**SHS IB Assessment Policy**

**The purpose of this policy is to describe the principles and practices for achieving the educational goals of all stakeholders and to make clear to the whole IB community the expectations and practices with regard to all aspects of Assessment for the Sumter High School International Baccalaureate Diploma Program.**

**1. Philosophy**

We believe that assessment plays a crucial role in supporting learning as well as in measuring learning. One of the positive aspects of the IB Diploma Program is the nature of the assessments, giving students multiple methods and opportunities to show their achievement of the subject area objectives. This effective approach is found within the IB subject area courses where teachers create their own assessments to measure students’ progress in addition to those required by IB.

It is the belief in our school that students are ultimately responsible for their own learning. They meet this responsibility by working diligently to complete assignments on time and in an ethical and appropriate manner. Students are expected to monitor their progress in their classes, to inquire about ways to improve if necessary, and to prepare well for all forms of assessment. Students are responsible for being aware of the goals and standards of their coursework and for asking for clarification when needed. In addition to the stated objectives of each class, students are expected to set goals for their personal growth as life-long learners, to reflect on progress in meeting these goals, and to assess their achievement of them.

It is the belief in our school that teachers are responsible for supporting and facilitating students’ learning. They meet this responsibility first by working diligently to understand intimately their subject matter and the standards of achievement for the courses they teach. Teachers are expected to communicate clearly with students and their parents exactly what goals need to be accomplished in their subject areas. Teachers are responsible for providing precise instructions where assignments are concerned, guidance when needed, and timely feedback to aid improvement. Teachers are expected to analyze assessment data to determine strengths, deficiencies, and student needs. Teachers are aware that assessments can be biased and use many types of assessment to evaluate their students’ progress. In this vein, teachers also use assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of their own instruction, reflecting on their own practices to improve where needed. Teachers are expected to use to their full advantage tools available through technology and other venues to enhance their instruction and further support their students with their progress.

It is the belief in our school that the coordinator and administration are responsible for supporting teachers and students in their efforts to meet the goals in their coursework. They meet this responsibility first by providing the necessary training for teachers to become knowledgeable of the needs for their subject areas. The coordinator is responsible for providing student data in a timely manner and for providing opportunities to analyze and reflect upon that data. The coordinator provides time for teachers to reflect on their practices and plan, individually and collaboratively to enhance instruction. The coordinator and administration provide training on data interpretation and use, as well as, using multiple assessment strategies. They work together to analyze student performance, to set achievement goals for the school, and to plan goals for the future. The coordinator and administration are committed to providing the necessary materials and tools to best achieve the goals of the IB Diploma Program at Sumter High School.

**2. Practices**

**Grading/Marking**

**Grading Scale (as determined by the South Carolina Department of Education)**

Sumter High School Report Card grades are based on a scale of A(100-90), B(89-80), C(79-70), D(69-60). Anything below 60 is an F (failing condition). All grading will be based on evidence and will not be subject to any form of bias. In determining a final average, teachers consider students’ improvement over time and students’ best level of performance and therefore have discretion to allow the reflection of this in a student’s grade (*Diploma Programme Assessment: Principles and Practice*, 2010). At the teacher’s discretion, students may be allowed to increase their score on a certain assignment if the material has not been mastered.

The IB Diploma Program uses a scale from 7(excellent) to 1(minimal), with a score of 4 as worthy of recognition by most colleges and universities. Due to multiple factors, a student may perform better according to the IB grading scale than the high schools or the opposite may occur.

Teachers use a range of assessment techniques that support the aims of their IB courses. While there exists a district grading policy prescribing the number, types, and frequency of assessments for each grade level, the school system allows for IB teachers to establish assessments, weights, etc. to more closely align with course guidelines established by the IBO. This practice makes it possible for the teacher to design day to day coursework and assessments that make use of the IB subject assessment criteria and demonstrate value for the most accurate demonstration of performance rather than relying on a calculated average of performances. This allows teachers of the IB to meet the expectations regarding criterion-related assessment, formative and summative assessments, internationalism, emphasis on higher-order thinking skills, and support for second language learners which are valued in the IB community (*International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme: A Guide To Assessment*, 2014). Teachers have the discretion to determine the frequency of formative and summative assessments based on their course requirements and the particular needs of their IB students.

Teachers of the IB analyze assessment data to inform their teaching and support student learning. Teachers adjust their practice informed by the analysis of assessment data. Teachers confer with and collaborate with one another in the process of adjusting their practice in order to best support student learning in the IB classroom and beyond.

Teachers provide opportunities for students to participate in and reflect on the assessment of their work through such practices as self-evaluation, peer-evaluation and journaling. The aim of these practices is to support the student in making them better judges of their own performance and thereby further developing as an independent and lifelong learner (*Guidelines for Developing a School Assessment Policy in the Diploma Programme*, 2010).

**Formative Assessment**

Teachers use their knowledge of IB summative assessment expectations and practices to support students in improving their performance in a formative way. A key function of assessment in our DP is that of providing valuable feedback. Teachers distinguish between formal IB assessment and school assessment and provide students with frameworks of supporting formative processes (scaffolding) to prepare students to meet those expectations. (For example: opportunities for classroom presentations and feedback while leading up to the Individual Oral Presentation in English A HL). Teachers value formative assessment for providing feedback on the nature of students’ strengths and limitations, as well as, strategies for improvement. Teachers provide opportunities and instruments to support the learning process such as student self-evaluation, rubrics, matrices, peer evaluation, and appropriately adapted formal assessments (*Teaching Informed by Assessment*, 2015).

It is implied with all assessments that the work be the authentic work of the individual student unless the teacher explicitly states that collaboration is allowed or expected. With regard to collaborative student work, teachers clearly articulate the degree of assistance they can give, the extent to which students may use external sources, and the amount of re-drafting that will be allowed.

**Summative Assessment**

Teachers use their best professional judgment to determine the type and timing of summative assessments such as tests, projects, essays, etc. which are designed to help the teacher determine the degree of understanding a student has gained over particular portions of the IB curriculum for a given course. Teachers make these determinations based on the feedback from multiple formative assessments of a given topic or unit of instruction.

**State Assessment Requirements**

At the time of the publication of this document, there are three state mandated assessments required for IB students in the DP. Students taking the course IB US History (History HL 1), must take the state end-of-course exam for US History. All IB juniors (year 1 DP) must take the ACT and Work Keys assessments.

**IB Required Assessments**

Teachers introduce IB assessment expectations, standards, and practices early in their instruction of IB courses. Some of the assessment required by the IBO is carried out internally by classroom teachers who score students’ individual work. When possible, internal assessment tasks will be a part of normal classroom instruction. These include oral presentations, commentaries, laboratory work, investigations, and performances. Teachers receive training to use the rubrics provided by IB and their scores are moderated outside of the school to assure reliability and equity. Teachers are knowledgeable about course objectives and requirements and provide effective instruction that ensures students have the opportunity to develop the skills and content knowledge necessary for IB’s formal assessment requirements.

Where two or more teachers are responsible for the instruction of the same course, they collaborate and calibrate the marking of internal assessment components. Teachers collaborate with one another to design a calendar of internal deadlines for IB assessments in order to support teachers and students in planning their work in manageable loads. Teachers seek input from students and their needs when setting the internal IB assessment deadlines. Teachers share their course requirements with one another in order to foster an understanding of the demands on students and teachers and to promote a culture of collaboration.

Some of the assessment is overseen by teachers as students produce the work, but it is scored by external examiners selected by the IBO outside of the school. These include the extended essay, essays for Theory of Knowledge, and others.

The annual May examinations are externally scored with no input from teachers aside from a teacher generated report to IB based on student feedback after the test on topics such as the level of fairness and difficulty of the assessment. The May examinations include multiple choice and open-ended or essay questions. Because of the greater degree of objectivity and reliability provided by the standard examination environment, externally marked examinations form the greatest portion of the assessment score for each subject. The student’s scoring of 1-7 has no bearing on the student’s final SHS grade in the course.

**Earning the International Baccalaureate Diploma**

The IBO uses criterion-referenced assessments to confer points leading to an IB Diploma. Each of six examined subjects is graded on a scale of 1 to 7 points. A student who scores a minimum of 24 points on 3 Higher Level and 3 Standard Level (or 4 HL and 2 SL) subjects, completes both the Theory of Knowledge class and the extended essay with at least a D grade, and satisfactorily presents evidence of personal growth in each of the eight CAS Learning Outcomes can be awarded an IB Diploma provided none of the following failing conditions exist:

  · A grade of 2 in any HL subject

 · Each grade 3 in an HL subject not compensated by a grade 5 or above in another HL subject

   · A grade 1 in any SL subject

  · Two or more grade 2 in SL subjects

  · Two or more grade 3 in HL with a grade of 2 at SL

  · Four or more grade 3 subjects

Excellent performance in the 6 subject areas results in a grade 7 for each, or a total of 42 points. The maximum diploma point score is 45. Theory of Knowledge and the extended essay contribute to the overall score through a matrix system, which awards up to 3 bonus points based on the candidate’s combined performance.

Those students who do not satisfy the entire set of requirements for an IB Diploma or who elect to take fewer than six subjects are awarded a certificate for examinations completed.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

At least annually, the IB teachers meet with the teachers of “feeder” courses to analyze the previous year’s examination results and any feedback provided by the IBO. This allows for vertical alignment of content as well as assessment. These teachers analyze the data for strengths and weaknesses within the courses and any patterns that may emerge from the data. They discuss instructional practices and make informed adjustments to the vertical delivery of coursework at all levels according to the students’ needs.

**Recording and Reporting**

**IB Marks**

The IB Coordinator provides Teacher Marksheets to IB Teachers in February for teachers to use for recording IB Assessment marks and Predicted Grades. IB Assessment marks and Predicted Grades are not shared with students as it is not desired to have that information effect student performance in any way. Teachers turn in Marksheets to the IB Coordinator within two weeks of marking deadlines so that she may verify marks on IBIS. Teachers are responsible for recording IB Marks on IBIS for the courses they teach. The IB Coordinator verifies these marks. Official IB Marks do not impact students’ course scores/grades (do not become a part of the student’s average for the course). Teachers may choose to give a grade which counts toward a student’s average based on whether or not an official IB Assessment was turned in and whether or not it was turned in on time.

**School Marks**

Teachers are encouraged to provide progress reports every two weeks to keep parents and students apprised of students’ grades. Parents are encouraged to register for Parent Portal which allows them to see in real time all grades for their students.

Report cards a issued once per nine weeks (per quarter). IB courses are yearlong, and credit is not earned until the end of the school year. A student’s GPA and class rank will not change to reflect yearlong IB coursework until the end of the school year.

**Sumter High School’s IB Diploma Program Homework Policy**

Sumter High School’s IB Diploma Program Homework Policy aims to help students establish a healthy balance between commitments in school, after school and at home. The policy also aims to aid students in planning their work time more effectively.

Expectations of Sumter High School **IB teachers**:

 a) Plan the activities of their classes effectively
 b) Remember that students have other classes, which make demands upon their time and mental resources.
 c) Avoid concentrating assignments, projects, or other work at the end of a grading period.
 d) Avoid homework practices that are punitive, unreasonable, and/or futile.

Homework encompasses a range of activities to be completed outside of class, activities such as students’ reviewing their notes after each class, study time for reviews, quizzes, tests etc. Students should be aware that activities that have been assigned well in advance (an essay for example) may require some additional preparation time in addition to regular homework time. Studies have examined the causal relationship between homework and student achievement by comparing experimental (homework) and control (no homework) groups. The research suggests that the relationship between the amount of student homework and achievement is positive and statistically significant.

One of the bigger issues in the homework debate is the amount of time students should spend on homework. It is reasonable to support the common "10-minute rule" which states that all daily homework assignments combined should take about as long to complete as 10 minutes multiplied by the student's grade level. For a 12th grade student, this would mean about two hours per night. When required reading is included as a type of homework, the 10-minute rule may increase to 15 minutes. Teachers of advanced courses should plan their coverage of curriculum in such a way as to minimize demands upon students' time outside of school.

The suggested homework guideline for IB HL subjects is three hours a week while IB SL subject teachers should expect their students to complete two hours of homework per week. Based on a full diploma loading this would mean that students would average around three hours a night Monday to Friday.

With rare exceptions, IB homework tasks are long-range in nature with assignments rarely being made one day and due the next. That said, **students must learn to plan ahead and plot out their after school time so that enough time is set aside to work on assignments over time rather than waiting until the night before an assignment is due to take care of it.** When a long-range assignment is given (test prep, essay, project, reading, etc.), students need to break the assignment down into smaller manageable segments or goals and work on meeting those each day. Parents are urged to assist with this concept and help students at home with mastering this valuable life skill. Additionally, it is preferred that procrastination not lead to potential academic dishonor/dishonesty.

To make sure that homework is appropriate, **teachers** should follow these guidelines in relation to the homework they assign:

 1. Homework should have a clear academic purpose. Homework should be used not for new learning; rather, it should enhance classroom learning. The student should easily understand the ultimate goal of the assignment - pre-learning, checking for understanding, practice, or processing, and the teacher should communicate the goal to the students. The important roles of homework are to practice skills and reinforce content taught in class. Typically, new material should not be given as homework except where the goal is pre-learning. Additionally, assigned readings as part of a unit that is first being introduced may involve the discovery of new material that a teacher may have not yet covered in class. Teachers should use a balanced approach between these priorities when planning assignments.

 2. Homework should focus on high quality tasks that are doable. Teachers are encouraged to complete the tasks themselves to gain a real understanding of the time and skill demands of the task. Modeling is important and expected. If a student cannot complete a homework assignment independently, such an assignment can undermine student motivation. In terms of difficulty, all homework should be within the developmental/intellectual/skill capabilities of the students, for whom it is assigned. At the high school level, parental or tutorial assistance should be virtually unnecessary.

3. Homework should be personally relevant. If teachers want students to take responsibility for homework, students must have a good deal of control over what they learn, how they learn it, and how they show that they have learned it. Teachers should design homework assignments, which provide students with ample opportunities to personalize their work. Teachers are encouraged to differentiate tasks by length, by difficulty, or by which concepts specific students need help understanding whenever possible.

**IB Junior and Senior Course Guidelines**
The policy recognizes that senior and junior level IB courses require more time during the week and a greater amount of weekend homework than Honors and CP level courses. It is recognized that during times such as IB internal assessment deadlines that students will be required to exceed the recommended homework time. In particular all the homework/journal work the students do for IB Visual Art SL is work that they are supposed to be experiencing on their own.

 IB students need to understand that homework, following the above guidelines, may be checked for accuracy.  As long as homework does not involve a new topic the students discover on their own, but enhances the knowledge acquired in class, accuracy is important. With exceptions, if students are to explore something new and give their opinion, there will be less expectation with regard to accuracy.

**3. Links to Inclusive Education, Language, Academic Honesty, and Admissions Policies**

**Assessment and Inclusive Education**

Students participating in the IB DP of Sumter High School who receive classroom learning support through a 504 Plan or IEP will receive those same learning support services within the IB coursework and assessments as authorized by the IBO. Students, their parents, and their inclusive education teachers are responsible for informing the IB classroom teachers and coordinator of all requirements. Teachers differentiate their assessments to support students with particular inclusive education needs.

**Assessment and Additional Language Learners**

Students identified as language learners of English in our school are encouraged to participate in our IB DP. Students, their parents, and language support teachers are responsible for informing the IB classroom teachers and coordinator of the enrollment of language learners in the DP. Teachers differentiate their assessments to accommodate students with language learner needs.

**Assessment and Academic Honesty**

Teachers provide instruction to IB DP students on appropriate effective citing and referencing. Teachers provide explicit instruction regarding the degree of help outside of the student’s own knowledge and skill base that will be allowed for each assessment. Expectations regarding academic integrity are clearly communicated and authentic student work is highly regarded. Consequences for misconduct are clearly communicated.

**Policy on Plagiarism**

Students are given a copy of our school’s IB Honor Code at the beginning of their junior and again at the beginning of their senior years. They are asked to review it with their parents, sign it, and return it to the IB Coordinator. Copies of the code are posted in each subject area classroom and in the IB Office as well.

Depending upon the severity of the incident, violations of the code are generally handled in the following manner:

 1st Offense: Parent Conference and a “zero” for the assignment

 2nd Offense: Written reprimand and a “zero” for the assignment and may result in possible

 exclusion from the IB Exam in the specified subject

 3rd Offense: Recommendation for dismissal from the IB Diploma Program

**Assessment and Admissions**

While our Admissions Policy stipulates that students must have no grade lower than “70” for any prerequisite course, circumstances will be taken into consideration where a students’ performance showed improvement over time even if the final mark for the course does not reflect this growth. It is the assessment of the student’s readiness, willingness, and work ethic which eclipse past academic performance. In such cases, the IB teacher of the given course will conduct an interview with the student to determine the student’s understanding of the whole course in question.

**4. The Implementation, Evaluation, and Review of the Assessment Policy**

**Training Teachers new to the IB Program**

The IB Coordinator, any course veteran(s), and new teacher(s) will meet within the first two weeks of the start of the school year in a small group or one-on-one training session following the sharing of the policy by email.

**Communication and Review of the Assessment Policy**

Annually, the IB Faculty and administration will receive the latest draft from the IB Coordinator by email within the first two weeks of school for their review. They may email their questions and concerns to the coordinator for discussion at the first IB Faculty meeting of the school year. Changes will be made by consensus of those present at that meeting.

Annually, IB Students and their parents will receive written copies of the policy within the IB student handbook within the first month of the school year. Students and their parents will be solicited for their input for any revision(s) that may be needed.

Other IB stakeholders may view the policy any time online on the school’s IB website. Questions, comments, or concerns may be emailed to the IB coordinator.

**References and Resources**

*Diploma Programme: From Principles to Practice*. Online Curriculum Centre. International

Baccalaureate Organization, 2015.

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