



Scholar Assessment Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy aims to outline the principles and practices of assessment at Penryn College. This policy will be reviewed when necessary to accommodate any changes in the National Policy and school-based practice.

2. Assessment Structures

Assessment is an essential component in evaluating and promoting scholar learning. For the purposes of this policy, assessment is defined as:

- The process of collecting evidence of a scholar's competence and capabilities, comparing this evidence against desired outcomes, recording the findings and deciding what should be done to help the scholar progress.

Assessments can be either summative or formative.

- Summative assessment refers to the assessment of scholars at the end of a section, or unit of study, or at the end of a term or year to assess progress.
- Formative assessment refers to a wide range of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluation of scholars' comprehension, learning needs and academic progress during a lesson, unit or course. Formative assessment is often appropriate at the end of a section of work to gauge if the learning programme can be continued, or if further revision of the unit is required.

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Assessment encompasses all forms of tasks (written, oral, practical, digital, etc.) that measure a scholar's progress, understanding and knowledge. Assessment includes those tasks that contribute to the scholar's formal record of marks, as well as those that are not formally counted towards reports and levels of achievement for reporting and progression purposes.

3. Assessment at Penryn College

Assessment at Penryn College operates within the parameters of the National Qualifications Framework, the National Curriculum Statement and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, as well as the Subject Assessment Guidelines (as provided by the Independent Examinations Board).

Penryn College is affiliated to the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) which is the College's assessment provider for the National Senior Certificate qualification.

Penryn College uses various forms of assessment and creates opportunities for scholars to prepare for the IEB examination in Grade 12.

4. Why do we assess?

Assessment is important for feedback in order to give guidance and direction to scholars. It is also a method of collecting historical records for a scholar's performance over the years.

The purpose of assessment is:

- To show developmental progress of the scholar throughout each grade.
- To assist in gaining insight to a scholar's level of understanding by giving them measurable progress indicators.
- To guide future planning and curriculum development in order to assist teachers in adapting and developing suitable teaching strategies.
- To inform parents and other relevant stakeholders of the scholar's progress.

5. What do we assess?

The application of knowledge, skills, values, critical thinking and attitudes are assessed. Scholars are assessed according to learning outcomes and assessment standards as laid out in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements and the Subject Assessment Guidelines.

6. Whom do we assess?

All scholars, including those with barriers to learning, are required to participate in assessment activities. The educational practices regarding inclusive education are laid out in the IEB Policy for the Implementation of Accommodations.

7. When do we assess?

Entrance and/or benchmark tests may be conducted during admission procedures to obtain baseline data of an applicant's core academic skills and to assist with subject choices where relevant.

Subject teachers set assessments across all grades, when and where relevant. Continuous Assessment (CASS) is performed throughout the year and presented in the form of portfolios. The weighting of the CASS and the June and Final Examinations varies by grade and subject.

Subject-Based Assessments (SBAs) are submitted for external moderation in Grade 12, when and as required by the IEB.

8. How is the quality of assessments ensured?

Moderation must be planned in conjunction with the termly assessment plans. Moderation of ALL assessments is expected before and after the assessment. Each assessment must follow the principles of assessment and must:

- Be participative and transparent.
- Be clearly focused.
- Be integrated with teaching and learning.
- Be based on pre-set criteria of the assessment standards.
- Use a variety of instruments.
- Be valid and reliable.
- Be differentiated.
- Be followed by timeous feedback.
- Be culturally sensitive to scholars' tacit, empirical and traditional knowledge.

Moderation can take place at different levels:

- Within departments (internal)
- Cluster (external)
- IEB (external)
- Umalusi (external)

Moderation and standardisation should take place when setting assessments. The Heads of Subjects/Departments are responsible for ensuring that moderation takes and ensuring the reliability and consistency of the assessments and marking standards.

Pre-moderation at departmental or cluster level must take place before the assessment is administered. Single member departments need to liaise with cluster schools to arrange moderation.

An assessment tool (marking guidelines, rubric, etc.) should accompany all tasks when submitted for moderation. ALL possible responses to questions should be reviewed prior to the assessment being administered.

Moderators should give clear feedback and support to the assessor during the moderation process. Feedback must be given in writing. This must include a moderation report as evidence of the moderation process. This report must be filed, along with the original assessment.

Post-moderation must include the moderation of marked assessments. This is to ensure that the marking process has been fair. Post-moderation includes:

- Random sampling moderation and marking by other department members, and/or the HOD or HOS.
- Analysing of results to see where there are areas for improvement. Systems and strategies must then be put in place to address these areas.

9. Scholar Absence and Late Submission of Assessments

Where scholars miss deadlines for submission of assessments (without a valid medical certificate or valid reason) 10% of the total mark for the assessment will be deducted for each day that it is late. This includes weekends. After 3 days the scholar will be given zero for the assessment.

Valid reasons for missing assessments include: the submission of a medical certificate, where the medical professional was consulted on or before the date of assessment, or the death of an immediate family member. Other reasons will be deemed valid based on the discretion of the Deputy Head: Academics (in consultation with the Head of College where necessary).

Where extenuating circumstances exist, deviations from this procedure may be permitted. Any deviations must be approved by the Deputy Head: Academics.

The concept of “duly performed” applies to all assessments. This means that all assessments must be completed and handed in by the scholar, even though the due date has passed and they have been given zero. This allows the teacher to still be able to assess the knowledge and skill level of the scholar.

In the case of individual oral presentations, scholars who are absent on their presentation day (with a valid reason) will be given the opportunity to present their oral presentation on another date. This new date will be negotiated between the teacher and the scholar. Should the scholar miss the next scheduled date, the scholar will receive zero for the oral presentation.

Where a scholar misses a scheduled assessment due to a valid reason, the scholar will be required to write the missed assessment within the same week. A missed formal Tuesday assessment will be written on the Friday afternoon of the same week. Where a catch-up assessment is not possible, a zero-weighting will be applied. The exception is Grade 12 School-Based Assessment Tasks. Grade 12 Scholars will have to do a catch-up assessment, and where necessary, the teacher may have to set an alternate assessment in order to ensure the integrity of the assessment.

Any Grade 12 scholar who misses any final IEB examination for any reason will need to adhere to the relevant IEB regulations and rulings.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that the relevant documentation for a missed assessment is submitted timeously to the Deputy Head: Academics. Should the relevant documentation not be submitted in time for the assessment to be redone or zero-weighted, the scholar will receive zero.

10. Dishonesty and/or Misconduct in Assessments

Academic dishonesty and/or misconduct refers to ANY cheating, duplicate submission, plagiarism (including the use of ChatGPT or any other AI tool without explicit permission and appropriate referencing), fabrication, briber, collusion, improper device use (having a cell phone/smart watch or any electronic device, on the scholar's person during an assessment, even if switched off) and/or other conduct that is contrary to the academic integrity expected of scholars in assessments.

Academic dishonesty and/or misconduct is viewed as serious misconduct. Disciplinary processes will be followed as per the Penryn College Code of Conduct. The Disciplinary process will be carried out by the Deputy Head: Scholar Affairs and Discipline.

Staff and scholars will be educated on the expectations of academic integrity and all effort must be made to prevent dishonesty and/or misconduct in assessments. Staff will be adequately trained in monitoring and invigilating assessments. Scholars will be educated on an appropriate level regarding the academic expectations for them.

11. Recording

Records form part of a scholar's journey and should guide any further support. Recording allows for a continuous overview of a scholar's progress and forms a vital role in the process of assessment.

Marks, observations of behaviour, attitude and work ethic are recorded. Teachers record marks, comments, and behaviour and endeavour codes on the school's electronic administrative system. Tutor teachers record general comments on scholars in Term 2 and Term 4 for Grade 8 to 11 scholars, and Term 2 for Grade 12 scholars.

Recording must take place within 5 (five) working days after the assessment has taken place.

Should a scholar want to appeal a recorded mark, the scholar must first approach the subject teacher. Thereafter, should the scholar feel the teacher is still being unfair, they are to take the matter to the Head of Subject/Department.

Should the need arise, the appeal may be escalated to the Deputy Head: Academics. An appeal needs to be lodged in writing. The Deputy Head: Academics will review the appeal and will either make a decision or send the assessment for external moderation. The decision on the appeal is final.

12. Reporting

Reporting is a way to maintain communication between the school, the scholars, and their parents/guardians. Reporting is a means of establishing accountability. Reporting also allows for invested parties to ascertain if a scholar is achieving their full potential. Reporting also helps parents/guardians to identify further needs of the scholar.

Reporting is done in various ways:

- During Lessons: scholars are given feedback during lessons by means of “teachback” on assessments, and verbal or written reports on orals/group work.
- Formal report cards: these are issued on a termly basis each academic year, and include either behaviour and endeavour codes (in Terms 1 & 3), and subject comments and tutor comments (in Terms 2 & 4).
- Parent-teacher interview afternoons/evenings: these are scheduled termly at the start of each academic term.
- Emails to parents: where scholars underperform in a formal assessment, the subject teacher is expected to send an email to the relevant parent/guardian informing them of the mark attained, and how to support their child in improving. (These emails will be sent within 1 [one] week of the assessment). These emails are also to include the Head of Subject/Department, the scholar’s tutor and the Deputy Head: Academics.

13. Progression and Retention Decisions

When deciding on the progression of scholars from one grade to the next, the minimum requirements as stated in the National Policy are used as a guide. The following factors are taken into consideration when discussing the progression of scholars who have not met the minimum requirements for progression:

- The chronological age of the scholar.
- Academic history and interventions provided to support the scholar.
- The socio-emotional context and needs of the scholar.
- The best interests of the scholar.
- Extenuating circumstances beyond the scholar’s control which may have impacted the scholar’s academic performance.

Where a scholar is to be condoned (as they have not met the minimum requirements) there may be provisos put in place in order to facilitate the promotion. E.g. Where a scholar has not met the minimum requirements for Mathematics in Grade 9, they may be allowed to progress to Grade 10 on condition that they opt for Mathematical Literacy as a subject in Grade 10.

The final decision regarding the retention or promotion of a scholar lies with the Head of College. The decision is final.