

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING POLICY

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1. Aim

The aim of this policy is to establish a broad, consistent approach to the way that students' progress is monitored, assessed and reported. The purpose of doing so is to ensure that:

- All students know where they have got to with their learning and that they understand how they can improve;
- Every student and their parents have an accurate appraisal of the student's academic progress and potential, so that an informed decision can be made about the student's next stage in their education;
- All of the students' teachers have a clear view of how each student is progressing so that they can effectively plan their teaching to best meet the learning needs of their students.

2. Principles of Marking and Feedback

"Assessment for learning (AFL) is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by students and their teachers, to decide where students are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there."

(Assessment Reform Group, 2002)

The overarching purpose of marking and feedback is to provide students with clear, accessible and constructive guidance about how to improve. At CATS Cambridge marking and feedback will be consistent with principles of AFL:

- Focused on student learning and how the student can improve their learning;
- Based on shared learning objectives;
- Periodically and selectively provided;
- Positive in tone, recognising that any assessment has an emotional impact ;
- Accessible to the student for whom it is provided i.e. feedback should be developed fully cognisant of the student's academic ability and their facility with the English language, teachers should confirm that the student has understood the feedback and that the student understands the actions that they need to take to improve;
- Include opportunities to develop for students to develop their ability to conduct effective peer-assessment and self-assessment;
- Used to inform the planning teaching and learning.

3. Marking & Grading Students' Work

Most students want to please and believe the marking of their work to be worthy of teacher time. It is recognised that thorough, effective marking can improve student motivation. Equally, ineffective erratic marking can most certainly have the opposite effect.

It is essential that students can easily identify assessment of their work from the work itself. To that end the following must be adhered to:

- Students should complete their work using blue or black ink
- Teachers should mark, grade and provide feedback using either red or green ink
- Colours other than blue, black, red or green may be used for self-assessment and peer-assessment. In addition, where peer-assessment or self-assessment is used, PA or SA (as

appropriate) should be written at the top of the first leaf the assessment in the same colour as that used for the assessment.

Departments may develop their own marking and feedback policies, but these must operate within the constraints noted above and the policy must be available in writing to all members of the department and the relevant PDs and PTs.

MARKING

In order to keep the marking load down to an effective minimum staff can use selective detailed marking of key pieces of work supported by a lighter scrutiny of other work.

All staff are to ensure that:

- Marking is regular and thorough enough to spot misconceptions, errors and inaccuracies.
- As a rule of thumb, a fully graded submission should be returned to the student at least **once every two-term weeks**.
- When a student's work has been subjected to lighter scrutiny than a full graded assessment, there must be clear evidence of teacher engagement with the work; ticks and/or comments.
 - Written comments communicate clearly to individual students and their parents the student's:
 - strengths/weaknesses,
 - level of performance,
 - suggested strategies for improving their knowledge, understanding and skills,
 - target going forward.
 - They do not accept inaccurate or inadequate responses to written or practical tasks.
 - Steps are taken to act on missing, incomplete or poorly presented work.
 - Deliberate care is taken to detect plagiarism. Subject teachers must brief their students about the severity with which instances of plagiarism will be dealt, and that when an instance of plagiarism is detected that it will be reported to the examination board when appropriate.
 - Work is returned promptly to students, certainly within 1 week of the work being submitted for marking.

Grading: When grades are applied common grading principles are used throughout the CATS College Cambridge.

Formal assessments will always receive a grade. The grade awarded for the work should be consistent with the grades used in the terminal exams for the Programme of Study upon which a student is enrolled; A-level and UFP courses use A*-E grades, for example, whilst GCSEs are transitioning from A*-G to 9-1

Otherwise, it is at the discretion of the teacher to decide which work is graded and which may simply have a comment or be marked in another way (discussion with students, peer marking etc.).

Grading for IELTS courses

Students can be awarded grades ranging from 9.0 to 0, although in practice no UFP/GCE student is likely to achieve less than 4.5. Work should be awarded .5 scores where the standard is approaching a higher band, including writing and speaking assessments. Students, however, should be made

aware that writing and speaking are assessed only in terms of .0 scores in the official IELTS marking system.

Score	Quick Description	Student action
8.0 / 8.5 / 9.0	Very Good User / Expert User	The student should try to maintain this standard of work
7.0 / 7.5	Good User	The work is of a high quality. Certain minor improvements can be made. The student should read any comments carefully
6.5	Competent User	The work has been done well, but points may have been missed, or there may be some other clear problems with the piece. The student should read any comments carefully
6.0	Competent User	The work is of minimum pass standard, but there are some serious errors or omissions. The student should look at e.g. any essay correction again, and make sure that all substantial points have been understood
5.5	Modest User	The work has almost achieved a pass standard. The student should discuss the work with the teacher, and should consider attempting the piece again.
5.0	Modest User	The student has problems which should be addressed and may need to discuss a programme of extra work in the weakest areas, e.g. grammar, vocabulary, with the teacher, if necessary purchasing extra course books, e.g. Grammar in Use. This is the entry level for AS level courses.
4.0 / 4.5 or below	Limited User	The student has serious language problems and should discuss a programme of extra work in the weakest areas, e.g. grammar, vocabulary, with the teacher, if necessary purchasing extra course books, e.g. Grammar in Use.

Grading for Cambridge English courses

Students will be studying for a range of exams depending on their level, and can be awarded a score on the Cambridge scale ranging from 120 to 210 (although in practice no UFP/GCE student is likely to achieve less than 155). They can also equate their score to a grade for each individual exam (e.g. a score of 185 overall would give a student taking the First exam a grade A, but the same score correlates to a grade C in the Advanced exam). Universities now specify a score in their entrance requirements, rather than a grade.

Score	Cambridge Exam	Quick Description	Student action
200 +	Proficiency / Advanced (Grade A)	Proficient User (Hi)	The student should try to maintain this standard of work
185 - 199	Advanced (Grade B, C), First (Grade A)	Proficient User (Lo)	The work is of a high quality. Certain minor improvements can be made. The student should read any comments carefully
172 - 185	Advanced (Grade C-Low), First (Grade B, C - Hi)	Independent User (Hi)	The work has probably been done well, but points may have been missed, or there may be some other clear problems with the piece. The student should read any comments carefully
160 - 171	First (Grade C – Lo, Preliminary (Distinction)	Independent User (Lo)	The work may be of minimum pass standard, but there are some serious errors or omissions. The student should look at e.g. any essay correction again, and make sure that all substantial points have been understood
150 - 159	Preliminary (Distinction, Merit)	Basic User (Hi)	The work may achieve a minimum pass standard but with considerable difficulty. The student should discuss the work with the teacher, and should consider attempting the piece again.
155 or below	Preliminary (Pass), Key	Basic User (Lo)	The student has problems which should be addressed and may need to discuss a programme of extra work in the weakest areas, e.g. grammar, vocabulary, with the teacher, if necessary purchasing extra course books, e.g. Grammar in Use. This is the entry level for AS level courses.

4. Appeal against Results

Students may appeal against coursework marks awarded, including UFP marks. The initial appeal is to the Principal and then the complaints policy can be followed and work can be re-marked as appropriate. There is an external moderator who would adjudicate on UFP grading and appeals will be notified to exam boards as appropriate. More detail and definitive instructions are given in the UFP quality assurance manual.

5. Plagiarism

Students are warned about the dangers of this by subject staff, and instances found will be reported to the examination board when appropriate.

6. Attainment Grades and the Frequency of Formal Assessments

Practising retrieval and application of knowledge is an important component of the process by which learning takes place. Teachers are encouraged to test their students regularly for the purposes of both formative and summative assessment. Test results should help to inform the generation of attainment grades which are gathered regularly to monitor students' progress across all of their subjects.

Formal assessments should take place at the end of each taught unit. Where appropriate the Academic Departments should ensure that students across sets take a common test.

Students are given written assessment tests in each of their academic subjects. An assessment is designed to last at least 40 minutes, and contains past exam style questions.

7. Student Reports

Teachers write regular student reports to the parents to provide information on academic achievement, effort, and attendance and achievement grades. Copies of these reports are given to students and form the basis of discussions between Personal Tutors, Subject Teachers and students. Subject teachers are responsible for discussing progress, setting targets and providing individual study plans.

Students' progress is reported to parents/agents five times per year:

- October half term:
 - Full Academic Report:
 - GCSE Year 2
 - A Level Year 2
 - Progress Report:
 - AEM &ED
 - GCSE Year 1
 - Pre-Programme
 - A Level Year 1
 - UFP
- November/December:
 - Progress Report:
 - GCSE Year 2

- A Level Year 2
 - Full Academic Report and Progress Check:
 - AEM &ED
 - GCSE Year 1
 - Pre-Programme
 - A Level Year 1
 - UFP
- February half term –
 - Full Academic Report; having taken mock examinations at the beginning of the Spring Term:
 - GCSE Year 2
 - A Level Year 2
 - UFP
 - Progress Report:
 - AEM &ED
 - GCSE Year 1
 - Pre-Programme
 - 2T Pre-Programme
 - A Level Year 1
 - 5T A Level Year 1
 - FT UFP
- Easter end of term:
 - Full Academic Report and Progress Check; having taken mock examinations at the beginning of the Spring Term:
 - 2T Pre-Programme
 - 5T A Level Year 1
 - FT UFP
 - Progress Report:
 - All other PoS
- Summer end of term - Full Academic Report and Progress Check (for continuing students)
 - AEM &ED
 - GCSE Year 1 & 2
 - Pre-Programme
 - A Level Year 1 (6T and 5T)

Three grades are reported with each Progress Check:

8. Predicted Grade

Statement to students:

This is the grade that you will achieve at the end of the course based on your teacher's best professional judgement based on your current work ethic and the current quality of your responses to feedback.

This is what a teacher feels the student is most likely to attain overall for the course. Grades awarded imply that if a student continues working at their current pace and effort they would attain

that grade. Grades awarded should take into account everything which the teacher knows about the student and how they are likely to cope with the remainder of the course, e.g. if the material to be covered will become more challenging. When marks are given, the relationship between scores and grades should be set out clearly to the student, including the level of difficulty of content being tested e.g. where it is only up to C grade material only a grade C can be given for the assessment. It will reflect practice in the final exam which may well vary between different courses. Any marked disparity between predicted and target grades should be able to be explained by the teacher, to either the student, line manager, parent or agent. It will be contextualised by the effort grade given.

9. Target grade

Statement to students:

This is the grade that we think you are capable of achieving at the end of your programme of study if you apply yourself fully and respond effectively to the feedback that your teachers provide.

This is the grade the teacher thinks the student could attain at the end of the course if they worked as hard as possible. It is based on a combination of ALIS (A level and UFP) or YELIS (GCSE) test scores and baseline tests. It should be the teacher's best estimation of what the student should be able to achieve and should, unless there is clear reason to predict otherwise, be at least one grade above ALIS.

NB Subject teachers should discuss the target grade with each student. When doing so the teacher should explicitly refer to the chance graph based on student's performance on the CEM Adaptive Test, this will be provided by the Examinations Officer

10. Effort grade

Effort grades are awarded so that students have a clear awareness of how their level of engagement may be supporting or inhibiting their academic progress. The grades with their descriptors are provided below:

Effort Grade	Descriptor Offered to Students
1 EXCELLENT	<p>You will get 1 on your report if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your effort is helping you to meet or beat your targets • You often ask and answer questions in class • You ask when you need help and don't wait to be found not working • You ask what to do next when you have finished • All your work, including homework, is done to the best of your ability • You act on advice to improve your learning and work • You complete all homework on time and come to ask for help if you get stuck • You always bring everything you need to every lesson
2 GOOD	<p>You will get 2 on your report if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your effort is helping you to meet most of your targets • You often answer questions in class • You don't ask when you need help and wait for the teacher to offer • You don't ask what to do next when you have finished, but do more work when asked • Most of your work, including homework, is done to the best of your ability

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You act on advice to improve your learning or work • You usually complete homework on time, but don't ask for help if you get stuck • You occasionally don't bring everything you need to a lesson
3 SATISFACTORY	<p>You will get 3 on your report if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are not working hard enough to meet your targets • You are sometimes off-task in lessons and talk when you should be working • You are quiet and do what you're told, but just focus on presentation, rather than learning • You don't often answer questions in class • You need to be reminded to get on with work in lessons • You sometimes produce poor quality work • You rarely act on advice to improve your learning or work • You sometimes don't do homework or it is late • You often don't bring the equipment you need to lessons
4 REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT	<p>You will get 4 on your report if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your lack of effort means you are working significantly below your targets • The quality and quantity of your work are poor • You don't act on advice to improve your learning or work • You often don't complete homework • You are either quiet and uninvolved, or noisy and disrupt the learning of other students • In lesson you focus on things that are not to do with your work • You often don't bring the equipment you need to lessons

11. Written reports

In addition, each student receives a full academic report twice a year. The written reports outlines areas of strength and development for students in each subject area, as well as a written overview comment from the Personal Tutor. These comments should reflect on successes during the term, and should be supportive but show clear areas for improvement.

EXPECTATIONS FOR REPORT WRITING AT CATS CAMBRIDGE:

Comments should be directed at the student and written in the second person.

The emphasis should be on **positive** and **constructive** feedback focused on ways in which the student can improve.

Where concerns need to be raised please do so, however, ensure that you always then advise the student what they need to do address and improve the situation and if necessary what help and support we can offer.

Please make the language you use clear, direct and easy to understand.

Avoid general sweeping statements, please be specific and ensure the reports are useful for the students and informative for the parents and agents.

Comments can encompass student performance in relation to areas such as participation in class, homework completion, punctuality and attendance, perseverance, motivation and use and development of academic English and/ or higher level subject skills and behaviour.

Please link your comments to the previous report (where there was one) so the student and parents can clearly see improvements that have been made, or not as the case may be, based on the targets set.

Once you have outlined the student's progress to date you will need to set some specific targets, again, these should link directly to the comments made and focus on how to address concerns and improve performance in the subjects.

WRITING EFFECTIVE TARGETS ON ACADEMIC REPORTS:

Be succinct and specific, these are not general comments. Targets should be specifically linked to academic areas for improvement.

Where appropriate link targets to assessment objectives for the student's qualification.

Remember that attending every lesson, arriving promptly and completing homework are college rules not academic targets and so can be commented on in the 'progress to date' section of the report but should not be set as an academic target.

Two to three targets should be set, use bullet points for clarity.

12. Attainment Grades

Regular attainment grades are collected from teachers to monitor student progress. Teachers should evaluate the performance of each student in their against the terminal assessment criteria for the relevant programme of study. Teachers should base their evaluation on work that the student has completed to date. Heads of Department are encouraged to use common tests for all students in the same programme of study.