

BCS Assessment Policy

BCS Vision:

"Nurturing lifelong learners for a more respectful, enlightened and compassionate world."

BCS Mission:

"The BCS mission is to foster international-minded, academically successful, and balanced lifelong learners. We achieve this through inquiry-based learning, innovative teaching, and community involvement; inspiring positive change in our diverse and dynamic world."

Why we assess:

At Berlin Cosmopolitan School we believe that assessment is essential for the high quality of planning, learning and teaching at our school. Through effective assessments, learning is made visible as students have the possibility to demonstrate what they are able to do and what they have understood. Together with the students, we are able to set attainable goals and decide on the action needed to reach them. Sharing this process helps them to take more ownership for their learning and growth, and helps them to recognize their strengths and areas they can improve.

It is important for teachers to use a variety of assessment tools to plan for the needs and interests of their class. We believe the most effective teaching happens when it is based on identifying and differentiating the performance objectives, and assessing students for how they understand and are able to apply them in new situations and real life contexts. Teachers also may need to remediate skills or knowledge, adjust their teaching methods, or skip the teaching of unnecessary information, based on the performance of their students.

What we assess:

Student progress involves more than just knowing information from a particular subject. As such our assessment practices reflect our aim to develop skills and attitudes in addition to gaining knowledge.

The Learner Profile:

The Learner Profile is embedded into the environment at BCS as it helps us to create lifelong learners and responsible citizens. The attributes and descriptors of the Learner Profile, exhibited by each student, are assessed in an ongoing and

reflective process, actively involving students and their parents. Parents are informed of their child's progress with regards to the learner profile at parent conferences, held in November and April, on the first and second term school report card and during the student led conferences.

Inquiry:

We believe in inquiry based learning and therefore feel it is important to assess the student's engagement in that learning process. Beginning in **primary** school we look at how the students are developing a broader understanding of the world around them. These indicators include their ability to ask questions, make connections across learning areas, and work independently of the teacher's full guidance.

The Five Essential Elements:

We assess the student's individual abilities covered by the PYP Five Essential Elements. These five essential elements include:

- **Knowledge:** The facts and information learned through the units of inquiry within the Transdisciplinary Themes.
- **Concepts:** The PYP concepts are ideas which give students a lens to analyse and make connections between subject areas.
- **Skills:** Disciplinary as well as transdisciplinary learning skills which students develop (social skills, thinking skills, self-management skills, communication skills and research skills).
- **Attitudes:** Beliefs and values which students need in order to have positive learning experiences.
- **Action:** Responsible action taken by the student as a result of the learning.

As students enter **secondary** school, assessment continues on this path, further developing the breadth and depth of subject curriculum.

How we assess:

At BCS, through collaborative planning, we create a balance between **formative** and **summative** assessments. *Formative* assessments are frequent, feeding the teacher the information they need to shape future learning experiences. Formative assessments include pre-assessments, to inform the teacher of a student's prior knowledge and current level of ability allowing teachers to plan meaningful and relevant lessons based on the students' needs and interest at the time of the assessment. Additionally, peer and self-evaluation are *used* to help students gauge their own progress and inform them from the students' perspectives. *Summative* assessments **in Primary** informs students, teachers and parents of an individual's progress in each of Five Essential Element explored in a given unit of inquiry. While **in Secondary** *summative* assessments are the

conclusion of the learning and teaching process, where students demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Our guiding principles require all assessments to be:

- **aimed** at supporting curricular goals and course requirements.
- **integrated** into the planning and teaching process, both formally (tests, projects, presentations) and informally (observations, discussions, class work).
- **transparent** through setting clear expectations, using rubrics, and involving students in evaluation of self and peers.
- **differentiated**, recognizing that all students have different strengths. Various assessment tools and strategies are applied to cater to those individual differences.
- **constructive** and **supportive**. Assessment should build confidence and motivation. It should take place in a friendly environment, avoiding anxiety for students.
- **criterion-based** in that assessment is done based on identified levels of attainment and not relative to the work of other students.
- **accurate** in its reflection of student performance (not simply averaging attainment goals).

In addition, within the **secondary** school, in order to maintain consistency and clarity, rules and regulations have been set regarding the methods of awarding grades, procedures for class tests (including quantity and duration), focus of assessment and parental involvement. These can be found in the *BCS Secondary School Rules and Regulations Handbook*.

In some grades assessment is designed externally to the school assessment components (i.e. IB Diploma Programme or the Berliner Rahmenlehrplan). A distinction must be made between formal and external assessment and school set supportive formative processes. As such, teachers and students must be familiar with and aware of assessment standards and practices as set out by the external body. In particular, within the Diploma Programme, assessment is practiced in a comprehensive manner, based on the whole course. As such students must be able to apply this comprehensive knowledge to new questions and situations. For the Diploma Programme assessment policy see appendix B from *Diploma Programme Assessment Principles and Practice, 2010*.

Standardized Assessments

At BCS, we use different standardized assessment tools to help provide timely information to teachers about progress and student abilities to aid in the differentiated planning for learning and to measure progress made. Teachers use this information alongside the many other ways they collect data about children's learning and provide feedback to parents. The following provides an overview of these assessment tools:

Primary Years Programme

Tool	When / Who	Purpose
Words Their Way – Spelling Inventory	Autumn, Winter and Spring / Y1 - Y5 students	Determine developmental spelling level to plan for instruction
Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing in Reading, Mathematics, Language Usage	Autumn, Winter and Spring / Y1 – Y5 students	Measure academic progress compared to self and to other students worldwide. These tests also assist in measuring growth in student learning and helps teachers differentiate their planning, place new students in the appropriate courses and groups and assist with identification of possible ELD, GLD or SEN needs.
QRI (Qualitative Reading Inventory)	Screening to help determine students who need ELD (English Language Development) and / or extra Literacy support.	Measures grade level reading (fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, oral reading accuracy)
Grundschule Diagnose (German Language)	End of each school Y2, Y3, and Y4	Attain students' reading and grammar proficiencies in German.
Känguru Mathematik (National)	Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6	Test for abstract mathematical abilities.

How we document:

Teachers are responsible for keeping evidence of students' learning and progress. How this is done may vary by department.

In **primary** school teachers must make use of an assessment file. The files should contain documentation of learning from each key learning area (Literacy, Math, and Units of Inquiry), relative to the learning objectives and assessment standards in the Berlin framework (Berliner Rahmenlehrplan). They allow for clear communication on each student's achievements and are used as a reference in conferences about individual students and when writing formal reports.

Students, with teachers' guidance, are responsible for keeping portfolios. Each student has a portfolio in the classroom, which they can have access to at any time. Students reflect on and choose artefacts they are most proud of from their learning, creating a documentation of their progress from their BCS career. Portfolios should show student growth over time, and include self-assessments and student reflections. (See BCS Primary Portfolio Policy for more information)

In **secondary** school teachers must also keep assessment files that include all formative and summative assessments of individual learning for their respective subjects. As in the primary school, this allows for clear communication of student achievement and aids in the development of teacher planning. Please see the *BCS Secondary School Rules and Regulations Handbook* for details regarding documentation expectations.

How we communicate

School to home:

While it is necessary that the school and home act as partners in the education of our students, we feel it is important that all parties feel informed about their progress. We have developed a structure of communication within the school year to share student progress with their parents.

- **Parent Consultations:** Parents and teachers meet every November for consultations, where parents are informed about the current level of their child, and views and concerns can be expressed. (*At any time, an additional consultation can be requested by parents to discuss their child.*)
- **Written Progress Reports:** At the end of each term, in February and July, formal reports will be sent home. These summarize student

learning through the year. Due to the Berlin law, numerical evaluations will begin when students reach Year 5.

- **Student-Led Conferences** in Primary school: At the end of each school year, students share their learning experiences and achievements with their parents by guiding them through their school work and portfolios in the classroom.

Teacher to teacher:

Student progress is communicated between teachers to ensure continuity throughout year levels as well as the individual students' school career.

- All teachers of a student (class, subject, morning & afternoon) meet regularly to discuss individual student's progress and behaviour to see the whole child in their learning processes.
- Teachers of a year level meet to create common assessments, and ensure that student performances are held accountable to shared standards within the school.
- The assessment file of the current school year will be passed on to each new teacher of the student.

Teacher to student:

Students are regularly given feedback on their learning and development. Students are also given time to reflect on the feedback and upon their learning experiences. Assessment results are also then used in the collaborative designing of future learning goals.