

Further guidance for developing MYP assessed curriculum

Two decorative blue curves are positioned in the middle of the page. The upper curve is a thick, dark blue line that starts on the left, rises to a peak, and then descends towards the right. The lower curve is a thin, light blue line that starts on the left, dips to a valley, and then rises towards the right. The two curves intersect in the middle of the page.

Middle Years Programme
Further guidance for developing MYP assessed curriculum

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IB mission statement

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.

As IB learners we strive to be:

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.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

Further guidance for developing MYP assessed curriculum

What is the difference between aims, objectives, criteria and strands in MYP assessment?

Teaching and learning in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) is organized by

- aims (general statements about what teachers may expect to teach or do, what students may expect to experience or learn, and how students may be changed by the learning experience)
- objectives (statements which describe the skills, knowledge and understanding that will be addressed in the subject group).

The subject group's assessment criteria align with the objectives. Teachers use assessment criteria to judge the extent to which students have been successful in achieving the objectives for the unit or the course. Strands are aspects or elements of subject-group objectives or criteria; or put another way, strands are a detailed breakdown of what each objective or criterion encompasses or entails.

What is the difference between addressing objectives and assessing criteria in the MYP?

By convention, in the MYP, teachers *address* objectives (through classroom teaching and learning—the taught curriculum) and *assess* criteria (through formative and summative assessment tasks—the assessed curriculum). Teachers must *address* all strands of all objectives and *assess* all strands of all criteria at least twice in each year of the programme.

Why are strands within MYP objectives and criteria identified by roman numerals (for example, i, ii, iii)?

In MYP subject-group guides, strands of assessment criteria are identified by roman numerals merely for convenience. They are not ordered by importance and they do not represent an ordered sequence for teaching and learning.

In the MYP unit planner, should I always assess criteria that correspond to the objectives addressed in the unit?

Typically, teachers follow the exact alignment between MYP subject-group objectives and assessment criteria, assessing all criteria associated with the objectives addressed in a unit. In some cases, assessment may focus on only some of the objectives (or component strands of the objectives) that were addressed in the unit—particularly in early years of the programme or beginning phases of language acquisition. It is not necessary to list all objective strands which teachers might review or to which they might refer during the unit; the unit plan only needs to record the central focus (objective) of teaching and learning.

Does every summative assessment have to assess all four criteria in the guide?

No. Summative assessments for shorter units and discrete tasks within longer units can effectively assess fewer than four criteria. However, as they progress through the MYP, students should be challenged by increasingly complex tasks that assess multiple criteria. Teachers can often design MYP units that assess multiple criteria holistically through a single task or discretely through a series of related tasks. Both increasing the complexity of summative tasks and using multiple criteria to assess them can promote effective vertical articulation and efficient assessment. Assessment tasks that use multiple criteria are also often more rigorous and authentic.

In the MYP design subject group, design project tasks **must** assess all strands of all criteria. The four objectives for interdisciplinary learning also work together in a holistic process that envisions students engaging all four criteria in every formal interdisciplinary unit.

Can I assess just one criterion in a summative assessment task?

Yes. In some subject groups, specific criteria are appropriate for certain kinds of assessment tasks. In others, focusing on one criterion can help students by scaffolding (or “chunking”) complex performances of understanding.

Working collaboratively, teachers should design holistic interdisciplinary summative assessment tasks (performances of understanding), which assess multiple criteria whenever possible.

Do I have to use every strand of the criterion being assessed when I develop a formative or summative assessment task?

No. In earlier years of the programme, students can often profit from focusing on particular strands of a criterion. In many cases, however, good practice in MYP assessment uses as many strands of the criterion as appropriate when developing summative assessment tasks.

Can I assess just one strand of a criterion in a summative assessment task?

Yes. However, subject-group objectives and their corresponding assessment criteria are designed to function holistically. Strands are not independent standards that must be individually taught, assessed and reported. Rather, they explain the nature of MYP objectives or criteria and ensure their academic rigour. In practice, classroom assessment can be difficult to plan and manage effectively if assessments focus on single strands. More complex tasks—tasks that incorporate multiple strands and criteria—are often more engaging and efficient.

Do I have to make a certain number of assessments of each criterion in my subject group over the course of a reporting period or academic year?

Yes, final grades in each MYP year for each subject group must be based on at least two judgments against each strand of all subject-group criteria.

MYP projects criteria are each assessed once in the course of completing the community project or personal project. When engaging students in formal collaboratively planned interdisciplinary units, schools must use the interdisciplinary assessment criteria to determine achievement levels for summative assessment tasks. In each year of the programme, schools must address all four objectives (every strand) of interdisciplinary learning.

Do I have to make a certain number of assessments of each *strand* of every criterion in my subject group in the course of each academic year?

Yes, all strands must be assessed at least twice in the course of an academic year. However, this assessment is always part of a more holistic assessment of the criterion, and it is not appropriate to record achievement levels for individual strands of a criterion in order to come to a judgment about student achievement for the criterion as a whole. Judgments about student achievement are made at the level of criteria, not at the level of specific strands. Even if only one strand in the criterion has been assessed by a particular summative task, the judgment of achievement being made is of the criterion—not the strand.

How do strands and criteria work in MYP eAssessment?

To provide IB-validated grades, MYP eAssessment aims to sample, replicate or simulate classroom assessment practice. MYP eAssessments use multiple criteria to make judgments about student achievement using appropriately challenging summative assessment tasks. On-screen examinations assess as many strands as possible of all four criteria in a subject group. ePortfolios assess all strands of all subject-group criteria.

If my school offers a modular course that includes multiple disciplines within a subject—or multiple subjects within a subject group during a single academic year—must I make two assessments of each strand in each course module/subject/discipline?

MYP grading and reporting is based on subject-group requirements. Those requirements may be met by discrete or modular courses, and final judgments about student achievement are always made on a “best-fit” basis. During a single academic year, it is only necessary to assess all strands of each assessment criterion twice in the course of the student’s study of any **subject group**, not each module of the course. If students are enrolled in multiple courses within a subject group during the same academic year, teachers should plan collaboratively to ensure that all strands are assessed at least twice.

How should I document my use of subject-group assessment strands?

The subject-group overview can be a good tool for ensuring that summative tasks comprehensively assess all strands of subject-group criteria. Some teachers make a note whenever they omit a strand from a criterion during summative assessment so that they can return to that strand in another unit later in the academic year.

Practically speaking, what does it mean to make “best-fit” judgments in MYP assessment?

The best-fit approach reflects the criterion-related philosophy of MYP assessment. In distinction from criterion-based assessment, the MYP approach does not require students to meet every strand of a criterion in order to be awarded a specific achievement level or progress to the next level. MYP assessment relies on teachers’ professional judgment to develop and apply shared understandings of “what good looks like”. Those understandings are best developed through a process of standardization. MYP teachers standardize assessment when they come to agreed interpretations of assessment criteria with reference to specific examples of student work. For these discussions, teacher support materials provide useful frames of reference and examples.

Criterion-related assessment (marking) works like this:

1. Locate the appropriate assessment criteria (year 1, 3 or 5) in the guide.
2. Choose one strand of the criterion being assessed; starting with level 0, move through each band until you reach a statement that no longer describes the student’s level of achievement.
3. Note the next lowest achievement level and confirm that it accurately describes the student’s work.
4. Repeat this process for each strand of the criterion being assessed.
5. Observe the pattern of achievement across levels against the relevant strands.
6. If most or all descriptors of the student’s work lie within the same achievement level, make a holistic judgment about whether the student’s work demonstrates the qualities described in that band to a greater extent (awarding the higher level) or a lesser extent (awarding the lower level).
7. If the descriptors are distributed across multiple achievement levels, use your professional judgment to select the level (0 or 1–8) that, overall, best matches the student’s work. Remember, students do not have to demonstrate that every relevant strand of the criterion describes their work in order to be awarded an achievement level in that band.
8. Record only whole numbers (do not use fractions or decimals in making best-fit judgments).

Here are some additional considerations for good practice in best-fit assessment:

- Teachers should not define a pass or fail boundary, but rather should concentrate on identifying the most appropriate descriptors for each assessment criterion.
- The highest level descriptors do not imply faultless performance and they represent an achievable challenge. Teachers should use the entire range of available levels as appropriate.
- Student achievement often varies across criteria. Students who attain a high achievement level for one criterion (or strand) will not necessarily attain high achievement levels for other criteria (or strands). Similarly, students who attain a low achievement level for one criterion (or strand) will not necessarily attain low achievement levels for other criteria (or strands).
- Teachers should not assume that criterion-related assessment will produce a standard distribution of achievement levels or MYP grades.
- Teachers should make assessment criteria and task-specific clarifications available to students in advance. Classroom discussion and individual conferences can often focus profitably on assessment criteria, strands, descriptors, achievement levels, criteria level totals and MYP grades.

- Teachers often use (anonymized) examples of other students' work at various levels of achievement to help current students develop a shared understanding of MYP standards.

Is it appropriate to expect MYP years 1, 2 and 3 to sit 2-hour examinations with the justification of eAssessment introduction?

MYP on-screen examinations are designed to simulate, sample and replicate teaching/learning and assessment in MYP classrooms. They provide a platform for large-scale assessment for 16-year olds that is valid, reliable and manageable and that can lead to a formal qualification (and, under certain conditions, the IB MYP certificate).

The MYP philosophy of assessment (summarized in *MYP: From principles into practice* [May 2014]) promotes a range of assessment strategies, focusing especially on authentic performances of understanding. Each IB World School is responsible for developing an assessment philosophy that supports assessment of, for and as learning. Tests can certainly be part of assessment in all year levels, depending on the context of the subject/discipline, school, nation and culture, as well as teachers' assessment proficiencies and professional judgment.

Over time, it is good for students to develop the stamina they need to maintain focus and engagement should they become candidates for MYP on-screen examinations. Schools are responsible for developing vertically-articulated approaches to learning (and opportunities for practising those skills) that are appropriate for students in various age groups. Since the MYP accepts 2-hour examinations (that are digitally-rich and designed to be highly engaging) as being manageable for many 16-year olds, it is reasonable to expect that younger students might be better served by school-based assessments that have shorter durations.