



**MERCEDES  
COLLEGE**

*Unlocking Life Potential.*

**Assessment  
and  
Reporting  
in  
The Middle Years Programme  
(Years 6-10)**

**A Guide for Parents**



## How are students assessed?

*Assessment is a dynamic and collaborative process of gathering information in order to form the most complete picture of a student's achievement and development in a way which will encourage and advance learning. (SACCS, p 1)*

Assessment is divided into two broad categories – **formative** and **summative**.

Formative assessment is often regarded as assessment **for** learning and summative assessment as assessment **of** learning.

The distinction is specific – summative assessment provides feedback on what has occurred in the learning journey and is represented by a final grade. This is very difficult to “unpack” to provide constructive feedback.

Formative assessment, on the other hand, provides a diagnostic value. A student will gain information about his/her progress by the formative feedback provided. If the information provided in formative assessment feedback (formal and informal) is clear enough for students to be able to make self-assessments of their progress, then we are providing students with the skills for lifelong learning.

Formative assessment comes from a range of activities that provide for a wide range of learning styles, learner motivation and relates to the criteria leading to the successful achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme. Importantly, these activities allow students to develop a capacity for self-assessment so that they become reflective and self-managing (ARG, 2002).

In highlighting the importance of life-long and life-wide learning skills, teachers are asked at various times to determine a student's approach and application to learning. In reporting, these are referred to as **ATL** scales or **pastoral** scales. Teachers can use a number of tools to determine these values – from maintaining an attendance record, homework register, and diary notes, to embedding aspects of these skills into assessment tasks such as the critical use of information and an ability to work independently.

The foundation of this comes from the International Baccalaureate Organisation Middle Years Programme (MYP) which identifies Approaches to Learning as one of the five Areas of Interaction at the heart of a student's learning expectations.

ATL's represent

“general and subject-specific learning skills that the student will develop and apply during the programme and beyond. The focus of this area is on teaching students how to learn and on helping students find out about themselves as learners so that they can develop learning skills”.  
(MYP from *Principles into Practice*, 2008, p20).

ATLS' provide students with

“the tools to enable them to take responsibility for their own learning. This involves planning, organizing and teaching the skills and practices that students require to become successful learners, while building on prior learning”.  
(MYP from *Principles into Practice*, 2008, p22).

## Assessment in the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP)

Each subject in the MYP has a number of criteria specific to that subject, which form the basis of assessment.

Each of these criteria has associated with it levels of achievement and associated descriptors by which the student's work is assessed.

Teachers will set tasks to address one or more criteria and will assess students by matching the student's performance against the descriptors for those criteria. Most criteria identify two levels against each descriptor to discriminate between higher and lower levels of attainment in each level.

The student's final grade is established by totalling the levels for each subject and applying the IB grade boundaries. This grade is then cross-referenced with the general grade descriptor to ensure it is an appropriate reflection of the student's achievement.

Teachers in different classes will often collaborate on assessing student work as a form of internal moderation to ensure consistency. The final grades awarded in the final year of the programme are externally moderated by the International Baccalaureate Organization based on samples of work sent to the IBO.

Further details about assessment criteria and grade boundaries can be found in the MYP Curriculum Handbook and Assessment Handbooks located on the Mercedes College web site.

## What is the purpose of reporting?

*Reporting is communicating to others the knowledge gained from assessing student learning. (SACCS, p 1)*

The reporting process at Mercedes College should be viewed as a series of feedback mechanisms to inform student progress and achievement on their **learning journey**. It provides information to parents and students about their learning (strengths and weaknesses), achievements and development that is valid, accessible and timely in order to assist in guiding their learning and educational choices throughout their schooling.

## Timing and types of reporting

Reporting at Mercedes College reflects our commitment to accountability and our support for the partnership between teachers, students and parents in learning together. Reporting consists of a number of components:

- **formal** reporting in the form of printed reports sent home to parents;
- **learning reviews** between staff, student and parents; and
- other **informal** opportunities such as exemplars of assessment tasks highlighting assessment criteria used.

It is important that the components of reporting should be viewed as parts of a **journey** rather than considered on their own out of this context. The type and timing of each component is centred on guiding students in **taking responsibility for their learning**.

### *Interim Reports – Terms 1 and 3*

Evidence for Interim Reports is not dependent on the completion of assessment tasks but by the general approach to learning (ATL) and application demonstrated by the student. Teaching staff will use a range of headings for reporting approaches to learning and enter their judgments on a scale ranging from **inconsistent** to **excellent**.

The ATL categories include:

- **Organisation** (using time in class effectively; goal setting; keeping to deadlines)
- **Collaboration** (working in groups; resolving conflicts; respecting other points of view; delegating and taking responsibilities)
- **Communication** (reading and interpreting terminology and numerical data; presentation skills)
- **Information Literacy** (accessing, selecting and sorting information; using primary and secondary sources; referencing)
- **Reflection** (seeking out positive criticism; reflecting on areas of perceived limitation; reflecting at different stages in the learning process)
- **Thinking** (brainstorming; planning; developing questions; identifying problems; critical and creative strategies)
- **Transfer** (using and applying knowledge, understanding and skills across subjects and in unfamiliar situations)

**Home Group teachers** supplement the academic report with a constructive comment, reflecting the student's overall social development.

### *Mid Year Report - Term 2*

Subject teachers identify the current levels attained in each assessment criterion, provide a progress grade and formative, constructive comments based on the student's approach to learning in the subject. Details of subject criteria are published in a range of documents – student assessment tasks, subject outlines and the MYP Curriculum handbook available on the Mercedes College web site.

Home group teachers provide continuum judgements on personal development components including Cooperation; Organisation; Punctuality; Use of Diary, Uniform and Courtesy. A breakdown of co-curricular participation and the number of days absent for the first half of the year are also provided.

### ***Final Report – Term 4***

A final grade is provided for each subject based on the final attainment in each criterion and the grade boundaries published in the Curriculum Handbook (available on the Mercedes College web site).

Home group teachers provide a constructive comment on overall student application, a breakdown of co-curricular participation and the number of days absent for the second semester.

The final report will also include a reflective comment by students. Throughout the year, students are encouraged to maintain a reflective journal based on the IB Learner Profile. This final reflective comment asks students to consider their strengths and areas needing attention across all aspects of their learning.

### ***Learning Reviews***

To support the partnerships of staff, student and parents, a 5-10 minute Learning Review occurs in Term 2. At this review, teachers would use student portfolios to demonstrate to parents and students any successes and concerns.

The aim of the review is to ensure parents are aware of the next stage of their child's learning journey and how they are able to support this at home. Students are encouraged to attend and to participate in the discussion of how to progress in their learning. Students should then complete a work plan based on this review (work plans are available on the night).

A supplementary Learning Review is provided in Term 3 upon the request of the subject teacher, parent or student. This request is based on whether a student has responded to the Learning Review from Term 2 and provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their work plan and recognise that they take responsibility in their learning. It is an opportunity, also, for teachers of new classes (e.g. in The Arts) to have a review with parents.

### ***Year 10 special notes:***

All reports will include lessons missed in the subject throughout each reporting period.

For students undertaking Stage 1 SACE subjects (e.g. French, PLP), a separate page will be included as the reporting formats vary.

Exams use criteria as any other MYP assessment task and are therefore generally embedded within the criteria and not reported separately.

## **Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004**

In order to comply with the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004*, reports must provide an A to E breakdown of student achievement. In 2006, the Minister for Education accepted the 1-7 scale used in the IB as equivalent to the A to E breakdown. Parents may also request comparative data by contacting the College.

## **References**

Mercedes College Policy on Learning (2005)

Assessment Reform Group (2002) [www.assessment-reform-group.org.uk](http://www.assessment-reform-group.org.uk)

Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) *Reporting on Student Progress in Best Practice in Reporting on Student and School Achievement – Information for teachers* (2000)  
[www.detya.gov.au](http://www.detya.gov.au)

International Baccalaureate Organization (2008) *MYP from Principles into Practice* [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)

South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (1998) - *Policy: Assessment and Reporting of Student Achievement*  
<http://web.ceo.adl.catholic.edu.au/SACCS.html>