Junior School
Assessment and Reporting Policy
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Policy outline

The purpose of the Junior School Assessment and Reporting Policy is to:

- provide a common definition of assessment and reporting;
- communicate the Junior School’s assessment and reporting philosophy;
- ensure the implementation of consistent, rigorous, well-planned and cohesive assessment practices across the Junior School;
- enhance teaching and learning, so that it is consistent with the philosophy, objectives, and standards and practices of the International Baccalaureate’s Primary Years Programme (PYP), as well as the requirements of the Australian Curriculum and the Early Years Learning Framework Australia (EYLF);
- outline the guidelines and procedures for assessment and reporting.

Application and scope

Reception to Year 6

Purpose of assessment

Assessment is the process of acquiring information and making judgements about student learning. In line with our School vision statement and the IB mission statement, assessment at Canberra Girls Grammar School is challenging, responsive, supportive, and an integral part of teaching and learning. The purpose of assessment is to assist student learning related to desired outcomes, to make judgments about student achievement, to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching programs and to inform decisions about future learning. It guides pedagogical practice and informs understanding of each learner’s ability, progress and achievement.

Related policies

- Junior School Language Learning Policy
- Junior School Academic Engagement Policy
- Junior School Academic Honesty Policy

Last updated: July 2020
Legislation and references

- The Australian Curriculum
  https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/
- The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
  https://www.acara.edu.au/
- Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- ACT Education Act 2004 (republished June 2020)
- Making the PYP Happen – International Baccalaureate Organization – Cardiff, Wales, 2009
- Programme Standards and Practices – International Baccalaureate Organization – Cardiff, Wales, 2014
- Making the PYP Happen – Pedagogical Leadership, International Baccalaureate Organization – Cardiff, Wales, 2009
- PYP: From Principles into Practice - Cardiff, Wales, 2018

Principles of assessment

Canberra Girls Grammar School uses an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment. Central to the Primary Years Programme, assessment supports students through the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge and skills, the understanding of concepts and the development of approaches to learning.

Assessment informs learning and teaching: it is an ongoing process of gathering, analysing, reflecting and acting on evidence to inform teaching. Assessment for learning, as learning and of learning are used individually or together, formally or informally, to gather evidence about student achievement, and to support student learning.

Assessment involves teachers and students working together to monitor, document, measure, report and adjust learning.

Assessment for learning, frequently referred to as formative assessment, is conducted throughout the learning process; it is iterative, interactive, learner-centred and forward thinking. Formative assessment is interwoven with daily learning and helps teachers find out what students already know and can do; this informs and can be used to plan the next stage of learning. Assessment for learning allows teachers to personalise learning and provide meaningful and timely feedback, both written and oral, to students. Pre-assessment allows the teacher and student to discover what is already known in a specific topic or subject. It is critical to recognise prior knowledge to enable students to engage in questioning, thinking and theorising in order to construct new knowledge appropriate to their level.

Assessment as learning is part of the formative process. Its goal is to support students in learning how to become self-regulated, life-long learners. Assessment as learning is often known as self-assessment, and it occurs during the learning process. Students are active agents in their own learning: they develop metacognitive strategies to plan and monitor learning goals, and they reflect in order to modify and adjust learning. Self-assessment and reflection can also address students’ decisions to take action. In peer assessment, students are provided with opportunities to assess their peers’ learning and performances.

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Assessment of learning, or summative assessment, is a specific indicative measurement of student performance against predetermined standards (mostly the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards) at the end of a unit of work, learning sequence, year level or developmental stage. Its purpose is to indicate to students, parents and teachers a student’s achievement in the acquisition and transfer of knowledge, skills and understanding within and between subject areas at a particular point in time.

Effective assessment at Canberra Girls Grammar School:

− improves and encourages student learning and performance by providing effective feedback to feedforward and support future learning;
− provides opportunities for students to be assessed in authentic contexts;
− is clear and specific, using a range of explicitly stated criteria;
− is varied and uses a wide range of multiple strategies and tools;
− focuses on an individual student’s progress and are modified to suit different learning needs and styles
− involves students in self-evaluation and peer-assessment;
− informs effective teaching and learning;
− fosters reflective practices;
− encourages students’ development of the IB Learner Profile attributes.

Assessment practice

At Canberra Girls Grammar School, the practice of assessment relates to the four dimensions of assessment: monitoring learning, documenting learning, measuring learning and reporting on learning (PYP: From Principles into Practice).

Monitoring learning

Through the monitoring of learning, teachers and students can gauge learning progress. The monitoring of learning is ongoing and involves students and teachers observing, questioning, reflecting and discussing learning. It can involve pre-assessment, formative assessment, self-assessment and peer assessment. The monitoring of learning also includes feedback that feeds forward to enable the next steps in learning.

Documenting learning

Documenting learning provides evidence of and insights into learning. The documentation can be physical or digital, and can include learning goals, questions, reflections and other evidence of learning in a variety of formats. This can include portfolios and student workbooks.

Measuring learning

Measuring learning captures student learning a particular moment in time. It can involve summative assessment, which is moderated across the year level, and measured against the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards for different subject areas. Levels of student achievement can also be measured through diagnostic testing including NAPLAN (Years 3 and 5) and PAT (Progressive
Achievement Test) which is conducted yearly. Data from these standardised tests as well as from school-created summative assessment tasks is analysed for individual learners, student cohorts and across the school to identify patterns in student learning and to guide next steps in learning and teaching.

**Reporting learning**

At Canberra Girls Grammar School, effective reporting involves communicating with parents and students as a means of providing feedback based on assessment. Our reporting process is varied and invites participation by students and parents to support the needs and progress of student learning.

**Parent-Teacher interviews**

Interviews are offered twice a year to parents in the final three weeks of Terms 1 and 3. These discussions are designed to provide communication between the student's teachers and parents in regards to student development and progress across all curriculum areas. From Years 3 to 6, students are able to attend and participate in Parent-Teacher interviews.

**Student-led conferences (SLC)**

Student-Led Conferences differ from the Parent-Teacher interview, as students are actively involved and take a central role in the process. Student-Led Conferences take the form of a conversation between the Junior School student and his/her parents, allowing students to share their individual growth and demonstrate a growing understanding of their development as independent learners. The class and specialist subject teachers act as facilitators on SLC Day as students share their learning across all curriculum areas. Student-Led Conferences occur during Term 2 (ELC) and Term 3 (Junior School).

**Written reports**

Our formal written reports are comprehensive, honest and credible, and meet the required government legislation. Students are graded against the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards for curriculum areas, and are also given effort grades. A 'Student as a Learner' comment, written by the class teacher, includes information about the individual student’s progress, their development of the IB Learner Profile and Approaches to Learning, their next steps in learning, and their school involvement. Specialist subject areas (with the exception of Library) are reported on from Prep to Year 6. The semester reports include a record of co-curricular participation and students’ personal goals and reflections on learning. Reports are distributed to parents at the end of each semester. Reception and Pre-Prep parents receive a written report at the end of Term 4 only.

**Unit of Inquiry reports**

At the conclusion of each unit of inquiry, a UOI report is generated, providing feedback about student progress in the targeted curriculum areas for that inquiry, their Approaches to Learning skill development, as well as the student’s understanding of the central idea.

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Student reflections on Seesaw

The digital portfolio app, Seesaw, is used across the ELC and Junior School as a way of recording and sharing student learning. In the ELC, learning is documented and shared by the teaching staff. In the Junior School, students are encouraged to engage in assessment as learning, by choosing their own items to reflect on and share in Seesaw. Parents are notified via the app when a post has been added, and they are only able to see their own child’s contributions, or teacher posts for the whole class.

Assessment tools

A variety of assessment tools are used to monitor, document, measure and report on student learning. These include, but are not limited to:

**Anecdotal records**: Brief written notes based on teacher observations of students. These records are systematically compiled and organised to increase their validity.

**Work samples**: Works samples are constantly reviewed by teachers, in collaboration with students to assess what they can do and their next steps in learning. Work samples can be found in books or portfolios.

**Benchmark/Exemplars**: Samples of student work that serve as concrete standards against which other samples are judged. Benchmarks/exemplars can be used in conjunction with rubrics and continuums which are widely used for moderating students’ work across year levels.

**Open-ended tasks**: Through open-ended questions or stimuli, assessment can be differentiated and students’ thinking challenged.

**Project-based tasks**: These allow students to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding, and often occur towards the end of a unit.

**Continuums**: Visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement or identify where a student is in a process.

**Checklists**: Lists of information, data, attributes or elements which should be present.

**Rubrics**: A set of rating criteria, which can be developed by teachers or teachers and students together. Rubrics are presented at the beginning of the task to be assessed to ensure students know what the range of achievement looks like and what is expected from the start.
Individual needs assessment

In addition to the wide range of assessment tools and strategies that teachers use, Canberra Girls Grammar School administers a number of individual needs assessments throughout the year in order to ascertain the individual needs of students.

Individual needs assessment may be conducted by members of the Academic Engagement Team (AET), including the Student Support teachers, EAL/D teacher and the School Psychologist in the areas of English, Mathematics, social, emotional and behavioural issues, psychometrics, and other needs.

Assessment may be conducted by professionals outside the school in areas including speech pathology, hearing and vision, occupational therapy and developmental delay.

Assessment in the Early years

At Canberra Girls Grammar School, we acknowledge the Early Years (3 - 6 year olds) as a unique phase of development. While the principles of assessment for learning, of learning and as learning continue to be important in the early years (Reception, Pre-Prep & Prep), assessment that ‘monitors and documents students’ learning against individual developmental milestones and celebrates achievements at times that are pertinent to individuals’ is the focus (From Principles into Practice: The Early Learner). Assessment in the early years predominantly involves individual, ongoing observation and documentation about both planned and spontaneous learning experiences. As children move into the first formal year of schooling (Prep), elements of the performance and diagnostic assessment strategies (described previously) are gradually introduced, though balanced by a focus on the individual and their own learning trajectory.

Policy development and review process

The information contained within this policy is informed by educational research, IB and ACARA documentation, effective practice and information obtained from professional learning workshops. The policy was first drafted in 2011, with subsequent reviews in 2015, 2018 and 2020. Another policy review is scheduled for the 2022 academic year.