



St Anne's Community College

Assessment Policy

Rationale

Assessment in St. Anne's Community College is an integral part of the teaching and learning process as it provides valuable information to the student, the teacher and the parent. Learning at St. Anne's Community College is very well supported: students are aware of what they are trying to achieve and through effective assessment they can gain a clearer insight into what they have achieved and where they can improve. The school acknowledges that all forms of assessment should have a positive impact on students' attitudes, motivation and self-esteem and that students should have the opportunity to respond to guidance they have received.

Teachers use assessment to set tasks which are well matched to the abilities of their students. Students are involved in the process of assessment by taking responsibility for their own learning, developing their ability to be self-critical and setting targets for their subsequent work.

Each student is assessed as part of an ongoing process based upon their homework, tests, assignments, projects and other forms of school work.

A formal record of these results is kept by the teacher in VS-Ware where students and parents/guardians can view their progress.

Objectives

1. To use formative assessment in the planning and practice of teachers in the classroom.
2. To use summative assessment to provide information to students, parents and teachers of what progress has been made in the learning process.
3. To provide consistency in procedures for setting, marking and supplying feedback to students.
4. To inform the teachers how students learn best.
5. To inform the students of how best to learn and to set individual goals.

Whole School Assessments

Christmas Exams

The following year groups sit Christmas exams which are uploaded on VS-Ware with a written report:

1st Year and 5th Year. Christmas exams will give parents an indication of how the student is doing with regard to the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Curriculum.

Summer Exams

The following year groups sit Christmas exams which is uploaded on VS-Ware with a written report:

1st Year, 2nd Year and 5th Year. Summer exams will give parents an indication of how the student is doing with regard to Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Curriculum.

CBAs

2nd Years, instead of Christmas tests undertake a Classroom Based Assessment as per the Junior Cycle requirements. Each subject department agrees on the relevant CBA process and timeline as per CBA Junior Cycle circulars.

Pre-Exams

Instead of Christmas exams the following year groups sit pre-exams for the Junior Cycle and Leaving Cert in February which is uploaded on VS-Ware with a written report:

3rd Years and 6th Years. These pre-exams are marked by external examiners and used as guidelines for students' junior cycle or leaving cert progress.

Transition Years Assessments

A digital class notebook is created by teachers for each subject/module. Teachers ensure that an element of teacher feedback and student reflection on feedback is incorporated in each class notebook. Students are assessed continuously by subject/module teachers. Teachers submit two formal reports throughout the year:

Reporting period 1 – September to December - Subject grade average and written report prepared for each student.

Reporting Period 2 – January to May - Subject grade average and written report prepared for each student.

Students are required to carry out weekly written reflection tasks. Reflection tasks are based on TY modules, activities and projects. At each reporting period, an overall accumulated grade average is given together with grades awarded for student communication, student reflection and student participation. A report including accumulated grade average is made available to students and parents. Students are therefore given the opportunity to monitor their own progress and reflect on their learning.

A final award, Distinction, Merit, Pass and TY Certificate is presented to students at end of year graduation in May.

Departmental Assessments Records

Each subject department records 4 class assessments (summative mark only) on VS-Ware (2 pre-Christmas and 2 post-Christmas), across the department over the year, in addition to Christmas, Summer and pre-exams exams. Common tests given in English and Maths are averaged and individual student results compared to their CAT4 assessment scores in both verbal reasoning and quantitative analysis. This comparative exercise informs teachers and managers when allocating additional resources to support students' academic needs.

Junior Cycle Programme

The assessment of the New Junior Cycle Programme ensures that a range of skills are assessed, placing students at the centre of the learning process. Students will complete Classroom Based Assessments (CBA) during class time in both 2nd and 3rd year, which will be reported on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). Students can achieve one of 4 grade descriptors (listed below) once teachers have conducted a Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting in which students' work is moderated.

E – Exceptional

AE – Above Expectations

I – In Line with Expectations

Y – Yet to Meet Expectations

Where a descriptor for a Classroom Based Assessment has not been given to a student, the term 'Not Reported' is used. There is no appeal to the allocation of a student's grade descriptor. In addition, students in 3rd year complete an Assessment Task (in most subject areas) which accounts for 10% of their final exam result. There will also be opportunities for students to contribute towards their JCPA by participating in 'Other Areas of Learning'. These are activities which must be school based and are also recorded on their JCPA. Finally, when the students receive their JCPA, their final grades are given as grade descriptors based on the following criteria:

90 ≤ Distinction ≤ 100

75 ≤ Higher Merit < 90

55 ≤ Merit < 75

40 ≤ Achieved < 55

20 ≤ Partially Achieved < 40

0 ≤ Not Graded < 20

Assessment on entry to St. Anne's in 1st Year

Initial student assessment takes place in April/May prior to entry of students into First Year in September.

Assessment takes place only after a student has been offered a place.

At this time the assessment carried out is the CAT 4 Test (Cognitive Abilities Test: Fourth edition). The CAT 4 test measures the four principal areas of reasoning. These are verbal, non-verbal, quantitative and spatial tests and are key to supporting educational development and academic attainment. The CAT 4 will provide important information that can assist students in achieving their potential. These the CAT4 helps to identify strengths and weaknesses for individuals and groups of students as well as students who need additional support. They are a means to inform and evaluate teaching and learning strategies.

Formative Assessment

According to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, assessment in education is about gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning.

Formative Assessment is promoted by:

Setting out clearly aims and objectives for each lesson.

- Asking a question which will be answered in the course of the class.
- Sharing the learning intention and development of the class.
- Revision of the previous day's work is carried out by means of questions, discussion, use of resources or by mini-tests.

- Giving homework and the ways in which we correct homework.
- Students and teachers correct homework orally.
- Answering questions from past examination papers.
- Using document based questions and mini projects.
- Writing of essays.
- Students self-assessment which allows them to assess how they understand the material from the previous class and what areas they need to work at.
- Peer assessment.
- Giving written and verbal feedback to students with guidance for improvement.

Formative assessment also takes place through teachers helping students to develop skills in note taking. Methods include giving headings, the use of diagrams, brainstorming, mind-mapping, etc. Differentiated learning is promoted by using a mixture of lower order and higher order questions directed towards individuals and towards the whole class. Teachers can direct the level of the question to each individual to match that student's ability. This helps to develop a student's confidence.

Activity based learning

First and Second year students are timetabled for one double period each week for English, Irish and Maths. Students will have 2 to 3 teachers working with them for this double period. This allows teachers to implement activity-based learning effectively. Assessment as to the effectiveness of co-teaching is carried out by means of a post 8-week reflection survey of both teachers and students.

How assessment is used and by who

Teachers

Assessment is used to inform teachers how students learn best in terms of:

- determining what the students know and understand,
- ascertaining the skills that students have acquired,
- diagnosing learning problems and student needs,
- monitoring standards of achievement,
- planning how the subject material is taught,
- checking teaching objectives against learning outcomes,
- providing clear feedback to students on how they can improve their level of achievement,
- motivating teachers and learners through success in achievement.

Each teacher keeps a record of homework, test and examination results.

Each teacher reviews the achievement of students in their classes regularly and takes appropriate follow up action including modifying their planning and presentation.

Common examinations are set at all levels and in all years.

Teachers work together to ensure consistency in assessment, recording and reporting procedures.

Serious underachievement, persistent failure or continuous presentation of sub-standard work, taking the student's abilities into consideration, is brought to the attention of the Head of Year and the parents.

Appropriate action is then taken by the various interested parties.

Head of Years

A Head of Year role is pastoral, disciplinary and administrative. The academic progress and assessment results of a student are of particular interest to a Head of Year in carrying out their role for each student. They assist the implementation of this policy by the following:

- Each head of year has access to their year groups recorded tests, examination results and
- A head of year reviews the academic progress of their year group throughout the year especially at Head of Year (Student Support Team) meetings with senior management, where the opportunity to discuss a student's academic needs and requirements is afforded.
- The head of year works with teachers and senior management together, to ensure consistency in assessment, recording and reporting procedures.
- Analysis and comparison of student common test results with CAT4 test results gives indications of student attainment relevant to their individual capability.
- Serious underachievement and persistent failure is brought to the attention of the SEN dept to ascertain what interventions and support may be required and provided.

Students

- Have a clear idea of knowledge and/or skills that are being assessed.
- Are involved in assessing themselves and are encouraged to identify personal targets.
- Receive clear feedback regarding a mark or grade that has been awarded.
- Identify their individual difficulties and develop strategies to overcome these.
- Are able to see each graded assignment.
- Have access to all criteria being used in the assessment.
- Are encouraged to recognise the value of all forms of assessment.
- Will be given advance warning of any assessment for which preparation is necessary and be
- Clear about the date of the assessment.

Parents/Guardians

Support the policies of St Anne's Community College

- Participate in the learning of their children.
- Are encouraged to provide a home environment which is conducive to study.
- Should have knowledge of and support their child in their goal setting targets.
- Support student adherence to set deadlines for work.
- Help motivate their children.
- Have an active role in the review of their child's performance.
- Monitor via VS-Ware their child's/young person in their care academic progress and reports

N.B: SEN academic support and assessment conducted by the school in relation to SEN are detailed with the school's SEN Policy.