

Assessment Policy



**Lake Wales High School
International Baccalaureate Diploma
Program**

Mission Statement: Creating a vibrant, internationally-minded community where students are encouraged to seek a life of inquiry, reflection, and merit.

**It's the process that matters; throw yourself into the task
at hand & the results will come! –Donna Dunson**

The assessment policy of Lake Wales High School IB Diploma Program is based on two important constructs: Mastery Learning and Standards Based Grading/IB Learning Outcomes or Topics.

What is Mastery Learning?

Mastery Learning is an instructional approach that puts the focus on learning rather than assigning grades for the completion of assignments. It is based on the belief that *all* students can learn essential knowledge and skills when the learning is broken down and presented sequentially.

What does Mastery Learning mean for a student's grade/GPA?

Mastery Learning allows students to work towards mastery of a learning goal even after a unit has been taught and assessed. We define mastery as 70% on a unit assessment. Students are allowed a second attempt at meeting mastery on each test. Ultimately, this means that fewer students will fail or finish courses with low grades.

What is the advantage of studying and making the grade on the first attempt?

If a student earns between an 85 and a 94 on an assessment on the **FIRST ATTEMPT ONLY**, they will earn a 95 in the gradebook.

In order for this to apply a student must:

1. Be in attendance the day of the assessment. (Only school-based absences will be allowed to reschedule their assessment prior to their absence.)
2. All offered prep-work for the unit must be completed and turned in prior to the assessment date.

What are the grading details?

Grades will be entered into two categories: Assessments, which are worth 80% of a student's grade and Learning Opportunities, which are worth 20%. This breakdown keeps the focus on learning rather than completion of assignments. Guideline: one retake is allowed for each test within two weeks of it being posted to the gradebook. Teachers may require additional prep work, or they may require that 70% of the original prep work is complete, before a retake is allowed. All retakes must be completed within the nine-week period.

The Quick Take on grading:

- **Grade books will contain three categories: Assessment – 80%, Learning Opportunities – 20%, Tracking – 0%.**
- **Guideline – retakes should occur within 2 weeks after a test grade is posted.**
- **Students are allowed one retake per test.**
- **Retakes do not apply to quizzes or items in the 20% category.**
- **Students must take advantage of Learning Opportunities to be eligible for retakes (i.e. homework, prep work, tutoring, H2H w/ Purpose, etc.)**

- **Retakes will close at the end of the nine-weeks.**
- **Formative assessments fall in the tracking category and do not impact grades**

What is Standards-Based Grading?

Standards-Based Grading is part of both Mastery Learning and an overall approach to instruction that is based on Florida State Standards. These standards exist to create a framework in which each student has access to a quality, rigorous education and all the benefits that go with it. Teachers plan carefully so that a student's grade reflects mastery of the targeted state standard. For IB students in 11th and 12th grade, the Florida standards are replaced by the learning topics/outcomes as stated in the course guide for each IB course; the essence remains the same.

Why is Lake Wales High School making this change?

We at LWHS believe that Mastery Learning and its partner, Standards-Based Grading or IB Learning Outcomes based grading, are the best way to ensure that every student enrolled in our school has access to a quality education that supports high achievement both in school and after graduation.

The contrast is a system in which students are allowed to advance without actually gaining the skills they need or are allowed to fail without any intervention or support for success. At LWHS, we are working to create a learning environment in which all students can gain the skills and knowledge they need for success in school and in life.

What if a student does not master a learning goal?

A student who does not master a learning goal can participate in additional *learning opportunities*. Success on these *learning opportunities* will earn the student one more chance to demonstrate mastery of the learning goal. *Learning Opportunities* may include, but are not limited to: tutoring sessions during H2H, additional practice assignments to be completed outside of class, or work time with a peer who has mastered the goal.

Does this change how the classroom is managed or what it looks like?

One of the biggest changes this approach brings to the classroom is a focus on tracking student progress. This takes place in many ways, including checks for understanding during a lesson or at the end with an exit ticket. Regardless of the approach to monitoring students' progress, regular feedback is part of the process, so students are aware of their progress. Teachers can continue to use their personal style and creativity to deliver lessons.

How does this work with state required testing and IB Testing?

Because Mastery Learning focuses on state standards and/or IB learning outcomes/topics, students are preparing for state tests/IB tests during every lesson. When grades reflect the students' progress towards mastering the state standards/IB learning outcomes, student scores on tests improve. Here at LWHS, we have test data to support this premise

A few more thoughts about grading:

An additional, no-credit, category, called 'Tracking' may be used to keep track of a variety of student activities, including progress monitoring scores and participation. This allows the teacher to monitor both academic and non-academic behaviors that contribute to the mastery of a goal, but don't actually indicate that a student has mastered a goal.

The result of students choosing to avoid learning opportunities may be lower test scores.

Assessment: is a measure of what a learner knows and can demonstrate. The assessment process and outcomes informs planning, teaching, resource allocation, and learning at LWHS. The student is at the center of the learning process at LWHS and assessment policies allow teachers to monitor student progress and adjust instruction to improve achievement.

IB Diploma students are assessed using both formative and summative Assessments. To begin with the end in mind, we will first focus on summative assessments.

Summative assessments: The goal of summative assessment is to *evaluate student learning* at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Summative assessments are often *high stakes*, which means that they have a high point value and they fall under the 80% category at LWHS. Examples of summative assessments include unit tests, quizzes, mock paper 1,2,3 tests, papers, discussion posts, etc.

Criteria and rubrics: In IB courses at Lake Wales High School (grades 11 and 12), the vast majority of summative assessments are graded by teachers using IB assessment criteria. It is the responsibility of the teacher to share rubrics with students in advance and to provide explicit instruction that clarify expectations.

Assessment models, sample work, and feedback to students: The Diploma program (grades 11 and 12) summative assessments often model in both format and material tested the formal assessments that are officially set by the IB itself. In 9th and 10th grade, summative assessments are designed by classroom teachers.

Whenever practical, teachers provide samples of work that have been marked so that students can internalize the assessment standards and understand what is expected. Such samples may be 1) the actual work of former students that have been marked or moderated by the IB (with consent from the candidates); 2) sample work generated by instructors; and/or 3) samples provided by the IB in official "Teacher Support Material" or through formal IB training.

Students receive feedback on summative assessments in various forms at different points in the year. The concept of mastery learning then allows students to go back and relearn what they may have missed on the first attempt.

On mock exams, teacher provide students a grade on the IB grading scale of 1-7 to help students track themselves against the IB grading scale and work towards their IB Diploma or IB Course score.

Formative Assessment: The goal of formative assessment is to *monitor student learning* to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. More specifically, formative assessments:

- help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work
- help faculty recognize where students are struggling and address problems immediately

Formative assessments are generally *low stakes*, which means that they have low or no point value. On our grading scale, these will fall in the 20% category of "learning opportunities", or in the "tracking" category with no weight attached meaning it will not impact the student's grade. Teachers at LWHS have discretion to decide if a particular quiz should fall in the 20% learning opportunity category or the

80% assessment category. Other forms of check for understanding are also used for formative assessment.

Grade Reporting: Our gradebook does not allow for a score of 1-7 and we record letter grades based on:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F= 50-59; if no work is turned in, a grade of 0 may be assigned.

All IB diploma courses have a 5.0 weight and all honors classes have a 4.5 weight.

References and Resources

- IBO: *Guidelines for Developing School Assessment Policy*
- IBO: *Principles into Practice*
- LWHS Faculty and Administration
- LWHS Student Body – Principal’s Council
- LWHS McCance Challenge Participants: Achieve 90% graduation rate
- Parent feedback: SAC committee
- Carnegie Mellon Eberly Center <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/formative-summative.html>
- Assessment Policy of Palmer High School/North Palmer.
- Assessment Policy of Norfolk Public Schools

The assessment policy was updated in April 2019 with input from teachers, students, parents, guidance counselors, the assistant principal/IB coordinator, and head of school.

