

Henry Foss High School
International Baccalaureate
Career-Related Programme(candidate)
Diploma Programme
Middle Years Programme



Assessment Policy

Introduction

Our Mission Statement: Henry Foss High School develops every student to be inquiring, knowledgeable, and reflective through intercultural understanding and respect.

Our Vision Statement: Henry Foss High School will graduate every student with an International Baccalaureate (IB) education that prepares them for college, career, and life.

Our Equity and Access Statement: We believe that every student, staff, and community stakeholder should be treated equitably. Our focus is to eliminate disparities among all groups.

Henry Foss High School is an urban public high school in the Tacoma School District in Washington State, USA. Foss High School has been an approved IB Diploma Programme school since 1982. We have a mix of special education, traditional, and identified gifted students in grades 9 through 12. Because of declining enrollment and demographic shifts, our size has decreased over the past 10 years. For the 2020–2021 academic year, we have approximately 7 diploma candidates and another 7 candidates for the 2021-2022 academic year. We expect that number to grow over the next several years as interest in the program increases as well as the rebuilding of Hunt Middle School, previously and anticipated IB Middle Years Programme school.

To become more equitable in our distribution of students in and out of the Diploma Programme, and to encourage more students to participate in the Diploma Programme, the school made choices to add Middle Years Programme (2020) and candidacy application for the Career-related Programme (2021). The goal is to create an “IB for all” environment at Foss. Aligned with that direction, starting in 2016, all juniors (except for students whose IEP necessitated an alternative course) took at least one diploma programme (DP) course in the studies in language and literature.

The diploma programme and middle years programme at our school is open access, as will be career programme; any student who wishes to take on the challenge of advanced coursework may do so, whether for a single class or the full diploma programme. We, do, however, **require** students to sit for the May exam session and complete the IB assessment requirements as part of their IB course experience. We make it a point to counsel students about their curricular choices. We do not believe in gatekeeping for college-preparatory coursework. We believe it is important to challenge students as appropriate to their individual needs and abilities while balancing their post-secondary goals.

Definitions of Assessment

Formative Assessments. The goal of assessment is to provide evaluation of student knowledge and learning. However, assessments need not be sit-down exams, nor must all assessments be used in

determining a student's grade. In the most literal sense, Foss teachers are assessing each student daily, and it is common for students to be assessed multiple times in each class each day, whether this is done formally or informally. These assessments are referred to as formative and are used by the teacher to help better understand the needs of each student or of the class. Formative assessments help the teacher diagnose the success of the delivery of the curriculum and allow the teacher to make modifications to the lessons, including the opportunity for revision. Formative assessments are used to inform our instruction and to gauge student's understandings of the standards throughout the course. A given standard or skill includes formative and summative assessments, with formative assessments comprising of 20% of the standard or skills final mark.

Diploma Programme teachers use previous IA feedback to improve accuracy regarding predicted grades which becomes a formative assessment for teachers to improve and reflect on their own grading practices. Every fall, our diploma programme teachers are supplied with the May exam IB diploma programme scores that are broken down by assessment and feedback from the IA moderator. The teachers are expected to use the information to modify and adjust their curriculum and practices for that year.

Summative Assessments. Summative Assessments can be used as a final evaluation of student learning and are usually used as a basis for a student's class grade. A given standard or skill includes formative and summative assessments, with summative assessments weighing 80% of the final mark in the standard. End of unit, sit-down exams are a good example of summative assessment, but other examples include essays written over time, oral exams, portfolios, projects, laboratory work, and other performances. With a focus on student learning through standards-based grading, allowance for multiple opportunities to show mastery of content and skills is embedded in our practices.

District, State, and National and International Assessments

Beyond the typical assessments that high school students would complete in class, Foss students also complete several different types of assessments created by groups and organizations external to the classroom.

Smarter Balanced (SBA)–The SBA is set of criterion-referenced, summative, computer-adaptive standardized tests required by the State of Washington for graduation from high school. Current SBA tests are administered in reading and writing and math. SBA is administered during the last 12 weeks of the sophomore year. Since this is a graduation requirement, students who do not pass in 10th grade are required to retest later and can take interim assessment benchmarks (IAB) throughout the school year as formative assessments.

International Baccalaureate Assessments (IB)–IB assessments are criterion-referenced, summative, standardized assignments, performances, and exams completed during the two years of the IB Diploma. More information on the IB assessments system is provided in the next section.

Advanced Placement Exams (AP)–AP exams are norm-referenced, summative, standardized tests produced by the College Board and administered in May each year. Currently we offer five courses at Foss that specifically prepares students for specific AP exams – AP Human Geography (which students take their freshman year), AP World History (which students take either their freshman or sophomore year), AP European History (which students take their sophomore year), AP English Composition (which students take their sophomore year), and AP Statistics (which students take their senior year).

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT)—The SAT and ACT are norm-referenced, summative, standardized tests used for in the United States for college admission. The SAT and or the ACT are generally taken at the end of the 11th grade (first year of the IB Diploma) or at the beginning of the 12th grade. Tacoma Public Schools mandates SAT testing district-wide (at district expense) for all 11th graders in March and 12th grade students in October of their senior year. The PSAT is also administered in October for all 10th and 11th graders in October.

Assessments

Since Foss is an IB World School, offering the IB Diploma and Middle Years Programmes, special consideration is required in the design of the school schedule, curriculum and class syllabi to support the completion of IB assessments. One of the fundamental distinctions of the IB Diploma Programme is the assessment model. Sit down examinations in May are only one component of the assessment model for the IB Diploma Programme and the weight of the May exam varies between different disciplines. Other assessments include: individual oral commentaries and presentations; interaction (group) oral presentations; Socratic seminars (and less structured classroom discussions); individual and group projects; quick writes; reflective journals; written commentary; formal essays; extended essay research; laboratory investigations and laboratory portfolios; portfolio projects (principally groups 4-6); performance and composition (group 6); work-site learning and internships. Assessments are usually carried out over several weeks and often cross the two years of the IB Diploma Programme.

To achieve the IB Diploma, students will be expected to complete and pass the following components: six diploma programme classes in designated areas (3 HL and 3 SL), Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, Extended Essay (EE), and Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS). Students must achieve 24 points in order to earn the IB Diploma.

As soon as we achieve authorization to offer the Career-related Programme, students will have opportunities to complete and pass the following components to achieve the CP Certificate: reflective project, service-learning project, language development portfolio, and personal and professional skills course. In addition, students will sit for the two chosen diploma programme exams and pass the corresponding courses internal and external assessments.

For our Middle Years Programme students, they will not sit for the MYP eAssessments because of the cost and conflicting timelines with SBA, AP testing, and other 10th grade graduation requirements. However, sophomores will be expected to complete the Personal Project, culminating their MYP learning.

Concurrency. The Diploma Programme at Foss is noted for its strict adherence to the IB model of concurrency. All IB courses (except for one specific SL course: IB Psychology) are designed as two-year course experiences. When a Foss student signs up for an IB course, they only do so with the understanding that they are undertaking a two-year commitment and are also required to complete all coursework and all IB assessments for that class. Further, any student who qualifies for an IEP or a 504 Accommodation Plan is identified by our IB testing coordinator so that a D1 Accommodation can be made. Finally, all fees associated with IB exam registration are currently paid by Tacoma Public Schools, thus minimizing the burden to our students.

Calendars. An important feature of our IB programme assessments are our two-year calendars. The program summary calendar gives approximate dates of all formal IB assessment deadlines. This is a single page at-a-glance view of the two programme years. This calendar has proven to help students

learn how to cope with deadlines. Although there is no empirical evidence, reports of students overstressing have decreased since the implementation eight years ago.

Just as important, the introduction of the program summary calendar has brought awareness to the faculty that they are not isolated subjects, but are part of a program and that teacher decisions about assessment scheduling should not happen in a vacuum, but in an atmosphere of collaboration. Too, faculty awareness of the nature, scope, and sequence of other IB courses has been greatly enhanced.

There are two types of IB assessment:

Internal Assessment is student work that is first marked by the teacher, and then moderated via a representative sample by IB. The Foss teacher serves as first examiner. Internal Assessments required by IB may also count towards a student's class grade, as determined by the individual teacher. Oral exams, projects, and lab work are examples of Internal Assessments.

External Assessment is student work for an IB grade that is not marked by the teacher. All External Assessments go directly to IB examiners. External Assessments required by IB may also count towards a student's class grade. The May examinations are External Assessments, as are the Theory of Knowledge Essay, Extended Essay, and Written Assignments from several courses.

Homework

Homework supplements and extends a student's class work. The type of work assigned outside of the class period varies according to the subject, but may include readings, essays, problem sets, projects, laboratory and design work, and other types of assignments. Students are expected to complete assignments within the prescribed timelines as set by their teachers; teachers will provide guidance to students on the appropriate time for the satisfactory completion of work. As a guide, an average of no more than 30 minutes per subject per night (or up to 150 minutes per subject per week) will be expected from students.

Consolidation of Learning

MYP Personal Project. The personal project is a requirement of all students during their sophomore year. Since the personal project is one of the elements of the Middle Years Programme, it is given dedicated time during our seminar for students to be guided and monitored through this activity. Students will present their project during the spring conferences in March.

DP Extended Essay. The extended essay is both a requirement of the IB Diploma Programme and a graduation requirement for full IB diploma candidates at Foss. Since the extended essay is one of the elements of the IB core, it must be given a dedicated place in the program and not relegated to some after school activity loosely monitored.

We used to embed the supervision and deadlines of the extended essay into the theory of knowledge class. However, the Instructional Coach/Coordinator successfully advocated for an extended essay coordinator to specifically oversee the extended essay process. This, in conjunction with our block schedule (which has both year 1 and year 2 cohorts together 2-3 times a week), allows much greater oversight over the extended essay (and CAS). We can now schedule regular

meetings (both individual and by cohort) with the Instructional Coach/Coordinator, CAS Coordinator, EE Coordinator, and EE Supervisors.

Students at Foss begin working on their extended essays at the outset of their junior year. Their first task is to isolate a subject area and to request a mentor from among our diploma programme teachers. With the current year 1 students we attempt to honor the choice of mentor but have resorted to distributing the students among the diploma programme faculty so that no small group of teachers ends up mentoring all a diploma programme cohort. The extended essay coordinator tracks and mentors progress of all of the students, provides instruction on research techniques in the first months of the essay, provides professional development to the supervisors, and makes sure that all students, parents, and teachers are clear on the deadlines and expectations, and monitors progress on the three reflection sessions. A penultimate draft of the EE is due on June 1st of year 1 so students can focus on their coursework and college planning during year 2. The final product is due October 1 of year 2, with a public exhibition to follow in the middle of October.

The crown jewel of our EE experience is the *Viva Voce*. Under the new EE guidelines, the third reflection is now the *Viva Voce*. At Foss, however, we will continue our tradition of a public presentation in our theatre of the EE to all stakeholders. This takes place in October once the final EE has been submitted, and just as the year 1 students are beginning their DP journey. The student does a five-minute reflection (critical, process, and affective) specifically on their EE and on their path on the DP to date. They conclude by announcing their college plans. A short period (no more than 5 minutes) of questions follow. This culminating experience has proven to be memorable for all the participants, with students taking full public ownership of their Extended Essay process.

Course Grades

Tacoma Public Schools has dictated final grading marks for mid-term and final semester grade marks. Each teacher applies this scale to determine the basis for the final class grade for each midterm and semester of instruction. Tacoma Public Schools transcripts document final grades at each semester and compute a Grade Point Average (GPA), in which each letter mark is given a numeric value on a 4-point scale (A=4, E=0). A “D” is considered the lowest passing grade, resulting in the award of credit.

Teachers include summative and formative assessments (as defined earlier) categories for determining the final grade. A web-based program called “E-School Plus” is used to document the performance of students on these assessments. Students, parents and guardians may monitor student progress by accessing their subcomponent of ESP (known as HAC) by providing a login ID and password to a secure online site.

Teachers use the IB rubrics to score their formative and summative assessments. For example, an essay would use an MYP or DP rubric and score according to the criterion. For the MYP classrooms, MYP criteria are assessed formally at least twice per year, if a year-long class. Teachers collaborate to ensure that all four criteria have been introduced, taught, and assessed throughout the MYP classes in 9th and 10th grades.

The marking of the formative and summative assessments using the IB rubrics have been aligned with the district’s 4-point grading policy as follows:

Letter Grade	Points Awarded	15 Point Rubric	12 Point Rubric	10 Point Rubric	9 Point Rubric	7 Point Rubric	6 Point Rubric	5 Point Rubric	4 Point Rubric	3 Point Rubric	2 Point Rubric
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A	4.0	15	12	10	9	7	6	5	4	3	2
A-	3.7	13-14	10-11	9	8	6	5	4	-	-	-
B+	3.3	12	9	8	7	5	4	-	-	-	-
B	3.0	10-11	8	7	6	4	3	3	4	-	-
B-	2.7	9	7	6	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
C+	2.3	7-8	6	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
C	2.0	5-6	5	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	1
C-	1.7	4	4	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
D+	1.3	2-3	2-3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
D	1.0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-
E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The final marks provided by the IBO, College Board, or other external sources are not used to calculate a student's class grade. Neither the final marks from IBO or College Board are reported on a student's TPS transcript; separate transcripts are available from each of these institutions.

Communication

Communication of Assessment Philosophy, Policy, and Procedures to the School Community. Foss High School's Assessment Policy can be found on the school website. In addition, we use the website calendar and other communication features of the site to regularly communicate testing schedules, assessment procedures, and reporting of grades and conferences to our larger community.

Feedback to Students

School-based feedback is varied, but is formal and structured in seven specific ways recognizable by students and parents/guardians: (1) eSchoolPlus a/k/a Home Access Center (HAC); (2) Schoology; (3) postal receipt of formal progress reports; (4) ManageBac; (5) Turnitin.com; (6) Office 365; and (7) phone calls.

eSchoolPlus a/k/a Home Access Center (HAC). eSchoolPlus is a web-based system that has distinct subcomponents for administrative, teaching, student, and parent/guardian access. Parents/guardians and students can view and track progress of all course assignments and grades at any time from any web device. There are also communication tools available in eSchoolPlus that allow communication between teachers, students, parents/guardians.

Schoology. Schoology is a web-based system that has distinct subcomponents for administrative, teaching, student, and parent/guardian access. Parents/guardians and students can view and track progress of all course assignments and grades at any time from any web device. There are also

communication tools available in eSchoolPlus that allow communication between teachers, students, parents/guardians.

US Postal Service. Our district distributes formal progress reports to all students twice a year and issues formal grades at the end of each semester. Teachers have the opportunity to add additional comments for students and parents/guardians at that time, although these comments are not a part of the student's permanent record.

ManageBac. Our building uses ManageBac to track our full-IB diploma candidates. The site's features are directly aligned to IB values. Our CAS and EE Coordinators regularly utilizes the site's features to communicate with students and provide them feedback that can be saved for later inspection and reflection. DP-specific program announcements to students are also made through ManageBac.

TurnItIn.Com. All major and many minor written assessments across the curriculum and encompassing all grades (9-12) can be submitted to TurnItIn.com. Teachers, primarily in English and social studies, use TurnItIn.com for the submission of all work written outside of class. By using TurnItIn.com as a submission mechanism, we have lowered our incidents of plagiarism. Moreover, the editing and recording toolset are giving teachers additional ways of communicating progress and outcomes to students.

Office 365. This suite of apps is generally thought of as a productivity toolset. However, all our teachers use the Microsoft Class Notebook to create an interface disseminate course materials, publish calendars and deadlines, and generally collaborate and communicate in their classrooms.

Phone Calls. Bi-yearly, two days are set aside to make calls or in-person conferences with families whose students have earned a C or less around conference time. Additionally, the school has an automated system to notify parents/guardians when a student's grade in any course slips below a "C". These automated calls go out on Friday afternoon. In addition, teachers are expected to maintain contact with parents/guardians via phone and e-mail, particularly when a student is struggling.

Analysis of Assessment Data to Inform Teaching and Learning

Analysis of data is an important part of our district's continuous academic improvement plan. Data informs what each school does, and this is reflected in our CAP (continuous academic plan). Additionally, each year we devote four full days to discuss student data and the issues that the data raise. Finally, we now have approximately 3.5 hours per week of dedicated professional learning community (PLC) time, during which we exam student data to improve both teaching and learning.

Data from a variety of sources are utilized, but ultimately the vast majority of it ends up in the eSchoolPlus system. This data is accessible to any teacher or building administrator through the PowerBI dashboard, a component of Office 365. The PowerBI dashboard allows us to see a snapshot of real time data including IB assessment data, grades, attendance, discipline, assessments, graduation requirements, extracurricular activities, industry certifications and more. We can search, filter, and export any of this data individually or for use in our various PLCs.

Reflection

Reflection is considered essential to the promulgation of an IB culture in the school. The Instructional Coach/Coordinator offers seminars to stakeholders on the nature and importance of

reflection and is actively working with faculty on formalizing reflection both horizontally and vertically in the school. As such, a common language around reflection is being developed as part of the school's move to MYP and CP authorization. While reflection in the DP core is already an embedded reality, we are extending these types of reflection into the school. As part of our collaborative time, genuine PLCs have developed in which critical, process, and affective reflection is taking place. This paradigm shift has taken root with students, as well, who have begun to expect genuine reflection as a component in their learning experience.

All teachers are expected to reflect on their scores and adjust their teaching, if required. This is done both in conjunction with the teacher's formal evaluation process with the building administration, and informally with the Instruction Coach/Coordinator and the teachers' PLCs.

Responsibilities

The Foss community recognizes that valid assessment of student knowledge and learning is an important function of high school.

The Foss High School administration shall:

- Stay informed about and be an advocate for IB assessments and requirements.

- Ensure that the best choices are made in creating classes and the master schedule to allow for continuity of the IB program offerings and assessments.

- Provide professional development opportunities to teachers about standards-based grading so that the school can make informed decisions when creating valid assessments and then assessing students' learning.

- Support and encourage staff to update their classroom grades frequently in the TAC (teachers' online gradebook) so students and parents/guardians are kept informed about class progress.

- Support and encourage staff to administer the district's common assessments.

- Support through space, materials, and providing substitutes as needed for staff to conduct all types of assessments.

- Welcome volunteers who will be serving as invigilators for IB assessments.

- Understand and support students in fulfilling their CAS group projects.

- Fund IB training and conferences for teachers to better understand the program and its assessments.

The Foss staff shall:

- Administer in-class assessments that are aligned to learning targets and allow students to demonstrate complex understanding and or skill related to standards.

- Use IB rubrics for assessment of meeting standard.

- Provide multiple opportunities for mastery, in recognition that students are at different levels of ability.

- Base class grades on mastery of standard and showing understanding rather than behavior and attendance.

Develop rigorous and relevant assessments and activities with academic integrity.

Schedule large-scale assessments, especially those required for the IB Diploma, evenly over time ensuring students have had appropriate chances to practice before summative assessments are administered.

Provide timely feedback on all assessments and assignments, no later than two weeks from completion.

Meet the deadlines set by IB coordinator for the submission of IB Predicted Grades and Internal Assessments

Provide accommodations for all assessments and activities to Special Education students as outlined in the Foss Special Education Policy and accordance of policies set forth by Tacoma Public Schools.

Use assessment data (IBO and College Board) to continually improve instruction.

The Foss students shall:

Approach both formative and summative assessments with integrity and academic honesty; assessments intended to be a measure of individual student performance should be a measure of that student alone.

Meet the deadlines set by each teacher for the completion of assessments, including in-class summative examinations as well as large-scale assessments (e.g. essays, lab reports, portfolios, projects).

Use rubrics provided by the teacher to complete related assessments.

Make the necessary arrangements to be present for scheduled IB assessments.

The Foss parents and guardians shall:

Refer to the available resources in learning about the nature of assessments in each class and in the IB program.

Understand that a class grade is determined by how many and what types of assignments and assessments have been collected.

Understand that how an assessment is scored, and how it might calculate into a classroom grade, varies by the nature of the assessment, the individual teacher, and by what skills/content are being assessed.

Support students in arranging their schedules so they can be present for IB assessments.

Assessment Policy Review

The Assessment Policy is a living document, subject to ongoing review and revision with the Coordinator/Instructional Coach taking the lead role in keeping the school informed of the principles and practices established by the IBO. As such, the policy will be reviewed annual after the May exam session by the collective faculty.

The building administration is responsible for the formal evaluation of teachers to include adherence to IB principles and practices as a responsibility for teaching MYP, DP, and CP courses.

This includes holding teachers accountable for ensuring that assessment practices are followed to ensure the best possible outcomes for student.

References

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