

BCS Assessment Policy

February 2021

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.

IB Mission

The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Why we assess

At Berlin Cosmopolitan School (BCS) we believe that assessment is essential for the planning, learning and teaching cycle at our school. We are a learning community of assessment capable teachers and students; our assessment practices inform teaching and learning strategies, while simultaneously clarifying and prioritizing the next steps of learning.

Our assessments show students' engagement with their learning, identifying what they know and can do in their development of knowledge, depth of understanding, skills, and attributes. The result is a desire to take action as an outcome of their learning. Sharing the assessment process with our students helps them take ownership of their learning; through reflection, our students self-adjust, recognizing their own strengths and areas of improvement which then sets the stage for the next phase of learning.

We use a variety of assessment tools (see Appendix 1) in order to reach diverse student capabilities and provide evidence of learning. Our assessments also help us evaluate the effectiveness of our teaching practices, inform professional development and resource needs, and identify needed student support, reinforcement or enrichment. Additionally, our assessments allows us to evaluate the depth of the curriculum and its appropriateness in meeting the needs of our students.

Our assessment practices at BCS enhance, for both students and teachers, our abilities to grow and develop as lifelong learners.

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What we assess

What we assess is defined by our school's mission and our IB programmes. Our focus is our students and preparing them for their future. To accomplish this, we help students learn by assessing their development in key areas:

The Learner Profile

Essential to developing internationally-minded, life-long learners is supporting our students in their growth of the Learner Profile attributes. The development of these attributes are monitored in an ongoing and reflective process, actively involving students and their parents. The attributes are: knowledgeable, inquirer, caring, communicator, principled, risk-taker, open-minded, thinker, reflective, and balanced.

Inquiry

The process of inquiry places students at the center of their learning experiences. Students engage in an inquiry cycle by asking questions and seeking answers to construct new knowledge and understandings which then leads to further inquiry. Teachers facilitate and assess students' ability to develop independence in the inquiry process and higher order critical thinking skills.

PYP Key Elements

We assess the student's individual abilities covered by the Programme's key elements. These include:

- **Knowledge:** The facts and information learned and the understandings gained through the Transdisciplinary Themes' units of inquiry together with the subject specific content supporting them.
- **Key Concepts:** The concepts (form, function, change, connection, perspective, causation and responsibility) are ideas which give students a lens to analyze lines of inquiry and make connections between subject areas in order to support higher order thinking and the transdisciplinary nature of learning.
- **Approaches to Learning:** The learning skills which students develop (social, thinking, self-management, communication and research skills) that support the learning process.
- **Action through Agency:** Resulting from the learning process, students are self-motivated to apply their understanding within a real-world context using their voice, choice and ownership of issues through deeds that will help make a difference.

The Subject Areas

Traditional subject content is learned through the key elements of the PYP framework which provides students with an opportunity to apply subject knowledge and skills throughout their inquiries. Teachers use prescribed learning outcomes from accredited subject area curricula in planning the Units of Inquiry by embedding these into the students' learning experiences. As such, student assessments include the learning outcomes of the subjects in order to determine learning progress. (See Appendix 2 for a list of the accredited subject area curricula used.)

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How we assess:

Our assessment philosophy creates a balance between formative and summative assessment. Assessments are developed through a collaborative process using a transdisciplinary lens and include:

- Pre-assessments that are used at the beginning of each unit to ascertain prior knowledge and inform unit planning.
- Formative assessments that are ongoing and indicate the development of varied student competencies, skills, and understandings.
- Summative assessments that inform students, teachers, and parents of a student's progress in knowledge and understandings, key concepts, Learner Profile attributes, and Approaches to Learning skills. These assessments provide the opportunity for students and teachers to develop next steps in the learning process and celebrate accomplishments.
- Student action within each transdisciplinary unit of inquiry can be used as an assessment when the response helps to measure the development of the Programme elements being assessed.

Formative and summative assessments are varied, fit for purpose, and authentic. Learning goals and success criteria are co-constructed, differentiated, and clearly communicated. So that the process is transparent, teachers and students work together to establish interactive and specific success criteria through tools such as rubrics, checklists, continuums, and other similar formats. Not only does this transparency help students gain clarity in terms of what and how responses will be measured, but it also permits students to have agency in the process. Teachers and students conference to feedback on assessment results which then feeds forward to future student learning goals and teacher planning.

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Realizing Assessment Best Practices: Rights and Responsibilities

In order to realize the “why”, “what” and “how” of assessment and assist our learning community in taking an active role in a meaningful assessment process, the following rights and responsibilities have been established:

Teachers

- Have access to this Policy, support in fulfilling its goals and provide input during its review
- Ensure that assessments are aligned with Programme and curricular standards and this Policy
- Engage in collaboration with colleagues and students regarding assessments and criteria
- Use a variety of assessment tools in the classroom
- Ensure that assessments are inclusive
- Make learning outcomes transparent to students and parents
- Monitor learning through observation, questioning, reflection, and a feedback to feedforward process
- Measure learning based on identified levels of individual student attainment
- Document learning using portfolios and a variety of assessment tools (see Appendix 1)
- Allocate time to conference with students in order to feedback and develop new learning goals by feeding forward in a safe learning environment
- Reflect on learning results from assessments for the planning and teaching cycle
- Report on learning through report cards each term as well as parent teacher conferences
- Obtain assistance in improving assessment practices

Students

Should actively engage in assessment by:

- Having access to this Policy, supporting in fulfilling its goals and providing input during its review
- Goal setting with teachers
- Being aware of success criteria
- Co-constructing criteria with teachers and classmates
- Frequently reflecting on work
- Self-assessing work when given the opportunity
- Documenting their learning in portfolios
- Providing feedback through peer reviews and reflection
- Conduct student-led conferences

Administrators (Principal and PYP Coordinator)

- Provide the learning community with access to this Policy, support in fulfilling its goals and provide input during its review
- Ensure assessment is consistent throughout the school
- Audit and monitor assessments
- Allow time for collaboration and reflection between teachers
- Provide professional development on assessment practices for teachers
- Provide tools to monitor, assess and measure student growth
- Provide central space to store documentation

Parents and Guardians

- Have access to this Policy, support in fulfilling its goals and provide input during its review
- Stay informed regarding the school’s Assessment Policy
- Engage in dialogue with teachers and at home with son/daughter about learning goals
- Be informed concerning the feedback outcomes
- Support with the resulting feed forward goals

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- Attend parent-teacher and student-led conferences and end of unit celebrations

Appendix 1:

Sample Assessment Tools

Tool	When/ Who	Purpose
Standardized Assessments		
Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) standardized testing in Reading, Language Usage and Mathematics	Autumn, Winter and Spring/ Grade 1- Grade 5 students	-Measure academic progress compared to self and to other students worldwide. -Measure growth in student learning and helps teachers differentiate their planning. -Assists with identification of possible ELD or SEN needs
Grundschuldiagnose	Autumn and Spring/ G1- G4 students	-Determine levels of spelling, listening, writing, and reading skills in German at the beginning and end of the school year - Measure progress compared to self and rest of class/grade level - Help teachers plan and differentiate instruction
Subject Specific Assessments		
German Language Development (GLD) Tracking Records	Autumn or upon enrollment / G1- G5 Students	-Determine oral and written level in German.
RazKids Running Records	Autumn, Winter and Spring/ G1-G5 students	-To assess student reading level, fluency, comprehension and understanding.
Spelling Inventory Primary spelling inventory (Y1- Y2) Elementary spelling inventory (Y2- Y5)	Winter and Spring/ G1 –G5 students	-Measure progress and understanding of phonemic awareness and common spelling conventions.
Fitness Tests	End of Units/ G1- G5 Students	-Fitness requirements set by Berlin Rahmenlehrplan.

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DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills®)	Ongoing/ SEN (Special Education Needs) Students	-Measure progress in reading fluency
ABC data (antecedent, behavior, consequence)	Used during SEN screening process or support plan reviews	-To identify patterns in when behaviors occur -To identify patterns in what triggers behaviors -To identify teacher/peer responses that may be reinforcing behaviors
Unit of Inquiry Assessments		
Pre-Assessments <i>Assessment for learning.</i> Mind-maps, KWL charts, discussion, observation, drawings.	Beginning of UOI/ G1- G5 students	-To inform teaching and promote learning.
Formative Assessment Tools <i>Assessment for/as learning.</i> -class work, observation, participation, exit cards, oral presentations, anecdotal notes, checklists, peer feedback, rubrics.	Ongoing throughout unit/ G1- G5 students	-Monitors student learning. -Informs teaching.
Self-Assessments/ Conferencing <i>Assessment as learning.</i> -self-reflections, portfolio reflections, student/teacher conferencing, feedback	Ongoing throughout unit/ G1- G5 students	-To create assessment capable students who become self-regulated lifelong learners. -Helps students to plan and monitor personal learning goals. -Allows students opportunities to reflect on learning.
Summative Assessment Tools <i>Assessment of learning</i> -rubrics, checklists, presentations, performances, tests	End of unit/ G1- G5 Students	-Measure learning based on criteria and curriculum standards. -To report on learning progress and provide feedback.

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PYP Exhibition	Spring/ G5 Students	-To synthesize and apply student learning over the years and reflect on their journey through the PYP.
Reporting on Learning		
Progress Report Cards	February and July/ G1- G5 Students	-To formally report on student learning. - Describes student progress, achievement and identifies areas of growth.
SEN (Special Education Needs) Report Cards	February and July/ G1-G5 SEN Students	-To formally report on student progress towards support plan goals.

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Appendix 2:

Glossary

Term	Definition within Context
Action	Action is a means for students to show that they have linked their learning to real-life issues and opportunities, and that they are developing responsible dispositions and behaviours towards social and physical environments and to the community within and beyond school. By taking individual and collective action, students come to understand the responsibilities associated with being internationally-minded and to appreciate the benefits of working with others for a shared purpose. When students see tangible actions that they can choose to take to make a difference, they see themselves as competent, capable and active agents of change. (IB 2018)
Agency	Students that show agency show that they have voice, choice and ownership for their own learning. By taking responsibility for their learning, students collaborate with teachers and other students to plan, present and assess learning needs. Students take initiative, express interest and wonderings, make choices and are aware of their learning goals. They are actively engaged, and monitor and adjust their learning as needed. Students offer feedback to others and consult on decisions that affect them. (IB 2018)
Approaches to Learning	These are five categories of interrelated skills (and associated sub-skills) that support students to become self-regulated learners. These core skills are: social, thinking, self-management, communication and research skills. (IB 2018)
Assessment capable	In an assessment-capable learning community, everyone has a clear understanding of the reasons for assessment, what is being assessed, the criteria for success, and the methods by which the assessment is made. (IB 2018)
Assessment tool	<p>Techniques or instrument (rubrics, presentations, performance, continuums, test, etc.) used to collect data and measure a student's abilities, skills, understandings and/or fluency in the specifies area(s) of the assessment or to measure the progress towards learning proficiency.</p> <p>Teachers use a range of assessment tools and strategies to compile the most comprehensive picture of student progress achievement over time. This</p>

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	includes the participation of the student within the process, which builds their assessment capability. (IB 2018)
Central idea	<p>Students inquire into, and learn about, globally significant issues in the context of transdisciplinary units of inquiry, each of which addresses a central idea relevant to a particular transdisciplinary theme. Lines of inquiry are identified in order to explore the scope and provide depth to the central idea for each unit. (IB 2009)</p> <p>Inquiries in the PYP begins with the central idea while summative assessments measures student understanding of the central idea. (IB 2018)</p>
Feedback to Feedforward	A collaborative method used between teachers and students that provides feedback on current learning outcomes based on assessments or performance indicators which then helps to inform them on what is needed to support future learning. (IB 2018)
Formative assessment	<p>Formative assessment provides information that is used in order to plan the next stage in learning. It is interwoven with learning, and helps teachers and students to find out what the students already know and can do.</p> <p>Formative assessment aims to promote learning by giving regular and frequent feedback. This helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding, to foster enthusiasm for learning, to engage in thoughtful reflection, to develop the capacity for self-assessment, and to recognize the criteria for success. (IB 2009)</p>
Key Concepts	Core ideas that are universal and abstract that have major significance within and across disciplines, regardless of time or place. The key concepts form a research tool that is more readily accessible to students that provides structure or frames an inquiry. These key concepts are: form, function, change, connection, perspective, causation and responsibility. (IB 2009)
Inquiry	Inquiry, as the leading pedagogical approach of the PYP, is recognized as allowing students to be actively involved in their own learning and to take responsibility for that learning. In the PYP it is believed that this is the way in which students learn best—that students should be invited to investigate significant issues by formulating their own questions, designing their own inquiries, assessing the various means available to support their inquiries, and proceeding with research,

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	<p>experimentation, observation and analysis that will help them in finding their own responses to the issues. [T]he goal is the active construction of meaning by building connections between that understanding and new information and experience, derived from the inquiry into new content. (IB 2009)</p>
International Baccalaureate®	<p>The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a worldwide, nonprofit education organization whose programmes encourage both personal development and academic achievement, challenging students to think critically, to ask the right questions, think across disciplines, build problem-solving skills, while encouraging diversity, international mindedness, curiosity, and a desire for learning. There are four IB programmes of which the PYP is one. (IB website 2021)</p>
International-minded	<p>A multifaceted concept that captures a way of thinking, being and acting. Internationally minded students are open to others and to the world, and are cognizant of our deep interconnectedness. (IB 2018)</p> <p>The attributes of such a learner are listed in the learner profile. The learner profile is central to the PYP definition of what it means to be internationally minded. (IB 2009)</p>
Learner Profile	<p>The attributes of the learner profile represent a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that encompass intellectual, personal, emotional and social growth. The development and demonstration of these attributes are foundational to students becoming internationally minded, active and caring community members who respect themselves, others and the world around them.</p> <p>The learner profile supports students in taking action for positive change. Exercising their agency, students take ownership of their learning, express their ideas and opinions, and reflect on their development of the learner profile attributes. (IB 2018)</p>
Learning Outcomes	<p>Learning outcomes are statements that describe the knowledge or skills students should acquire by the end of a particular assignment, class, course, or program, and help students understand why that knowledge and those skills will be useful to them. They focus on the context and potential applications of knowledge and skills, help students connect learning in various contexts, and help guide assessment and evaluation.</p>

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	<p>Good learning outcomes emphasize the application and integration of knowledge. Instead of focusing on coverage of material, learning outcomes articulate how students will be able to employ the material, both in the context of the class and more broadly. (U. of Toronto 2021)</p>
Lines of inquiry	<p>Statements that clarify the central idea and define the scope of the inquiry. These contributing aspects of the central idea extend the inquiry, focus student research, and deepen students' understanding. (IB 2009)</p>
PYP	<p>The Primary Years Programme (PYP) of the International Baccalaureate provides an inquiry-based, transdisciplinary curriculum framework that builds conceptual understanding while promoting international minded-ness, student agency and life-long learning skills. The framework is organized around six trans-disciplinary themes of global significance that are explored through the knowledge and skills developed by the traditional subject areas. The transdisciplinary nature of the Programme help students understand the interconnected nature of the subject areas, both with one another and with the transdisciplinary themes. The Programme's student-centered approach to education reflects best practices anchored in current educational research. (IB 2009, 2018, website)</p>
PYP Key Elements	<p>Previously known as the essential elements, the PYP seeks a balance between the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills, development of conceptual understanding, and taking of responsible action. (IB 2009, 2018)</p>
Portfolio	<p>A portfolio is a record of students' involvement in learning which is designed to demonstrate success, growth, higher-order thinking, creativity, assessment strategies and reflection. It provides a picture of each student's progress and development over a period of time both as individual and group learners. It enables students to reflect with teachers, parents and peers in order to identify their strengths and growth as well as areas for improvement, and then to set individual goals and establish teaching and learning plans. Evidence of learning in a portfolio should be from a range of experiences and curriculum areas. The portfolio is used to show the development of knowledge, conceptual understanding, transdisciplinary skills, and the attributes of the learner profile over a period of time. It may also be used to document student action. Portfolio entries should document both the process of learning and the product, including images and evidence of</p>

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	students in the process of constructing meaning. It can be used as a tool for assessment and reporting purposes for students, parents, teachers and administrators. (IB 2009)
Pre-assessment	An assessment developed to assess students' prior knowledge and skills in order to plan the inquiry. (IB 2009)
Self-adjuster	Self-assessment involves students reviewing and evaluating their knowledge, conceptual understandings and skills. It then leads to students monitoring and adjusting their behaviour and planning, making corrections and implementing improvements in their learning. Self-adjusters use the feedback they are given to modify and improve their learning. Self-adjusting therefore requires both thought and action and supports students' self-efficacy. (IB 2018)
Subject Areas	<p>Subjects at BCS are taught using the following curricula:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art: <i>Visual Arts Curriculum, Government of Ireland 1999, PYP Arts Scope and Sequence, IBO, Switzerland 2018</i> • German Language Arts: <i>Berliner Rahmenlehrplan, Teil C Deutsch, Jahrgangsstufen 1 – 10, Germany 2017</i> • German Language Development (GLD): <i>Based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Standards, Council of Europe, France 2001, updated 2018</i> • Information and Communication Technology (ICT): <i>Smart Classrooms, Queensland Government, Australia 2016</i> • Literacy (English Language Arts): <i>National Curriculum for England, UK 2014</i> • Maths <i>National Curriculum for England, UK 2014</i> • Music: <i>National Core Arts Standards, USA 2014</i> • Science: <i>Cambridge Primary Science Curriculum, UK 2018</i> • Social Studies: <i>PYP Social Studies Scope and Sequence, IBO, Switzerland 2018</i> • Sports: <i>Berliner Rahmenlehrplan, Teil C Sport, Jahrgangsstufen 1 – 10, Germany 2015</i>

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Success criteria	<p>Success criteria is a list of features that a teacher asks students to include in their work or assessment. It is a way for students to be aware of what success looks like and also encourages them to extend themselves during the course of providing the work product.</p> <p>When students know the success criteria, they are more likely to plan and predict, set goals, and acquire a stronger sense of how to judge their own progress. Success criteria provides students with an opportunity to assess their own learning. (Freibrun 2019)</p>
Summative assessment	<p>Summative assessment is the culmination of the teaching and learning process, and gives the students opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned. It can assess several elements simultaneously: it informs and improves student learning and the teaching process; it measures understanding of the central idea, and prompts students towards action. (IB 2009)</p>
Transdisciplinary Theme	<p>To facilitate students' openness to others and to the world, the PYP offers opportunities to inquire into human commonalities through the transdisciplinary themes. The transdisciplinary themes offer authentic contexts for students to learn increasingly complex ideas about themselves and the world around them. They are cognitively and developmentally appropriate for learners because they have enduring importance, and children can identify with them. The PYP themes are broad in scope and timeless by nature and encompass: "Who we are", "Where we are in place and time", "How we express ourselves", "How the world works", "How we organize ourselves" and "Sharing the planet". (IB 2009, 2018)</p>
Unit of inquiry	<p>Inquiry in the PYP consists of six transdisciplinary units of inquiry that frame the exploration for students through: a central idea which supports the conceptual understandings of the transdisciplinary theme, key concepts, and lines of inquiry. Subjects and their contributing skills play an important role in a transdisciplinary unit of inquiry since they can determine, support, enrich and connect learning. Student action through agency then links the learning to real life issues as students demonstrate international mindedness through the learner profile attributes. (IB 2009, 2018)</p>

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