

# Assessment Policy



Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed

February 2020

# 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.

## Aims of Assessment

### **Assessment should enable students:**

- 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 students’ learning needs
- To ensure that students know how to improve the standard of their work
- To evaluate teaching and learning styles and outcomes
- To review and change practice
- 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 subjects where this is appropriate.
- To aid in the assessment of 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.
- To meet statutory requirements.

### **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.

Assessment for Learning should support learning as well as measure the outcomes.  
Effective assessment for learning enables students to understand how to improve their work by:  
Ensuring they know what they should be learning in each lesson  
Helping them to understand the assessment criteria before an assignment is begun  
Telling them what they have done well and what they could improve their work  
Making available examples of work (where appropriate) which do meet the criteria so they can see how to improve their own work  
Being a part of effective planning – helps teachers to modify teaching methods  
Focusing on how students learn  
Being central to classroom practice  
Recognising all educational achievements.

Central to the schools vision for learning and teaching is the class teacher's commitment to

- Sharing learning intentions and success criteria
- Effective questioning
- Effective formative feedback
- Encouraging student reflection

Examples of approaches that support this 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

In recognising the importance of learning intentions and success criteria teachers will (where appropriate)

- a. Share the learning intentions and success criteria with students
- b. Where appropriate negotiate success criteria with students
- c. Use learning intentions and success criteria to ascertain progress
- d. Keep examples of students work (within the bounds of GDPR) as exemplars
- e. Highlight how student work on display meets success criteria

In recognising the importance of feedback teachers will (where appropriate)

- Mark work assigned to students and provide appropriate oral or written feedback based on the success criteria/features of quality
- Use peer or self assessment
- Encourage student reflection
- Use formative comments in written reports

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

The assessment will:-

Be standardised by departments (while being cognisant of the need for differentiation) 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 3 occasions per year in 1st, 2nd, and on 4 occasions in 5th year.

- First and Second years have class based examinations in Autumn and formal house exams in November/December and May
- 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 system (which is collated twice per year). See the TY policy for more information on same.
- Leaving Cert Applied students are assessed using the departments assessment for this programme and in house exams at Christmas and summer as appropriate.

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. **Where a format other than a summative exam is used for reporting purposes the teacher will provide a statement outlining the learning outcomes being assessed and the mode of assessment.** This will be distributed to parents with the report.

(4) Formal examinations will normally be assessed numerically and students 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 Compass, in teacher diaries, and homework diaries.

TARGET Grades.

John Hattie's research indicated that self reported grades are the best way to raise student attainment. He further clarifies this by stating that it is the dialogue between students and teachers in this process that is the most powerful component. With this in mind in Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed students are required to set target grades.

The target grade is recorded in the student diary and entered by the student on compass. It is what we believe students should be aiming towards. Teachers are encouraged to negotiate this grade with parents and students. The target grade is what they should achieve in each exam through hard work, endeavour and with support and guidance. Students should also record the

results of academic tracking tests in their diaries. Teachers are encouraged to discuss academic grades with reference to target grades.

## 6. Assessment in the Junior Cycle

1. There are three strands to Junior Cycle assessment: Classroom Based Assessment, Assessment Task and Final Assessment.
  - Classroom Based Assessment (CBA): All subjects and short courses engage with this form of assessment. CBAs take place in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year. This assessment is conducted by teachers, and is moderated by means of a SLAR (Subject Learning and Assessment Review) meeting.
  - Assessment Task (AT): A number of subjects (but not short courses) engage in the Assessment Task in 3<sup>rd</sup> Year. This is marked by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). The AT takes place during class time.
  - Final Assessment (FT): The Final Assessment applies to a number of subjects (but not short courses) and takes place by means of an exam in June of 3<sup>rd</sup> Year.
  - It should be noted that CBAs and ATs should be considered formative modes of assessment.
  - CBAs are reported using statements rather than grades
  - All strands of assessment are reflected in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) which is awarded to students following completion of the Junior Cycle programme. This includes students accessing Junior Cycle at Level 2
  - The JCPA will also reflect learning that has occurred outside of the classroom. This is recorded in the Other Areas of Learning section. Students prepare a variety of other areas of learning in each year of their junior cycle and choose their preferred statements at the end of the process.

### **Junior Cycle Assessment in the Event of Student Absence**

It is recognised that the Junior Cycle programme presents a large number of assessment events. It is likely, that on occasion, circumstances will result in student absences during these times. Students and parents/guardians should look to minimise such occurrences.

To allow for planning of medical, dental and other essential appointments, Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed shall provide dates of assessment events as they become available. Students are also required to note these date in a page in their journals/student diaries.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to schedule essential appointments outside of school time where possible. Parents/guardians are advised not to schedule appointments during the times of assessment events.

The following are the arrangements for CBA and Assessment Task Administration in Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles.

1. Dates of CBAS, Assessment Tasks and SLARS are agreed by staff and are adhered to in each subject.
2. Dates are sent to parents and students.
3. CBAs must be submitted in the timeframe outlined. The final date of that period is the deadline date.
4. Subject departments will request that a text be sent to the relevant cohort reminding them about key dates as they arise.
5. The SLAR takes place in the time specified by the NCCA after the CBA deadline date.
6. If a child is not engaging with the CBA the classroom teacher must flag this with the year head and the year head will contact parents regarding the same.
7. In the case of a subject where there is a 3 or 4 week window a medical cert or bereavement (death of parent, sibling or grandparent) a one week extension can be given for the Classroom Based Assessment. This is arranged by the class teacher in consultation with the Year Head and parents. Parents are phoned and notified in writing by the Year Head. This extension period cannot extend beyond the agreed SLAR date.
8. In the case of a medical cert or bereavement (death of parent, sibling or grandparent) a rearrangement of the Assessment Task date can be made. This is arranged by the class teacher in consultation with the Year Head and parents. Parents are phoned and notified in writing by the Year Head. This extension period cannot extend beyond the SLAR date.

**In exceptional circumstances where a student is precluded from engaging with an assessment event, parents/guardians should contact the Year Head. The Year Head, following discussion with Senior Management, will exercise his/her discretion as to whether students may avail of an extension session to engage with the assessment event.**

**The regulations of the state examinations commission apply to assessment tasks, practical exams and summative assessment and take precedence (where applicable).**

Reasonable support

To facilitate providing feedback to students during their engagement with assessment, the process of completing the Classroom-Based Assessments should be viewed as part of teaching and learning, and not solely for assessment purposes.

It is envisaged that teachers will guide, support and supervise throughout the process. Teachers should refer to the assessment guidelines in their subjects for further clarification.

## 7. Reporting

### **Written reports**

Written reports are forwarded to Parents/ Guardians of First, Second Years , TY and Fifth year students in December 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, grade and effort grade are awarded and an original comment is given. Comments are phrased in a formative, positive manner and the purpose of this comment is to guide future progress.

Transition Years parents receive a report following term 1 and at 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.

### **Teacher comments in reports**

When writing comments teachers are asked to

- Write formative comments
- To highlight areas for future improvement
- To ensure that comments directly link to future progress and learning

### **Parent teacher meetings**

Parent teacher meetings are seen as an integral part of the reporting process.

At Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed students attend the parent teacher meetings. Meetings are held once per year in a schedule provided with summer correspondence for all year groups. An extra meeting is held following the mock examinations for third and sixth year students.



Parents and students should bring their school journal/diary to the meeting and target grades and actual attainment should form the basis of the conversations.

## Roles of Key Personnel in Assessment

### **1. Role of Individual Teachers**

In relation to assessment, individual teachers shall:

- - familiarise him/herself with assessment procedures and requirements. Information is available at [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie)
- – incorporate the principles of formative assessment into their practice
- - facilitate assessment events
- - keep attendance records at all assessment events
- - record results in compass and results of CBAs into P-POD when this facility is made available
- - inform the Year head in the event where a student is absent from an assessment event and provide additional details if required
- - provide the Junior Cycle Co-ordinator with results from CBAs
- - provide the Examinations secretary with any examinations material and records of attendance at ATs
- follow procedures laid out by the relevant department in regards to assessment
- - engage in the SLAR process
- – discuss academic tracking results with parents at parent teacher meetings or at an appointed time if requested to do so by the year head, deputy or principal .

### **2. Role of SEN team**

In relation to assessment, SEN key workers (SEN Co-ordinator, RACE Co-ordinator & Exam Secretary) shall:

- - Be accessible to teachers for discussion regarding necessary exam/assessment supports for students with extra needs.
- - ensure that appropriate supports are put in place for students where sanctioned, e.g. scribe, reader, laptop etc.
- - inform students with special needs and their parents/guardians, as to what supports are in place for the state exams.
- - organise USB keys to save assessment materials where appropriate during state exams / assessments. Such USB keys should be labelled with the individual student's exam number

- - liaise with RACE to ensure that digital booklets and other relevant material are made available
- - oversee the special supports put in place for SEN students at exam / assessment times.
- - liaise with key workers and management where appropriate

### **3. Role of Junior Cycle Co-ordinator**

In relation to JC assessment, the Junior Cycle Co-ordinator shall:

- - share all relevant assessment dates with staff when they are made available and collate a timetable annually
- - communicate with parents/guardians providing information regarding assessment events
- – communicate with students the dates of CBAs, and maintain a notice board re same
- - answer any queries or concerns regarding assessment procedures
- - locally store all results from CBAs
- - collate information for the JCPA in relation to the ‘Other Areas of Learning’ component

### **4. Role of Assistant Principal with responsibility for Exams and Reporting**

The State Examinations Liaison Person shall:

- - distribute relevant booklets and examinations material as they are made available
- - distribute examination numbers
- - collect examination booklets and other relevant material from teachers, and post them to the State Examinations Commission
- - collect students’ signatures where appropriate
- – lead school initiatives to raise attainment
- -Oversight of school reports (setting up, sending home)
- -Organising Parent Teacher meetings
- -Oversight of eportfolios

### **5. Role of Subject Departments**

Subject departments shall:

- plan collaboratively for assessment and build up exemplars of good practice, to facilitate best practice when sharing success criteria, keeping GDPR in mind, over time.
- discuss assessment procedures and put appropriate plans in place

- Subject departments will request that a text be sent to the relevant cohort reminding them about key dates as they arise.
- Liaise with the Junior Cycle Coordinator as appropriate
- nominate one teacher to act as SLAR Facilitator as outlined in *Circular Letter 0015/2017*

#### **6. Role of Year Heads**

- - liaise with management and other teachers where appropriate
- - receive information from teachers a regarding attendance
- - make contact with home/refer to HSCL where appropriate, particularly in the case of absence
- - liaise with Senior Management regarding 'mop-up' assessment events where appropriate

#### **7. Role of Principal**

- - facilitate teachers to carry out all roles as outlined in Points 5-11 above
- - oversee all assessment events
- - liaise with teachers and other management as appropriate

## **8. Psychometric Tests:**

The following tests are administered:

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

A test called "Pass Maths"

A test called "NGRT"

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.

Testing as is deemed appropriate by the Department of Education for the purposes of Irish Exemptions.

Testing as is deemed appropriate by the State Examinations Commission for the purposes of RACE is also administered.

## 8. Inhouse Examination regulations

1. Study time must be used to revise for upcoming exams.
2. Students must familiarise themselves with their exam timetable.
3. Students must follow all instructions by supervising teacher.
4. Students must be on time for all exams and in full uniform.
5. Students must sit in their assigned seat during examinations. Students must remain in their allocated seat for the duration of the exams unless requested to move by a member of staff.
6. Students must bring all the necessary equipment for their examinations- e.g.: Maths sets, calculators, drawing equipment etc.
7. Students must remain in the exam centre for the duration of the examination. Students who have completed their examinations must sit quietly and study for next exam, and must not disrupt other students. Students who do not have exams must have books or notes to study, if not doing an exam.
8. No mobiles or music players allowed in the exam centre.
9. No chewing gum, food or drinks allowed in exam centre.
10. Students must not leave exam centre without permission.
11. Students must not leave school grounds after an exam (except in case of Leaving Cert)
12. Students are not allowed to go to the bathroom, except in the case of an emergency.
13. Students must respect the rights of other students to complete exams. Disruption of any sort will not be tolerated. Students must not attempt to talk to or distract another student in the exam centre.
14. When examination officially ends, students must go quietly to the canteen area, or leave the school grounds where permission has been given. Normal classes may be ongoing, and students are not permitted to disturb these classes.
15. If a student disobeys a clear instruction they will be sent to another exam center and will be required to sit the exam after school that day.

## 10. Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed – State Examinations Policy

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed encourages all students to avail of every opportunity to optimise their potential. Part of this is to fully engage with state examinations. Students who are properly organised and have all the necessary equipment are better prepared. Students who remain in the exam for the full official duration of the exam give themselves a better chance to answer questions fully and to revise answers where possible/necessary.

Parents and students should note the section on study skills in the student diary which includes a section on Study Tips for students in Exam Years.

During the exam period parents and students should consider the following:

- Know the exam timetable
- Know what equipment is needed for each day
- Avoid “post mortems” (going over and over an exam), allow students to say how they got on and try to focus on the next day.
- Encourage students to eat a healthy diet and to get exercise.
- Make sure they get a good night’s sleep before an exam.

If students need support during the exam period the student support page at [www.cmco.ie](http://www.cmco.ie) may offer some useful points of contact. <http://www.cmco.ie/information/pastoral/student-support-2/>

Parents are also reminded that the National Parents Council offers useful supports which can be found at [www.npcpp.ie](http://www.npcpp.ie)

The following regulations apply during exam time

- Students must be on time for all their exams. Students cannot be admitted to an exam after 30 minutes have elapsed. It is very important that students are in the exam centre at least 15 minutes before the official start time.
- The use of mobile phone and digital media is strictly forbidden by the state examinations commission. Should a student be found with such an item, in an exam, the equipment will be forwarded to the exams commission with a report outlining the incident.
- It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their son/daughter attends all exams. Parents and students must be familiar with the examination timetable.
- Junior Cycle Students are encouraged not to leave the exam until the official finish time of the exam.
  - If Junior Cycle students choose to leave early they must go to supervised study, which is provided by the school.
  - They will not be permitted to leave this study session until the official finish end time of the exam unless they are signed out by a parent/guardian.

- They will be permitted to make a call in the study centre to their parents/guardians.
- A student may leave the study centre earlier than the official finish time if signed out (in person) by a parent/guardian. Please note the parent/guardian must go to the study centre and sign their son/daughter out of the school.
- Students must bring all the necessary equipment (calculators, geometry sets, drawing equipment etc.) as spares are not available in the school and the State Exams Commission does not provide them.
- Students must wear full school uniform for the duration of the exams
- The normal code of behaviour applies throughout the exam period. Disruption of exams is not allowed and will be reported to the Department of Education by the state superintendents.
- As these regulations constitute school policy, students who fail to comply with them may be excluded permanently from Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed following the Junior cycle exams.

#### External Candidates

It is the policy of Coláiste Mhuire Co ed that only past pupils of CMCO or current PLC students in CMCO may complete the State Exams in our Leaving Cert Centres.

The School reserves the right to refuse external applicants