning something they have no interest in learning. And they will face those times.

Policy Development

1. Frequent discussions by all MYP staff members occurred in the spring of 2016, with participants in IB Category I and II training helping to clarify the intent of MYP assessment practices for all staff members.
2. Support for proceeding with MYP assessment was garnered from members of Norfolk Public Schools' central administration in June. Concerns shared in these meetings addressed how MYP grade reporting would blend with the district's grade reporting platform, Synergy.
3. One Mathematics teacher, one Individuals & Societies teacher and the MYP Coordinator developed the policy's first draft in July of 2016.
4. Since the initial implementation of this policy commitment to its outcomes has grown. Some adjustments exist in this most recent version to how Current Progress in each Criteria is determined. Current and consistent still matters but was not always sufficient to providing evidence of student gains made. For that reason, the practices outlined on page 6 are being adopted. We will revisit their impact in one year to determine if any changes are required.

Alignment with other policies

Inclusion Policy:
The use of assessments, both formative and summative, aid in providing feedback to students who may be challenged by a barrier to learning. That feedback can inform them and their teachers. Early low scores are not averaged into subsequent scores indicating progress. Both policies complement one another in assisting students to learn and grow.

Language Policy:
MYP criteria utilized in assessment require students to utilize their language capabilities in all forms of communication (reading, writing, discussion, and performance.) The development of those skills will serve to build students' abilities to collaborate with others and to reflect on their current progress as learners.

Academic Integrity Policy:
As mentioned in the Frequently Asked Questions section, infractions related to Academic Integrity will occur at times and consequences can result. Those consequences may even impact a recorded score. Students learn from both policies that cheating does not promote their own progress and its consequences are based on a behavior which only indirectly impacts a grade, but not progress.

Policy Review
The first year's use of the assessment practices helped Lakewood strengthen the foundations for assessment in subsequent years. That policy represented deep changes in assessment practices and resulted in "growing pains" as all stakeholders adjusted to the changes.

This policy was last reviewed in the fall of 2021. The practices used for assessment continue to be shared with stakeholders in meetings with parents conducted by the MYP coordinator and by staff in conferences with students and their families.

Resources

Berger, Ron. March, 2014. *When Students Lead Their Learning*, Educational Leadership (online).

International Baccalaureate Organization (2016). *Learner Profile Booklet*

International Baccalaureate Organization (2014). *MYP: From principles into practice*

International Baccalaureate Organization (2014). *Programme standards and practices*

International Baccalaureate Organization (2014). *Sciences Guide*

Lesher Middle School, https://les.psdschools.org/ibmyp

Mid-Atlantic Association of IB World Schools. *Assessment Policies.* http://www.ibmidatlantic.org/Assessment_Policies.pdf

Moss, Connie M. and Susan M. Brookhart. 2012. *Learning Targets: Helping Students Aim for Understanding in Today's Lesson*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Norfolk Public Schools. 2016. *Grading Procedures: Handbook for Teachers.* Norfolk, VA.

Stiggins, Rick. 2014. *7 Principles of Student Centered Classroom Assessment*, http://www.rickstiggins.com/2014/03/04/7-principles-of-student-centered-classroom-assessment/

Wormeli, Rick. 2006. *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.