

International School of Creative Arts

Assessment Policy & Marking Guidelines

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ISCA Assessment Policy and Marking Guidelines

Students at ISCA are regularly assessed in order to assist teachers in ensuring progression, continuity of learning, and to provide students, parents and teachers with information on performance and achievement. Assessment feedback is individual and differentiated to maximise the potential of every student. Assessment runs parallel to an overall course provision to include targeted assessment strategies to support individual progression routes.

ISCA evaluates performance through two strands: external assessment carried out through coursework and formal examination in conjunction with portfolio development in line with the student's chosen progression route. Formal assessment is delivered through Ofqual registered awarding bodies (e.g. Edexcel, OCR, etc.) and conforms to their respective requirements.

Portfolio development is a specific opportunity for diagnostic assessment in line with students chosen career pathway and forms a crucial part of preparing students for further study and professional life.

Assessment Rationale

Assessment is an integral part of instruction, as it determines whether or not the goals of education are being met. Assessment affects decisions about grades, progression, advancement, instructional needs and curriculum.

Assessment inspires us to ask these hard questions: "Are we teaching what we think we are teaching?" "Are students learning what they are supposed to be learning?" "Is there a way to teach the subject better, thereby promoting better learning?"

When assessment works best, it does the following:

- a) Provides diagnostic feedback
 - What is the student's knowledge base?
 - What is the student's performance base?
 - What are the student's needs?
 - What has to be taught?
- b) Helps educators set standards
 - What performance demonstrates understanding?
 - What performance demonstrates knowledge?
 - What performance demonstrates mastery?
- c) Evaluates progress
 - How is the student doing?
 - What teaching methods or approaches are most effective?
 - What changes or modifications to a lesson are needed to help the student?
- d) Relates to a student's progress
 - What has the student learned?
 - Can the student talk about the new knowledge?
 - Can the student demonstrate and use the new skills in other projects?
- e) Motivates performance

For student self-evaluation:

 - Now that I'm in charge of my learning, how am I doing?
 - Now that I know how I'm doing, how can I do better?
 - What else would I like to learn?

For teacher self-evaluation:

 - What is working for the students?
 - What can I do to help the students more?
 - In what direction should we go next?

Assessment Procedures

A. Responsibility

- Each subject teacher is responsible for the regular assessment of the students he or she teaches.
- The Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring the regular assessment of students within a subject area, monitoring their performance and arranging for records to be maintained.
- The Director of Studies is responsible for overall monitoring of students using internal assessments and examinations and for evaluating performance in public examinations.

B. Planning Assessment

Teachers consider assessment before they begin planning lessons and projects, reflecting on what they are trying to accomplish. They design a lesson structure that delivers a combination of content and instructional methods, but also builds in the assessment. As they plan assessment, they ask questions such as:

- "What do I need to assess?"
- "What's evidence of the goals that I have in mind?"

Before deciding which activities to adopt, they first consider what achieving their objectives will look like. In other words, what evidence of learning is required and how will the evidence be documented.

C. Assessing Student's work

ISCA evaluates performance through tutorials, critiques and submission of academic work at the end of a project or after timed exams.

The purpose of assessment can be:

1. Summative, which aims to measure students' progress against a given set of criteria
2. Formative, which aim to provide feedback to the learner on how and where they can improve;
3. Diagnostic, a form of pre-assessment that aims to determine students' individual strengths, weaknesses, knowledge and skills prior to instruction. It is also used to facilitate curriculum planning.
4. Peer assessment, which aims to help students develop the ability to critically evaluate each other's work, including their own, and develop a greater awareness of how to work autonomously to improve their work

Formative, diagnostic and peer assessments are on-going throughout the school year and conducted as an integral part of teaching or during tutorials and critiques when students have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their progress. During tutorials students meet 1:1 with subject specialists who assist with academic progress, university progression and examination strategies and requirements.

Summative assessment is usually undertaken at the end of a period of learning in order to generate a grade/level that reflects the student's performance. It is completed on work handed in for the Technical Diplomas and for the mock A Level and AS Level Timed Assessment. The results are given in writing together with feedback.

Final Summative Assessment refers to the results of externally set exams (e.g. the A and AS Levels and the Technical Diplomas). No formal feedback is given. Marks are internally verified and then sent to the external exam body. Students receive their final grades towards the end of the summer holidays.

D. Tutorials & Critiques

Tutorials and critiques are a primary form of assessment at ISCA and are used for diagnostic, formative and summative feedback sessions.

1. Review Tutorials

Review tutorials are not subject specific and are conducted by one or two subject specialist tutors for the duration of approximately 15 minutes. Every student has at least one review tutorial a term, which is scheduled into their timetable. The outcome of the tutorial is recorded in student files.

Review Tutorials are more formal than normal tutorials and an action plan is agreed between student and tutor, which is followed up at the next tutorial. Students are required to keep all Review Tutorial sheets organised in their tutorial folder and bring this folder to every lesson.

2. Subject Tutorials

Academic tutorials are subject-specific and aim to ensure that students are clear regarding the requirements of the examination board and how to improve their work in order to succeed in the exam. Delivered 1:1 by subject specialists, students are invited to actively reflect on their academic work and given feedback. The outcome of the tutorial is recorded in student files.

Academic tutorials can be held during lessons or at pre-arranged times outside of class. Each student will have three academic tutorials a term and are required to keep all academic tutorial sheets organised per subject in their tutorial folder and bring this folder to every lesson.

3. Progression Tutorials

Progression Tutorials provide 1:1 time with tutors who are experienced in the student's chosen career pathway. They offer specific advice regarding degree courses, progression routes and university institutions world-wide. Tutors encourage students to research and consider a number of options and ensure that an informed decision and application is made. The aim is to ensure that students have a clear understanding of the admissions and interview procedure and take a greater role and responsibility for their success. The outcome of these tutorials is recorded in student files.

Portfolio building and preparing for an interview is also an essential part of this tutorial scheme. Sessions focus on reviewing all student work and preparing a portfolio which reflects the strengths and interests of the student in line with university course requirements.

Students are offered at least two 1:1 tutorials to supplement their weekly progression classes. As the deadlines approach for university application and interviews, students get an additional 5 tutorials at the weekend and/or in the evenings, conducted by specialist tutors who help with portfolio development.

4. Catch-up Tutorials

Catch-up tutorials are 1:1 sessions with a tutor, scheduled based on need and focus on areas for which students require extra support at different stages of the academic year. Their frequency will vary depending on the needs of the individual and will normally be conducted out of normal school hours, in the evenings or at the weekend. The outcome of these tutorials is recorded in student files.

5. Critiques

Critiques are an integral part of classroom practice at ISCA and serve both as a platform for students to receive formative feedback from their tutors and peers and as an opportunity to critically reflect upon their own work. Critiques help students to become aware of relevant disciplinary criteria and to compare their progress with that of their peers.

During critiques students reflect on what they've been taught, what they've learnt and if they have successfully applied this in their practice. Lively debate and discussion is encouraged, helping students become articulate at giving meaningful feedback and confident at discussing and justifying their work and creative decisions.

E. Teacher's Records

1. All subject teachers maintain records of the achievement of the students they teach, using a range of evidence to support these records.
2. Marking of work is undertaken regularly and marks recorded.
3. All records of formative and summative assessment are filed in the Student Folders.

F. Diagnostic Assessment and Benchmarking

Students are assessed and benchmarking data gathered prior to embarking on formal study at ISCA by the following methods:

1. Prior attainment data gathered from previous school records, qualifications and reports.
2. Induction activities to establish practical and cognitive skill levels.
3. Reports generated from ISCA Live, an on-line learning platform designed to test and report on ability in line with the demands of A Level study.
4. English language level assessment to establish current levels and allocate the most appropriate support.
5. SEN screening in order to gather data used to help identify students with SEND and ensure suitable support can be put in place.

All initial assessment data and benchmarking is disseminated to teaching staff and included in course files.

G. Assessment Criteria

The assessment criteria established by the awarding bodies (e.g. Edexcel, OCR) will be applied depending on the courses students are following.

H. Monitoring of Students' Progress

1. Each subject teacher continually evaluates the attainment of each student, responds to his/her needs, and sets targets for future performance.
2. Teachers support and encourage students by drawing attention to the progress they have made, whether by congratulating students for an individual piece of work or in reviewing performance over a period of time. General assessment of the progress of a class depends upon the willingness of students to ask questions, find answers, look for patterns and deeper meaning, observe attentively and find out information. Teachers continually encourage students to involve themselves proactively in the lessons, critiques and group work in order to further assess understanding and progress.

3. Tracking is completed by academic staff within course files to ensure strict monitoring of progress.
4. Each student is made aware of his/her level of achievement in relation to future examination performance, with feedback on how he/she can maximise performance a minimum of twice termly.
5. Each teacher monitors the regular completion of homework for the students that they teach.
6. The Director of Studies monitors the performance of individual students in relation to their reports, their overall performance, behaviour records, their personal circumstances and whole school targets.
7. The Director of Studies monitors the performance of students in public examinations in relation to previous performance and school targets.

I. Reporting

Written reports are issued at least twice a year for all students. Reports include current levels of attainment and targets for improvement as well as comments reflecting on student strengths and areas for improvement.

Parent-teacher meeting are fixed to coincide with the publication of reports in order to ensure that teacher evaluation and understanding of student performance is informed by the input of parents and/or guardians.

J. Self and Peer Assessment

Formal written work and final responses (in the creative subjects) are not the only method of assessment.

Students are encouraged to assess their own progress in the classroom through discussion, examining model answers and exemplar art & design work, and applying assessment criteria to their own work. Self-assessment is designed to help students understand assessment requirements so they can make judgements about their own work.

Peer marking and contributions during art & design critiques helps students understand the standards expected of them and how to make constructive judgements about work.

Students are encouraged to engage in self-assessment as part of a Target Setting and Review Day where students set targets to improve their learning.

K. Marking Guidelines

Marking is central to teaching and learning. It informs and supports the quality of teaching and learning. In particular marking:

For the teacher:

1. Assists in the diagnosis of student needs and difficulties.
2. Assists in the planning of future learning objectives and specific targets.
3. Provides evidence of whether planned learning has occurred and the effectiveness of the teaching and allows for modification of the teaching programme if required.
4. Provides evidence for a professional judgement to be made on the achievement of a pupil.
5. Allows progress to be recorded and where appropriate student achievement to be stated in terms of an A Level grade.

For students:

1. Has a positive impact on students' attitudes, motivation and self-esteem by valuing their work and celebrating achievement.
2. Enables them to see how to improve their work and set targets.
3. Indicates and corrects errors, omissions and misunderstandings.
4. Indicates underachievement in relation to their target grade.
5. Involves them in the process as a part of taking responsibility for their own learning.

For the parent:

1. Indicates that work is regularly viewed and evaluated.
2. Informs the parent as to his/her child's progress in relation to the target grade.

For the school:

1. Provides a record of individual student progress and achievement.
2. Assists tutors and the Director of Studies to assess the progress of a student.
3. Provides data for the Head of School in the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and the quality of the teaching and learning taking place.

Feedback comments by the teacher to students should be given as appropriate. Whilst a tick without a comment will be appropriate in some circumstances, in general a comment should be given alongside written work, however brief this may be. Ideally marked work should reflect a continuing dialogue between teacher and student. Students should be praised orally and in written comment; their strengths need to be noted. Of equal importance, weaknesses, within this positive framework need to be pointed out and strategies suggested for future advancement.

All formal or summative marking is provisional and subject to change after internal and external verification and moderation.

L. Internal Verification and Moderation Procedures

The Director of Studies has overall responsibility for internal verification and moderation.

Verification of initial briefs is completed prior to distribution where all staff are involved in the process as part of continuing professional development.

Briefs, feedback and assessment are reported on standardised formats

Marking, moderation and invigilation takes place in line with formal examination board and JCQ procedures.

M. Complaints Procedures

The Director of Studies has overall responsibility for internal verification and moderation.

Students have the right to appeal examination decisions. Prior to examination they are advised regarding the complaints procedures put in place, in line with JCQ guidelines.

ISCA is ultimately bound by the decision of the authority body but can represent the student regarding any queries, clarifications or complaints to be addressed to the examination board.

In the first instance any grade queries or clarifications should be sent in writing to the Director of Studies or the designated examinations officer. Appeals will be followed up through a formal meeting regarding the complaint and how to make representations to the examination board. For further details refer to ISCA's EaRs Policy and Procedures document.

N. Intellectual Property

All work completed for ISCA Live portfolios and formal assessment is the property of ISCA. This may be used for staff training purposes, moderation or examination exemplars as often requested by formal examinations boards. Work may be distributed via the ISCA website or used for publicity purposes without student's permission.

O. Lesson Planning

Teachers are expected to show evidence of planning in the following areas:

- Clear learning intentions – We are learning to...
- Teaching to the top and aspirational learning outcomes – What I'm looking for...
- Modelling and scaffolding to ensure students are achieving aspirational outcomes.
- A 'Prepare for Learning' task which is focussed, has students active on entry, reinforces systems and routines in the classroom and encourages independent learning.
- Planning for 3 levels of challenge.
- Planning for the needs of specific students with SEND and other vulnerable groups.
- Planning for Assessment for Learning, including questioning, peer and self-assessment, written and verbal feedback.
- Planning for Actions for Progress opportunities where students respond fully to teacher feedback.
- Planning for independent learning.
- Planning for frequent review points during the learning, where effective progress checking takes place enabling both the students and the teacher to diagnose learning, to make next step intervention and further evaluation of learning.
- Planning for questioning.
- Planning for Literacy and Numeracy.
- Planning for opportunities to focus on British Values.

P. Schemes of Work

Subject schemes of work will include the following:

- Links to the previous scheme.
- A detailed list of learning intentions and outcomes.
- Clear assessment criteria for assessments.
- Notes on differentiation.

Q. Progressive Feedback

The aim of feedback and time effective feedback is:

- To ensure that students are making progress in terms of knowledge and understanding of subject content.
- To prepare students for summative assessment through the application of skills related to specific command words i.e. analysis and evaluation
- To encourage students to take more responsibility and ownership for their learning

Teaching staff will use three forms of feedback:

1. Analysis with feedback: This is personalised feedback ensuring students know exactly what to do to improve to reach the next level. It will identify clear areas of strength and exact comments on how to improve in order to make progress (actions for progress).

Students will then be expected to respond to the action(s) for progress. This will occur either in class or as an independent learning task.

2. Verbal feedback: This essential feedback offers learning conversations that encourage the student to reflect on the teacher's comments and encourages the students to discuss their areas of concern and aspirations. Verbal feedback given and either the student or member of staff will date it.
3. Students feedback: This takes two basic forms:
 - *Self-assessment*, which ensures that students take responsibility for their learning and can recognise their strengths, weaknesses and common mistakes.
 - *Peer assessment*, which evaluates the work of other learners. Students get an understanding of feedback and success criteria whilst being able to learn from their peers. It provides an opportunity for modelling and sharing work.

R. Characteristics of Feedback

Whether feedback is just there to be grasped or is provided by another person, helpful feedback is goal-referenced; tangible and transparent; actionable; user-friendly (specific and personalized); timely; ongoing; and consistent.

Progress orientated

Effective feedback requires that a person has a target, takes action to achieve the target, and receives target-related information and guidance about his or her actions. Clear and with tangible impact. Any useful feedback system involves not only a clear target, but also tangible results related to the target. This could be in the form of completion of success criteria related to the target.

Actionable

Effective feedback is concrete, specific, and useful, it provides actionable guidance for the students. 'Excellent work', 'not correct', 'Level 5' are not examples of feedback. Student must be able to use the feedback provided to make progress towards the overall target.

User-Friendly

Feedback might seem perfectly understandable to the teacher however this may not make sense to the learner. Feedback has little or no value and therefore impact if the student cannot understand it; model what it is you want students to do. Students can feel overwhelmed by extensive feedback. Prioritise what it is you would like students to do and chunk it down.

Timely

In most cases, the sooner a student gets feedback, the better. Careful setting of objectives and introducing exit tickets allows for frequent assessment of student understanding and rapid action. They help provide a straight answer to a simple question that we should be desperate to answer at each stage of a lesson: what did students learn?

Ongoing:

In order for students to progress with learning it is essential to have time built into schemes of learning whereby students action the feedback given. Attempts at up-levelling need to be revisited by the teacher and further feedback given or in the event of student being successful, celebrated and the feedback loop 'closed down'. If students are receiving the same feedback repeatedly but show no improvement, the student will obviously need further support.

Consistent

Teachers need to meet ISCA's expectations of feedback in order for it to be effective across the whole school. Only when this occurs can student transfer skills needed to up-level work and make progress.