

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF MARRAKESH



ASSESSMENT POLICY

Updated August 2021

ASM MISSION

The American School of Marrakech is a multicultural community of learners.

We offer an American-style education with a thorough grounding in the Liberal Arts, Sciences and Technology, and a highly competitive preparation for university acceptance around the world, especially American universities. Our students strive for mastery of English and fluency in Arabic and French.

Our mission is to foster excellence through critical thinking and creativity; build resilience and character; promote responsible, global citizenship; and encourage lifelong learning.

IB MISSION

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

IB LEARNER PROFILE

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and Groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their Consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the Experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

INTRODUCTION

The following assessment policy serves as a guide for staff and faculty in conducting and implementing assessments at the American School of Marrakesh. The policy is based on best practice in assessment and builds on the institution's years of experience and organizational capacity to offer a solid implementation framework as well as guidance and support to all concerned stakeholders: students, parents and staff. The procedures and practices listed herein will guide our assessment practices at the American School of Marrakesh.

“Assessment can mean any of the different ways in which student achievement can be gathered and evaluated. Common types of assessments include tests, examinations, extended practical work, projects, portfolios and oral work.”

Assessment principles and practices—Quality assessments in a digital age. IBO, 2019.

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

We, at the American School of Marrakesh, understand that effective assessments:

- improve and encourage student learning by providing effective feedback on the learning process and outcomes;
- inform planning and teaching;
- assess student understanding, knowledge and skills;
- are a continuous, ongoing process;
- are directly related to learning outcomes/curriculum standards;
- are criterion based;
- use a wide range of multiple strategies and tools;
- have clear criteria that are known and understood in advance;
- involve frequent opportunities for students to be assessed in authentic contexts; and
- engage the learner in the reflection of their learning.

We also believe that assessment should be:

- honest, accurate, fair and reliable;
- modified or accommodated to suit different learning needs and styles;
- user-friendly for both teachers and students;
- cumulative, consistent and valid;
- clear, concise and as culturally neutral as possible;
- significant, engaging, relevant and challenging;
- positive and encourage growth;
- able to cover a broad spectrum of understanding, knowledge and skills;
- authentic to the task undertaken;
- regularly and accurately reported to students and parents.

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AT ASM

GRADING/MARKING

To facilitate transparency in grading, teachers should record a minimum of two assessments of any type (homework, classwork, projects, quizzes, participation, tests, etc.) for every seven-day cycle of four or more classes. Classes meeting less frequently should follow the same ratio of assignments to class meetings.

Mid-Term and Final Exam make-ups will only be permitted in cases where 1) a student presents a verified medical certificate and a parent note or 2) in cases of extenuating personal or family circumstances, requiring a parent note which must meet the satisfaction of administration, preferably with advance notice. Early departure for holiday travel is not justified. Students with justified absences on exam days must schedule makeups on the pre-identified exam make-up days if possible. Students missing exams without justification will lose the opportunity to take the exam and receive a score of 0.

GRADE RECORDING

Starting in first grade, grades are recorded in the School's Student Information System Software. Teachers are encouraged to enter grades promptly into their respective gradebooks so that students and families are able to access these promptly. The academic year is divided into four quarters that make up the students final grade.

It is important that teachers update their gradebook account on a regular basis. Grades should be entered promptly after corrections so that these are accessible to parents and students in a timely manner. Teachers using gradebook must keep a hard copy of all their grades for the classes they teach. Special precautions must be taken when entering grades from school:

- Teachers should not log-in to their gradebook account in front of students and may not use a student's device to do so.
- Teachers must log-out from their gradebook account when done entering grades
- Classroom desktops must be logged out when not being used
- Teachers should change their password every 30 days and should use complex combinations that cannot be easily figured out (See section on Password Tips)

In general, teachers should be very careful with grades and test materials and may not leave these accessible to students. Please refer to the school's assessment policy in the Subject-specific Curriculum Manual.

GRADE REPORTING

ASM follows a semester system. Student progress and performance is communicated in a variety of ways. Our reporting process includes the following:

PreK - 12 Reporting Scheme

Semester	Reporting Tool	Date Completed
Semester I	Mid-Term Progress Reports	November
	Fall Parent-Teacher Conference	November
	Semester I Reports	January
Semester II	Mid-Term Progress Reports	March
	Fall Parent-Teacher Conference	March
	Semester I Reports	June

In addition to the student progress reports and semester reports, students also receive a character education report at the end of each semester providing feedback on the extent to which our students demonstrate our values.

Report cards are given out at the end of each semester. Mid-term Progress Reports are also issued half-way through each semester.

Teachers should keep their respective Division Head and the Head of School apprised, throughout the year, of students who experience learning difficulties. *Discussions between parents, teachers and administrators regarding learning difficulties must occur as early as possible (during the first half of the school year) and be thoroughly documented.* It is the responsibility of Division Heads to initiate these discussions as early as possible, involving the appropriate student services available on campus.

Parents and administrators should be notified immediately if a student's average falls one letter grade or below C-. Please remember that when it comes to grades, *no surprise is a good surprise.* Teachers need to keep their grade books up to date and communicate regularly with parents and administrators. We recommend that teachers contact parents via email and phone to keep them posted about their child's progress.

GRADE COMPOSITION

Components	Corresponding Weights		
	PK-5	Grades 6-8	Grade 9-12
Semester I	50%	40%	35%
Semester I Exams	NA	NA	10%
Semester II	50%	40%	35%
*Final Exams	NA	20%	20%

**High school students (9-12) may opt out of the final exam in no more than one subject area if they have a standing grade of 94% or greater by the end of the school year.*

GRADING SCALE

Levels of Performance		
A Excellent	A+ (97-100) A (94-96) A- (90-93)	The student has demonstrated the required knowledge and skills with a high degree of effectiveness. Achievement surpasses expectations.
B Very Good	B+ (87-89) B (84-86) B- (80-83)	The student has demonstrated the required knowledge and skills with considerable effectiveness. Achievement meets expectations.
C Satisfactory	C+ (77-79) C (74-76) C- (70-73)	The student has demonstrated the required knowledge and skills with some effectiveness. Achievement approaches expectations.
D Passing	D+ (67-69) D (64-66) D- (60-63)	The student has demonstrated the required knowledge and skills with limited effectiveness. Achievement falls below expectations.
F Insufficient		The student has not demonstrated the required knowledge and skills.
P		Pass
I		Incomplete

Grade Point Average (GPA) is reported at the end of each academic year. It is determined by averaging all earned grades over that period and is cumulative over the four years of high school. Please refer to the chart below:

A+	4.3	C+	2.3
A	4.0	C	2.0
A-	3.7	C-	1.7
B+	3.3	D	1.3
B	3.0	F	0.0
B-	2.7	P	Pass
I	Incomplete		

GPA Boost: for some classes, students are able to earn additional credit for attempting higher level classes and/or attempting IB course certificates:

COURE/LEVEL	GPA BOOST
Honors and IB HL	+0.5
IB Course Certificate (HL) / AP Course*	+1.0
IB Course Certificate (SL)*	+0.5

*to qualify, you must take the exam (IB or AP)

IB INTERNAL & EXTERNAL ASSESSMENTS

IB courses include a range of internal and external assessments. The internal assessments (IAs) are graded by ASM teachers and moderated by the IB while external assessments (EAs) are graded externally by the IB.

- **Internal Assessments** include investigations, fieldwork, oral responses, lab assignments, essays, etc.
- **External Assessments** include essays, data-response questions, text prompts, etc.

A detailed calendar of assessments will be posted for DP1 and DP1. It is important to meet the deadlines for submission of assignments as stated in the calendar of assessments (IAs and EAs)..

IB grading system is based on a 1-7 scale. Please see *grade descriptors* for an accurate description of each performance level. IB grades will be converted to the ASM grading system described above according to our internal grade conversion system set on ManageBac.

IB ASSESSMENT INCLUSION POLICY

Assessments at ASM are differentiated according to the Student Assistance Team recommendations, requirements of the outside testing agency (in the case of MAP, SAT, and AP testing), and the ASM Handbook. All ASM teachers are expected to ensure they provide all students with differentiated assessment through utilizing the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) instructional planning approach as well as completed ongoing assessment. This is via benchmarking, pre-assessment, and formative assessments in order to better understand how they can provide the opportunity for all of their students to demonstrate their learning on summative assessments.

To qualify for testing accommodations through the Learning Support Program, a completed evaluation from a licensed outside provider, not older than 2 years, must be provided to the school. ELL students are accommodated per the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) guidelines for MAP testing and granted additional time on classroom based tests in collaboration with teachers.

Diploma Program (DP) students at ASM will be granted inclusive assessment arrangements in accordance with the current IB policies and guidelines. No special arrangement will be done without the required documents and only the IB is authorized to allow “assessment access requirements”. All requests made by ASM for inclusive assessment arrangements will be submitted to the IB six months prior to an examination session.

Assessment accommodations for classroom based and outside assessments typically include:

- Modification to exams in length or presentation
- Extension to classwork deadlines
- Clarification of test and classwork directions
- Additional time/frequent breaks
- Small group testing in a separate location
- Information and communication technology
- Scribe and transcription
- Readers for testing

HOMWORK

Homework is meant as a way for students to reinforce what they have learned in the classroom. ASM believes that homework is of pivotal importance in reinforcing what students have learned in the classroom and in developing habits that are conducive to healthy and successful learning. Homework helps students understand and enhance their level of achievement in any given academic subject.

Here are a few benefits of homework for students and their families:

- Homework provides opportunities for extensions of learning and developing creativity
- Homework gives students another opportunity to review the class material.
- Homework teaches students about:
 - Time management and the setting of priorities
 - Taking responsibility for their part in the educational process
 - Working independently
 - The importance of planning, staying organized and taking action
- Homework helps teachers determine how well lessons are being understood by their students.
- Homework gives parents a chance to see what is being learned in school.

Homework Guidelines

Depending on their grade level, students will be assigned homework based on the following guidelines:

Recommended Homework Minutes Per Level	
KG3 - 1	10-15 minutes per day

Grades 2 – 3	20 - 30 minutes per day
Grades 4 – 5	40 - 50 minutes per day
Grades 6 – 8	60 - 90 minutes per day
Grades 9 – 12	90 - 180 minutes per day

No homework shall be assigned on weekends for Lower School students (except Independent Reading). This should be time for these young learners to “recharge their batteries” and be with their families.

At the Upper School level, students are expected to spend time reviewing information, reading, writing and completing projects. Each teacher will provide students and their parents with written information regarding her/his homework policy for each class. No assignments will be scheduled over religious holidays or over winter and spring holidays.

Teachers will communicate among themselves to avoid giving more than one major test on the same day. They will do the same for major papers and projects.

Assignments prepared outside the classroom should reflect the work of the student. When a student collaborates with fellow students or receives assistance from a parent, tutor or other source, it is the student's responsibility to disclose such assistance to the teacher. If the teacher discovers that a student has not disclosed such assistance, the matter may be referred to the appropriate Division Head as a breach of academic integrity.

FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

Initial/ Diagnostic assessment usually takes place at the start and is used to identify the current learning needs in order to provide appropriate support.

Formative assessment is developmentally appropriate and is ongoing throughout the course. It is used to give feedback and support to the learner on progress to date and to inform the learner of action to take to maintain or improve performance.

Summative assessment takes place at the end of a course and counts towards a final assessment decision. It is used to measure how much learning has taken place. It is a judgment on whether the learner has achieved all or some of the learning outcomes for a given level.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING ASSESSMENT

Teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses all relevant data to measure student academic progress, guide instructional content and delivery methods, and provide timely feedback to both students and parents throughout the school year:

- Teacher works independently and collaboratively to analyze and interpret multiple sources of data to identify student learning needs, to guide planning and instruction, and to assess the effectiveness of instruction.

- Teacher communicates specific performance expectations and uses a variety of assessment strategies to monitor and document student progress and provides meaningful feedback to students and parents.
- Teacher engages students in understanding, identifying, and assuming responsibility for quality work and provides them with timely, frequent, and effective feedback to guide their progress toward that work.
- Teacher sets measurable and appropriate goals for students based on baseline data and accepts responsibility for providing instruction that will enable students to achieve those goals.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

As part of the school's onboarding process, all new teachers attend a week-long orientation at the beginning of the school year. Key policies such as our assessment policy are discussed at the beginning of the school year. New teachers will also be paired with a returning teacher for mentorship and support during the first few weeks of school.

Our assessment policy will be reviewed based on need. An academic council composed of administrators and department leaders will conduct the review and will approve any suggested or needed changes that comply with our assessment practice and philosophy.

ASM expects all faculty and staff to faithfully implement the School's assessment policy and to give feedback and take an active role in reviewing and improving our assessment practices.

References

Assessment principles and practices—Quality assessments in a digital age. IBO, 2019.

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