

Assessment Policy

June 2016



Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed

A. Definition: The term “Assessment” refers generally to the gathering and interpretation of information related to a student’s learning abilities, learning attainments, learning strengths and learning needs through summative and formative assessment.

B. Aims of Assessment

Assessment should enable pupils:

- To improve their achievement
- To be involved in their own learning
- To be motivated to achieve their full potential

Assessment should enable teachers:

- To assess progress and adapt planning as required
- To evaluate their pupils’ learning needs
- To ensure that pupils know how to improve the standard of their work
- To evaluate teaching and learning styles and outcomes
- To review and change practice
- To meet statutory requirements.
- To monitor a student’s progress and to provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the student is learning.
- This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the students learning and adapt her / his teaching strategies and / or learning activities as appropriate.
- To provide the students and parents with information regarding progress.
- To establish baseline data in relation to a student’s attainments in certain subjects
- To identify students for levels in Maths, English and Irish.
- To assess a student’s eligibility for additional support and services and to inform consultations with the ETB or private psychologist where necessary.
- To assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred to an outside professional or agency for assessment or direct intervention

Reporting of assessment should enable parents:

- To be involved in their child’s learning
- To understand and encourage the progress their child is making
- To check their child’s progress throughout their time in Secondary School

3. Legislation:

The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to students and their parents. In fulfilling this requirement, schools develop assessment procedures, which provide an accurate account of a student’s progress and achievement.

4. Formative Assessment:

(1) Definition: Formative assessment involves a range of strategies designed to give students, teachers and parents' feedback about students' understanding of elements of their learning in courses.

(2) Assessment for Learning : Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed has adopted the Assessment for Learning (AFL) approach to formative assessment. Its purpose is to use the whole process of assessment to help learners improve their learning. It is formative because its intention is to form, shape or guide the next steps in learning. It is about 'learning to learn.' It should be cooperative and student centered. An outline of this approach is given in the Staff handbook.

Assessment for Learning Assessment should support learning as well as measure the outcomes. Effective assessment for learning enables pupils to understand how to improve their work by:

- Helping them to understand the assessment criteria before an assignment is begun
- Telling them what they have done well and what they could improve on
- Telling them how to improve their work
- Making available examples of work which do meet the criteria so they can see how to improve their own work
- Being a part of effective planning – helps you to modify your teaching methods
- Focusing on how pupils learn
- Being central to classroom practice
- Recognising all educational achievements.

We recognise, however, that not all aspects of this approach are of benefit in all curriculum areas and the discretion of the teacher is advised to adapt the theory to suit the particular demands of the subject.

Examples of formative assessment in Coláiste Mhuire Co-ed are

- Observation
- Questioning (considering Blooms taxonomy)
- 2 Stars and a wish
- Self assessment
- KWL
- Peer evaluations
- Traffic Lights
- Exit cards
- Think pair share

(3) Assessment work may be differentiated to suit the needs and abilities of the individual.

5. Summative Assessment & Academic tracking:

(1) Definition: Summative Assessment refers to the assessment of learning and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner.

Academic Tracking; is the process whereby students record their target grades and actual grades in their diary and this progress is monitored by year heads.

(2) Key Assessment Tasks: Subjects should use key assessment tasks to measure pupil progress. These may take the form of formal tests but may also be longer pieces of work completed over a period of time. Practical and investigational work will also be used in several subjects. The aims of these assessments are to:

- Assess pupils achievements against clear objectives i.e. success criteria
- Raise pupils' awareness for their progress towards their optimum grade.
- Ensure that pupils understand how they can improve their work by using assessment for learning techniques.

The assessment will:-

- Be standardised by departments in order to be able to moderate across the year group and ensure a consistent standard related to the programmes of study
- Be assessed against level descriptions set by the Department of Education and Skills and material of the State examinations commission
- Be an integral part of the learning process
- Take place on 4 occasions per year in 1st, 2nd, and 5th year.
 - First and Second and Fifth years have class based examinations in Autumn and Spring, and formal house exams in November/December and May
 - Third and Sixth Years have examinations in late November/December, Mock examinations in early February and the Certificate Examinations in June.
 - Transition years are assessed using continuous assessment and the TY merit system (which is collated twice per year). See the TY policy for more information on same.
- Students will also receive an effort grade which is based on agreed criteria (see Appendix 1)

(3) The mode of assessment may include: written examinations, practicals, aural and/or oral work.

(4) There are formal examinations will normally be assessed numerically and pupils will be given a grade related to the public examination towards which they are working. Examinations generally follow the same format to the junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations as per the Department of Education and skills and a marking scheme follows the department guidelines.

(5) Grades are recorded on Vsware, in teacher diaries, copies and homework diaries.

TARGET Grades.

The target grade is recorded in the student diary and is what we believe pupils should be aiming towards. This is what they should achieve in each exam through hard work, endeavour and with support and guidance. Students, in consultation with their parents and teachers should record their target grades in their diary. Students should also record the results of academic tracking tests in their diaries.

Reports

Reports are forwarded to Parents/ Guardians of First, Second Years and TY students in December and in June. Reports are forwarded to Parents/ Guardians of Fifth year students in December, after Easter and in June. Reports are forwarded to Parents/ Guardians of Third and Sixth year students in December and after the Mock Examinations. The report template is computerised and allows teachers to distinguish levels. A mark and grade are awarded and a comment can be generated from a menu. Alternatively, an original comment can be given.

Transition Years parents receive a report at Christmas and summer which shows how students are progressing according to the merit system and an overview of progress from the co-ordinator.

All reports are signed off by the year head and the Principal and a general comment may be made on progress to date.

6. Psychometric Tests: The following tests are administered to incoming 1st Year students prior to entry:

Cognitive ability Test (CAT) E 4th edition (computerised)

Maths competency test

The learning support team also administer Access Literacy and Numeracy to all first year students . Students with particular needs are identified. Retesting occurs as deemed necessary by the Learning Support Department.

A further Cat test is administered at the end of the year to TY students/students progressing to 5th year.

Appendix 1

1	Work is always of the highest standard - for ability. There is evidence of active learning and revision of work
2	Evidence of revision Exceeding target grades Is always striving to improve his/her work
3	Has made progress Revises for tests - meeting target grades. Grade reflects student's ability
4	Little evidence of revision Student is not achieving target grades
5	No evidence of revision Test results do not reflect student's ability. Underperforming