



ST STITHIANS COLLEGE
POLICY: LEARNING AND TEACHING
ADDENDUM: PROCEDURES FOR ASSESSMENT

Final Draft: 15 March 2021

Introduction

1. The St Stithians College Policy: Learning and Teaching outlines the overarching educational philosophy and practices of teaching and learning embraced by all schools under the St Stithians College banner.
2. Addenda to the Learning and Teaching Policy might include additional policy, guidelines and / or procedure documents related to specific areas of learning and teaching.
3. New addenda remain aligned with the Learning and Teaching Policy as well as its existing addenda (including the Addendum: Procedures for Academic Support and Addendum: Additional Languages) and are applicable to all schools on campus.
4. This Addendum: Procedures for Assessment aims to outline the overarching philosophy, principles, and practices of assessment at St Stithians College.
5. This document will outline and discuss the following aspects of assessment:
 - 5.1. Assessment Structures
 - 5.2. Phase 1: Assessment
 - 5.3. Phase 2: Recording
 - 5.4. Phase 3: Reporting
 - 5.5. Phase 4: Decisions on promotion, retention, and progression
6. The assessment procedures will be reviewed regularly to accommodate any changes in national policy and school-based practice.
7. In addition, the College will review this addendum considering any relevant contextual factors occurring in an academic year which may impact on various aspects of assessment (for example, the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the 2020 school year)

Assessment Structures

8. Assessment is an essential component in evaluating and promoting student learning.
9. For the purpose of this document, assessment is defined as:
 - 9.1. The process of collecting evidence of a student's competence and capabilities, comparing this evidence against desired outcomes recording the findings and deciding what should be done to help the student make progress.
 - 9.2. Summative assessment refers to the assessment of students at the end of a section or unit of inquiry, or the end of a term or year to assess progress.
 - 9.3. Formative assessment refers to a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson, unit, or course. Formative assessment is often appropriate at the end of a section of work to gauge if the learning programme can be continued, or if revision is required.
 - 9.4. Assessment encompasses all forms of tasks (written, oral, practical, digital etc.) that measure a students' progress, understanding and knowledge.
 - 9.5. Assessment includes those tasks that contribute to the student's formal record of marks, as well as those that are not formally counted towards reports and levels of achievement for reporting and progression purposes.
 - 9.6. Assessment includes tasks assigned to student both in the classroom and using online schooling platforms.

10. Assessment at St Stithians College:

- 10.1. operates within the parameters of the National Qualifications Framework, the National Curriculum Statement and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements.
- 10.2. Is affiliated to the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) which is the College's assessment provider for the National Senior Certificate qualification.
- 10.3. uses various forms of assessment and creates the opportunity for students to prepare for the IEB examination.
- 10.4. embraces the Critical Outcomes as stipulated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements Grades R-12.
- 10.5. draws on input from relevant ISASA guideline documents (such as the Early Childhood Development document published by ISASA, which is used by the Junior Prep to guide outcomes and assessments, for example).

11. School Assessment Team

- 11.1. The School Assessment Team is an academic staff team that ideally meets once every two weeks to discuss and make decisions on curriculum matters and plan assessments within each school. Schools may differ somewhat in the structures of this team depending on the developmental phase and needs within each school on campus.
- 11.2. The Team is also a consultative body responsible for input into internal policy and procedure decisions.

PHASE 1: ASSESSMENT

WHY do we assess?

12. A National Protocol on Assessment has been issued by the Department of Education which standardises assessment for schools.
13. Assessment is important for feedback in order to give guidance and direction to students. It is also a method of collecting historical records of a student's performance over the years.
14. Purpose of Assessment:
 - 14.1. Assessment aims to show the developmental progress of the student throughout each grade.
 - 14.2. Assessment aims to assist in gaining insight into a student's level of understanding by giving them measurable progress indicators.
 - 14.3. Assessment should guide future planning, teaching and curriculum development in order to assist teachers in adapting and developing suitable teaching strategies.
 - 14.4. Assessment should inform parents and other relevant parties of the student's progress.
 - 14.5. Outcomes Based Assessment (OBA) is a shift from comparing a student's performance with that of other students (norm referencing) to comparing a student's performance against clear objective criteria devised before the assessment begins (criterion referencing).
 - 14.6. A norm referencing assessment can be used to inform teaching methodologies and the necessary support that needs to be implemented for individual students.
 - 14.7. OBA involves the assessment of the learning outcomes and assessment standards through skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes, which aims to identify the support strategies which may be required to ensure that students are equipped with feedback to make progress within learning areas.

WHAT do we assess?

15. We assess the application of knowledge, skills, values, critical thinking, and attitudes.
16. Students are assessed against Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards using specific criteria.
17. Informal assessment of the Critical Outcomes is also carried out.
18. Principles of Assessment: Assessments should

- 18.1. be participative and transparent.
- 18.2. be democratic.
- 18.3. be clearly focused.
- 18.4. be integrated with teaching and learning.
- 18.5. be based on pre-set criteria of the assessment standards.
- 18.6. use a variety of instruments.
- 18.7. allow for expanded opportunities for students.
- 18.8. be student - paced and fair, with adequate differentiation to accommodate a range of learning needs.
- 18.9. be valid and reliable - as this ensures that tasks effectively measure student attainment of learning outcomes at the appropriate level.
- 18.10. be differentiated - as this ensures that tasks effectively measure student attainment of learning outcomes at the appropriate level.
- 18.11. be followed by timeous feedback.
- 18.12. be culturally sensitive to students' tacit, empirical, and traditional knowledge.

WHOM do we assess?

19. All students need to be assessed, including those with barriers to learning.
20. The educational practices regarding inclusive education, differentiation and student support are outlined in detail in the Learning and Teaching Policy's Addendum: Procedure for Academic Support document, which guides assessment for students with barriers to learning.

HOW do we assess?

21. Assessment is conducted using various types of assessment, e.g., base-line assessments (including recognition of prior learning), informal assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments.
22. Different assessment methods are used to ensure that students are assessed in a variety of ways, e.g., tests, exams, research enquiry, practical tasks, orals, assignments, essays, presentations etc.
23. These can be assessed by the teacher, by another peer, by the students themselves, or by an external assessment body (such as the IEB, for example).

WHEN do we assess?

24. Entrance and/ or benchmark assessments may be conducted during admissions procedures to obtain baseline measures of applicants' core academic skills.
25. Subject and class teachers set assessments across all grades when and where relevant.
26. Continuous Assessment (CASS) refers to ongoing feedback of a student's performance.
27. Baseline assessments may be conducted at the beginning of a section to ascertain the student's prior knowledge.
28. Assessments in the Prep Schools are predominantly continuous, with some formative and summative assessment opportunities. Baseline and diagnostic assessments are also used to plan and implement an appropriate curriculum for all students.
29. In the Colleges, School Based Assessment (SBA) is implemented in all grades.
 - 29.1. CASS is presented in the form of portfolios which gather evidence of a student's progress and achievements throughout the year.
 - 29.2. The weighting of CASS in Grades 8 and 9 is 40% and final examinations/ summative assessment is weighted 60%.
 - 29.3. In Grades 10, 11 and 12 CASS is weighted 25% and examinations are 75%.
 - 29.4. The languages are weighted 50% for CASS and 50% for examinations.
 - 29.5. CASS portfolios are presented for external moderation in Grades 12, as required by the IEB.

How do we ensure the QUALITY of assessments?

30. Quality assurance or moderation must be planned in conjunction with the termly assessment plans. Moderation of tasks should take place before, during and after assessment.
31. Quality assurance or moderation can take place at different levels:
 - 31.1. Within departments
 - 31.2. Cluster moderation
 - 31.3. IEB moderation (external)
 - 31.4. Umalusi compliance (external)
32. The process of moderation is considered good educational practice. Moderation may be carried out in various ways, where appropriate and in increasing frequency as students' progress in higher grades:
 - 32.1. Moderation and standardisation should take place when setting assessments, determining attainment criteria, and in marking to ensure reliability and consistency of assessment and marking standards.
 - 32.2. Tasks should be moderated within departments or cluster groups before assessment takes place with students. Single member departments need to liaise with neighbouring schools or cluster school to assist with moderation.
 - 32.3. An assessment tool (marking guidelines, rubric, etc) should accompany the task to be moderated. All possible responses to questions should be reviewed before assessment and students with barriers to learning must be taken into consideration.
 - 32.4. Moderators should give clear feedback and support to assessors during the moderation process, preferably in writing. This can include providing a moderation report as evidence of the moderation process.
 - 32.5. Marking should be moderated both during the marking process and after marking has been completed to ensure that marking has been fair.
 - 32.6. Some forms of marking moderation may include:
 - 32.6.1. Teachers getting together to make additions to the memo and then mark one script each. Each script is then passed to another marker for remark and discussions take place if there is a difference in marks.
 - 32.6.2. Team marking whereby members of a department mark at the same time in a venue and decisions are made together in continuous discussion.
 - 32.6.3. Random sampling moderation and marking by other department members and/ or the HOD/ HOS.
 - 32.6.4. Results should be diagnostically analysed (averages and standard deviations) to see where there are areas for improvement. Systems and strategies are then put in place to address these.

Student Absence and Consequential Missing of an Assessment

33. Expectations regarding school attendance are outlined in the St Stithians Learning and Teaching Policy.
34. In the Prep Schools, should a summative assessment be missed, the student will write at an alternative date and time. If a formative assessment is missed, the student may write at another time or the teacher may use another assessment result to evaluate the student's progress.
35. The section below outlines the procedures in the Colleges for missed assessment due to absence from school.
36. Zero weighting in the case of illness:
 - 36.1. A student's absence covered by a valid doctor's note/ medical certificate will allow the assessment to be zero-weighted.
 - 36.2. Students who miss an assessment and return to school the next day, may be allowed to write the assessment (at the teacher's discretion or if permitted by the IEB, in the case of portfolio tasks for Grade 12 students) provided that the integrity of the assessment has not been compromised. In this instance the mark may be used, and the assessment will not be zero-weighted.

- 36.3. If a doctor's note is not provided, the student will get zero.
 - 36.4. The student will still do the assessment as practice, to enable consolidation of the required content.
37. Zero-weighting in other circumstances
- 37.1. Where a student has been selected to represent the school, province, or country in any academic or co-curricular activity (for example national sports competition), any assessment missed will be zero-weighted. The student will do the assessment as practice, to enable consolidation of the required content.
 - 37.2. If the student is in Grade 12, this assessment will be re-scheduled at a later date, at the convenience of the staff and the student. The assessment might need to be reset at the same standard, so that the student is not advantaged by the transfer of information from the original assessment.
 - 37.3. Where the student is on exchange, and either misses the assessments, or returns and does the assessments for consolidation purposes, these will be zero-weighted.
 - 37.4. In special circumstances, it is at the discretion of the Academic Head, whether to grant a zero-weighting. These conditions might include:
 - 37.4.1. Death of a family member
 - 37.4.2. Religious holidays
 - 37.4.3. Cultural observance
 - 37.4.4. Marriage of a family member
 - 37.4.5. Other compassionate grounds
 - 37.5. Grade 12 students missing any final IEB examinations for any reason will need to adhere to relevant IEB regulations and rulings. Zero-weighting in such cases is at the discretion of the IEB as the assessment body.
38. Where a student has been zero-weighted, and this has impacted negatively on the final subject mark, the reason for this will be provided in the report comment. In the circumstance where the student has done very few of the assessments and has been advantaged by the zero-weighting, a mark relative to the class performance can be awarded, and once again this will be referred to in the report comment.
39. The impact of zero-weighting may have long term implications, for example, should the student use the report for university application, especially overseas. In this instance an academic transcript is required for Grade 8 to Grade 12, and any missing marks need to be explained.
40. If a student has been on exchange, a zero-weighted report can be published, but marks based on the student's track record will be entered into the school administrative system, otherwise the transcript will display zeros, which causes extensive problems with the academic transcripts at a later date.

Dishonesty and Misconduct in Assessments

- 41. Academic dishonesty and misconduct refer to any cheating, duplicate submission, plagiarism, fabrication, bribery, collusion, and/ or improper device use (e.g., cell phone use, Smart Watch use, calculator use), and / or other conduct that is contrary to the academic integrity expected of students in assessments, both written and online.
- 42. Dishonesty and misconduct in assessments is included as a point under schedule of acts listed as serious misconduct in the St Stithians College Code of Conduct: Students.
- 43. Investigation, disciplinary processes, and appeal processes which are outlined in the St Stithians College Code of Conduct: Students shall apply for dishonesty and misconduct in assessments.
- 44. Each school is responsible for the education of students regarding what constitutes academic dishonesty and misconduct and considers the developmental level of students at each phase of schooling.
- 45. The College is committed to educating staff and students on the expectations of academic integrity and all effort must be made to prevent dishonesty and misconduct in assessments. All staff will be adequately trained in monitoring and invigilating assessments. All students will be educated on appropriate and expected academic expectations for each phase of schooling and developmental level.

PHASE 2: RECORDING

WHY do we record?

46. Records form part of the student's educational journey and guide support.
47. Recording is necessary to obtain a continuous overview of a student's progress.
48. Records form a vital role in the process of assessment.

WHAT do we record?

49. Teachers record grades, marks, levels of attainment, checklists, narrative comments and observations of behaviour, attitude, and work ethic.

HOW do we record?

50. Various assessment tools can be used to record marks, comments, or observations. These include memorandums, rubrics, checklists, assessment grids, comment sheets etc.
51. Teachers record marks, comments, and outcomes on the school's electronic administrative system.

WHO does the recording?

52. Subject teachers can record marks, comments, or observations.
53. Students can record marks, comments or observations during peer, group, or self-assessment.
54. Tutor teachers record general comments on the student.
55. Moderators record comments on assessment.

WHEN do we record?

56. Recording takes place continuously after assessment has been completed.
57. Informal recording on progress is done continuously.
58. Recording also occurs for specific report back (e.g., parent interviews or round-table discussions) and minutes/ notes of such feedback are maintained for record-keeping.

What is the process for APPEALING recorded marks?

59. In appealing a recorded mark for an assessment, the student needs to approach the subject teacher first, then the Head of Department if needed.
60. In the Colleges, should the appeal need to be escalated to the Academic Head/ Faculty Director, a formal application form (annexure to this policy) needs to be completed in writing and addressed to the Academic Head/ Faculty Director.
61. In the Colleges, a request for external moderation can only be made by the school at which the student is enrolled.
62. In the Colleges, the school may request a current or previously appointed IEB National Moderator to conduct the external moderation.
63. The decision of the appeal is final.

PHASE 3: REPORTING

WHY do we report?

64. Reporting is a transparent way of communication between the school, the student, and the parents.
65. Reporting is also a means of establishing accountability.
66. Reporting is necessary to ascertain whether a student is achieving full potential.
67. Reporting helps to identify needs for improved teaching and learning.

WHAT do we report?

68. Reports indicate students' marks/ levels and comments against the subject outcomes.

69. The school reports also include comments from the tutor teachers on school life and general behaviour, attitude, and work ethic.
70. Students' achievements are also reported at assemblies, an annual academic awards evening, sport, and cultural awards evenings, in the school newsletter and at marks meetings.
71. Student achievements may also be reported on social media platforms, the school website, and the press where consent from the student and/ or parent (in the case of students under the age of 18) has been obtained.

HOW do we report?

72. Students are given continuous feedback in class.
73. Formal report cards are issued throughout each academic year and are available electronically on the school's administrative system.
74. Parent interview evenings are set up to communicate directly with parents.
75. Students' personal files contain reports throughout their school career.
76. Round-table discussions are conducted to provide in-depth focus on specific concerns about a student's progress, particularly those students with barriers to learning.
77. Telephonic or electronic reporting takes place between teachers, directors, and parents.

TO WHOM do we report?

78. Reporting by the school is to students, parents, staff, the Rector, Head of the school, and the Independent Examination Board (IEB), as well as tertiary institutions.

WHEN do we report?

79. At the end of each cycle in the Preps, and the end of each term in the Colleges, students and parents receive formal report cards.
80. Students are reported to on a continuous basis.
81. Parents also receive feedback at parent interviews and other parent meetings held throughout the year.

PHASE 4: DECISIONS ON PROMOTION, RETENTION AND PROGRESSION

Promotion Requirements

82. Junior Preparatory

- 82.1. National codes are taken into consideration.
- 82.2. A three-point assessment rating scale is used in Grade R:

Rating	Achievement description	Marks in terms of %
3	Achieved	N/A
2	Elementary completion with support	N/A
1	Yet to complete requirements	N/A

- 82.3. A five-point assessment rating scale is used in Grade 1 and 2:

Rating	Achievement description	Marks in terms of %
5	Outstanding achievement	N/A
4	Excellent achievement	N/A
3	Achieved	N/A
2	Elementary completion with support	N/A
1	Yet to complete requirements	N/A

- 82.4. Children in Grade R are in the Early Childhood Development Phase (ECD) according to the Department of Education (DBE). According to the DBE, the ECD is not a compulsory phase for children to attend and therefore, the child may not repeat a year without parental consent.
- 82.5. Children in Grade 1, 2 and 3 are in the Foundation Phase (FP) according to the Department of Basic Education (DBE). A child in this phase may only repeat once, with parent consent.
- 82.6. For a child to repeat the year in Grade R, 1 and 2 they must continuously achieve level 1 in the core learning areas and there must be a concern that the child is at risk of not achieving within a mainstream school. This requires a case conference with all educational experts and stakeholders, as well as the parents.
- 82.7. At times parents may request that students in the Junior Preparatory repeat grades for various reasons. This requires consultation with educational experts and agreement of the Head of School, as well as adequate evidence that this is in the best interests of the child.

83. Girls' and Boys' Preparatory

- 83.1. Two assessment scales are used to describe student attainment.
- 83.2. A 5-point assessment rating scale is used in Grade 3, as it remains part of the Foundation Phase:

Rating	Achievement description	Marks in terms of %
5	Outstanding achievement	75 to 100
4	Excellent achievement	60 to 75
3	Achieved	45 to 60
2	Elementary completion with support	30 to 45
1	Yet to complete requirements	0 to 30

- 83.3. A 7-point assessment rating scale is used in Grades 4 to 7:

Rating	Achievement description	Marks in terms of %
7	Outstanding achievement	80 to 100
6	Excellent achievement	70 to 79
5	Substantial achievement	60 to 69
4	Adequate completion	50 to 59
3	Partial achievement	40 to 49
2	Elementary achievement with support	30 to 39
1	Yet to complete requirements	0 to 29

- 83.4. The following levels of achievement must be attained for a student to progress to the next grade level at the start of the new academic year:

83.4.1. Foundation Phase (Grade 3) Promotion Requirements for the End of the Year:

Home Language	3
First Additional Language	2
Mathematics	2

83.4.2. Intermediate Phase (Grade 4 to 6) Promotion Requirements for the End of the Year:

Home Language	4
First Additional Language	3
Mathematics	3
Any Other 2 Subjects	3

83.4.3. Senior Phase (Grade 7) Requirements for the End of the Year:

Home Language	4
First Additional Language	3
Mathematics	3
Any other two subjects	2

84. Girls' and Boys' College

84.1. A 7-point assessment rating scale is used for Grades 8 to 12:

Rating	Description of Competence		Percentage
7	Outstanding achievement	All aspects of all assessment standards achieved	80-100
6	Meritorious achievement	Almost all aspects of all assessment standards achieved	70-79
5	Substantial achievement	Key aspects of all assessment standards achieved	60-69
4	Adequate achievement	Key aspects of most assessment standards achieved	50-59
3	Moderate achievement	At least half the assessment standards achieved	40-49
2	Elementary achievement	A negligible number of assessment standards achieved	30-39
1	Not achieved	No achievement	0-29

84.2. Promotion requirements for the General Education and Training phase (Grades 8 and 9):

A student will be promoted only if they have satisfied the achievement requirements of each of the learning areas as follows:

- At least a rating level 4 (50%) in Home Language (English)
- At least a rating level 3 (40%) in the First Additional Language
- At least a rating level 3 (40%) in Mathematics.
- At least a rating level 3 (40%) in THREE of the following learning areas: Natural Science; Social Sciences (History and Geography combined); Technology; Creative Arts; Economic and Management Sciences, Life Orientation
- A rating 2 (30%) in TWO remaining learning areas.

84.3. Promotion requirements for the Further Education and Training phase (Grades 10-12):

A student will be promoted only if they have satisfied the achievements requirements as follows:

- At least a rating level 3 (40%) in Home Language (English)
- At least a rating level 2 (30%) in First Additional Language (*St Stithians internal requirement*)
- At least a rating level 3 (40%) in any TWO of the remaining subjects
- At least a rating level 2 (30%) in any THREE other remaining subjects
- May fail one subject (except Home Language)

Approach to Progression and Retention Decisions

85. When deciding on the movement of students from one grade to the next the minimum requirements stated in national policy are used as a guide when considering promotion and retention.

86. The following contextual factors are considered when discussing progression of the 'at risk' student to the next grade level:

86.1. The chronological age of the student.

- 86.2. Achievement level/marks of the student.
 - 86.3. Academic history and interventions provided to support the student.
 - 86.4. Support interventions for barriers to learning as per the Learning and Teaching Policy's Categories of Support.
 - 86.5. The social-emotional context and needs of the student.
 - 86.6. The best interests of the student and what is fair to the individual.
 - 86.7. Educator and Head's discretion.
 - 86.8. Parent consultation – the partnership between school and parent is vital to a student's academic success.
 - 86.9. Circumstances beyond the student, family and/ or school's control which may have impacted on the academic year.
87. The final decision for progression and retention requires the consent of the parents and agreement from the Head of School.

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