

Desert Mountain High School
Assessment Policy

Balanced Assessment Philosophy Statement:

Assessment is for student learning, is student-centered and involves a commitment by all stakeholders. Accordingly, assessments serve different purposes dependent upon classroom, district and state level uses. Assessment is standards based, and includes a variety of methods that guide instruction and inform instructional decisions. Student-centered assessment motivates, encourages and inspires students' passion for learning when it is delivered in a timely and reasonable manner and includes purposeful feedback.

Vision Statement of the Scottsdale Unified School District:

Engaging all students in world-class, future-focused learning

Strategic Goals of the Scottsdale Unified School District:

Goal 1 – Academic Excellence	Challenge and inspire students to reach high levels of achievement so they thrive as confident, dynamic, future-ready learners equipped to pursue their passions and ambitions.
Goal 2 – Culture and Climate	Cultivate positive relationships to build an inclusive, equitable, nurturing environment that creates conditions for highly effective teaching, learning, and leading.
Goal 3 – Talented and Qualified Professionals	Attract, hire, develop, support, and retain highly qualified, passionate, and talented professionals.
Goal 4 – Community Engagement and Partnership	Foster relationships with mentors, volunteers, and business partners to provide real-world opportunities for students that enhance and strengthen our community.
Goal 5 – Optimized Resources	Generate and utilize resources to maximize educational opportunities in order to ensure organizational health.

Assessment Practices, the DP Criteria and Frequency of Assessments:

Formative Assessments:

Teachers use formative assessments to gather information on the students' strengths and weaknesses. At the beginning of the school year and continuing throughout the year teachers utilize formative assessments so they can see what skills the students have already mastered and where the teacher needs to focus. The DMHS IB DP program expects every teacher to use formative assessments in unit planning, daily instruction and remediation of concepts. Some examples of formative assessments include:

- Pre-tests
- Pre-reading exercises
- Surveys
- Portfolios
- Photos
- Student Self-Assessments
- Journals

Summative Assessments:

Summative assessments are also an important part of the learning process. Teachers use these assessments to measure how their students have mastered the curriculum and anticipate how the students will do on the IB tests. Some examples of summative assessment at DMHS include:

- Final Exams
- IB Exams
- Internal assessments
- Unit tests
- Mock or Practice IB exams

Teachers are constantly modifying their curriculum and lesson plans throughout the year based on the feedback they have received from both types of assessments. Also, when teachers receive the IB test results, they adjust their lesson plans for the following year based on the strengths and weaknesses of the previous class. That is why the formative assessments are so important at the beginning of the year because then teachers can see if the strengths and weaknesses are continuing trends from class to class. The DP teachers are expected to use the DP assessment criteria on assignments that they are appropriate for. All our teachers have gone to training, so they are familiar with the assessment criteria and rubrics. Teachers use the IB rubrics and sample papers within their instruction, so students can become familiar with the areas they will be assessed on and what makes an exemplar sample. We also have Professional Learning Communities (PLCS) where the teachers can meet and discuss how they use the assessment criteria.

District/State Assessment Program

For every IB and non-IB class, the district recommends teachers do a pre-test at the beginning of the year and a post-test at the end of the year to measure the growth of the students. Some of the DP classes use the IB assessments as their post-test, and when teachers get the results of their tests, they can adjust their teaching accordingly. The Scottsdale Unified School District pays for every sophomore to take ACT Aspire test in fall. It also uses the Horizon ACT Benchmark tests for reading, English, math and science for each quarter. The ACT is the statewide high school achievement test in the state of Arizona.

Training has been given to all teachers and administrators in regards to formative and summative assessments; teachers are expected to use a balance of formative, summative and diagnostic assessments throughout the school year.

Grading and Marking

Teachers are expected to grade and return assignments to the students in a timely manner, taking into account some assignments take longer to grade than others. Because our teachers recognize that there are multiple paths to learning, they use a variety of methods to assess students including:

- Performance assessments- Debates, Presentations, Performances
- Test/Quizzes
- Science lab reports
- Essays
- Peer Editing
- Student Reflections
- Journals

Through the use of Professional Learning Communities, our teachers are developing common assessments. When the PLCs are also vertical teams, DP teachers help assist the MYP teachers on creating modified IB assessments where the teachers can use a modified DP rubric in the MYP program. This will enable teachers to see if all students in a particular subject have mastered the curriculum. Since our DP teachers also develop assessments keeping the IB examinations in mind, they are constantly using and referencing the DP rubrics and subject area guides.

Recording and Reporting

Teachers are expected to update grades on a weekly basis on the school website so that parents and students can keep track of their progress. This site also allows teachers to post homework assignments and other files and links for students to use for the class.

Teachers are also required to send mid-quarter reports to students who are failing or in danger of failing a class.

At the end of each quarter and semester, teachers also post quarter and semester grades on the school website. Because DMHS is environmentally conscious, the school does not send home paper report cards. Parents can access the report cards from the school's website. If a family does not have access to a computer or does not know how to use a computer, they can request that a paper copy of the report card be mailed home at no charge to them.

Internal Moderation and Standardization of Assessment:

For most of our DP classes, only one teacher teaches all one year of a DP class, so we do not have to worry about standardization of the IB internal assessments. For example, one teacher teaches the IB Math Analysis and Approaches HL Year 2, so she is the only teacher who grades those internal assessments. We also have one teacher who teaches both year one and year two of biology, so she grades all the internal assessments each of those years. Once the teachers receive their results and how their samples were moderated, the teachers then use that information to adjust their grading the following year. However, we have two teachers who teach TOK, so before they grade the Exhibition, together, the teachers review the rubric and grade a few of the students' work, so that they have standardized their assessment practices. Also, both the Language A Literature teachers for years one and two grade the internal assessments. For the first day of IAs, both teachers sit in on the internals and grade them together, so that they can standardize their grading, then they grade some independently

and come back together to grade a few more to make sure they are using the rubric in the same manner.

Homework

The Scottsdale Unified School District's policy on homework, as written in the High School Planning Guide states:

Homework completion contributes to the development of self-discipline, responsibility and lifelong learning. It is the expectation that Scottsdale Unified School District staff assign challenging and meaningful homework assignments to reinforce academic standards. Homework will be assigned at the discretion of the teacher to support learning outcomes.

Homework assignments may include:

- Preparation for new learning
- Practice to reinforce classroom instruction
- Extension of new skills to foster critical and creative thinking
- Time for test and project preparation

Actual time required to complete assignments will vary with each student's study habits, academic skills and selected course load. When absent, the student has the responsibility to acquire and complete all missed work, which may include handouts, reading and assignments. Students are encouraged to consult the SUSD Grading Guidelines and the SUSD Code of Conduct to learn more about the expectation and policies for homework.

Homework Quality:

- Well-designed homework assignments relate directly to class work and extend students' learning beyond the classroom. Homework is most useful when teachers carefully prepare the assignment, thoroughly explain it, and give prompt feedback when the work is completed.
- To make the most of what students learn from doing homework, teachers need to give the same care to preparing homework assignments as they give to classroom instruction. When teachers prepare written instructions and discuss homework assignments with students, they find their students take the homework more seriously than if the assignments are simply announced. Students are more willing to do homework when they believe it is useful, when teachers treat it as an integral part of instruction, when the teacher evaluates it, and when it counts as a part of the grade.
- Effective homework assignments do not just supplement the classroom lessons; they also teach students to be independent learners. Homework gives students experience in following directions, making judgments and comparisons, raising additional questions for study, and developing responsibility and self-discipline.

Homework Quantity:

Student achievement rises significantly when teachers regularly assign homework and students conscientiously complete the work. Extra studying helps students of all levels of ability. Homework boosts achievement because the total time spent studying influences how much is learned. Time is not the only ingredient of learning, but without it little can be achieved.

Make-up Work:

We believe that student attendance in class is critical to high levels of student learning. Thus, any absence from class has natural consequences and some (unexcused absences/truancies) have behavioral consequences.

A student who is absent for with an excused absence will be permitted the same amount of time s/he was absent to complete make-up work. All work must be made up; all work will be assessed on the quality of work. Full credit will be given if full credit is earned based upon the content and standards being assessed.

Links with other Documents

The different types of assessments that DMHS teachers use allow students to demonstrate the traits listed in the IB Learner Profile.

Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers and administrators are responsible for implementing the Assessment Policy. However, as needed teachers, administrators, students and parents can come together to evaluate and review the policy. Their responsibility will be to make sure the policy is up to date with the best practices in the teaching field and to make sure that the Assessment Policy is relevant and fair for all students. In regards to the DP program, the DP coordinator will discuss with new teachers in the program how our DP program implements this Assessment Policy. Also, veteran teachers in the different subject areas will assist new teachers and explain how this policy applies to their specific field. As with all IB policies, it is posted on the DMHS IB page for anyone to see. This policy was reviewed by all IB DP teachers along with representatives of the IB Parents' Association during the 2023-24 school year.

District Grading Scale

The following grading scale is used in all courses, both non-weighted and weighted, and at all levels to report grades:

A = 100% – 90%

B = less than 90% - 80%

C = less than 80% - 70%

D = less than 70% - 60%

F = below 60%