



Assessment Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Reporting
3. Assessment
 - 3.1 Inclusive Assessment
 - 3.2 Assessment for Learning & Assessment of Learning
4. The Purposes of Assessment
5. The guiding principles of reporting
6. Forms of Assessment
 - 6.1. Informal Assessment
 - 6.2. Formal Assessment
7. Reporting Descriptors for Programmes
8. The Teachers' Duty
9. Rules and Guidelines for the Students:
 - 9.1 In House Exams
 - 9.2 State Examinations
10. Glossary of Terms

Assessment and Reporting Policy

Gaelcholáiste Chomáin

1. Introduction

Teaching, assessment, learning and reporting are the four pillars that aim to contribute to the personal and educational development of our students in Gaelcholáiste Chomáin. As a school we recognise that parents, teachers and students need to have an effective learning-focused partnership to ensure the best possible outcomes can be achieved for our students.

2. Reporting

Reporting aims to support and underpin ongoing learning and assessment, and to be manageable, accessible and effective for the school, teacher, student and parent (Junior Cycle Framework, 2015).

3. Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to help the student discover 'where to go next' and help the teacher support that growth. Assessment in the widest sense is a snapshot of where a student is at a particular point in time.

In planning for effective assessment and reporting teachers in Gaelcholáiste Chomáin will use the Looking at our Schools 2016 document to support their classroom practice. This document will direct the teacher in the planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning. Subject specifications, curriculum and assessment guidelines are all key documents in the planning for assessment and reporting.

3.1 Inclusive Assessment

Inclusive assessment practices are a key feature of teaching and learning in schools. Accommodations, e.g. the support provided by a special needs assistant or the support of assistive technologies, should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student's learning throughout the year. Where a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable accommodations will be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student's performance in their assessments. Accommodations which enable all students to access learning and assessment are based on specific needs.

3.2 Assessment for Learning & Assessment of Learning:

Our policy covers both assessment of learning (summative assessment) and assessment for learning (formative assessment). Assessment of learning is assessment for accountability purposes, to determine a student's level of performance on a specific task or at the conclusion of a unit of teaching and learning. The information gained from this kind of assessment will be used in reporting. Assessment for learning, on the other hand, is a continuous process which combines a grade with

advice/feedback to the student towards further improvement. Both forms of assessment are invaluable and will be used equally by teachers in this school.

4. The Purposes of Assessment

- To evaluate what a student has learned in a particular area.
- To provide feedback to students in a timely and constructive manner.
- To provide feedback to teachers on the success of particular teaching methodologies in the learning process.
- To highlight difficulties and shortcomings in the learning process in order to develop intervention strategies.
- To identify students who require extension activities such as learning support.
- To encourage and increase the skills of self-assessment.
- To keep records of attainment that will inform parents/guardians through the school's reporting process.
- To measure the progress of students over time.
- To raise expectations and standards.
- To act as an incentive for students in the learning process.
- To help in ascertaining whether it is appropriate for a student to continue studying in any given area.
- To allow staff to plan for Teaching & Learning, and to engage in effective School Self-Evaluation.

5. The guiding principles of reporting

Effective reporting in Gaelcholáiste Chomáin

- Encourages authentic engagement with parents
- Provides opportunities for students through feedback to reflect on their learning
- Values the professional judgements of teachers
- Uses the language of learning to provide effective feedback
- Is manageable and does not take away from learning and teaching
- Clearly communicates students' progress in learning
- Provides information on a broad range of achievement
- Is sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students and take an inclusive approach. (NCCA, 2018)

Assessment Policy



6. Forms of Assessment

6.1 Informal Assessment

The most common forms of assessment used in the school are of an informal nature, and these take place regularly in the classroom. These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers who will use them constructively for learning to take place. Timely feedback and constructive advice are vital components in this process. Where appropriate, teachers will keep records of these assessments to provide an insight into a student's progress over time and to fully inform the learning process. Informal Assessment methods include:

- Worksheets & written classwork
- Questions and answers in class
- Essays & assignments
- Reading & writing in Class
- Sample exam questions
- Projects
- Oral Presentations
- Homework – written or learned
- Informal conversations with individual students about their learning and their progress
- Informal written feedback
- Student Journals
- Parent Teacher Meetings
- Student learning logs, diaries, reflections
- End of topic/term/year reports

6.2 Formal Assessment

These are some of the many types of formal assessments that take place in the school environment:

I. Monthly/End of Topic Test

These assessments may be conducted either on a monthly or end of chapter basis if it is deemed necessary by the subject teacher. These formal tests are a vital component in providing feedback to teachers, students and parents/guardians, on the level of each student's attainment and learning in that specific subject area. Constructive feedback will be given by teachers to students who take part in these tests, and the results of these tests will be used in the school's formal reporting structure where appropriate.

II. House Exams

All years 1st -6th will sit their Christmas Exams in early December and 1st, 2nd and 5th will sit their Summer Exams at the end of May. The purpose of these exams is to measure student learning and attainment in each subject area, and to give students experience in sitting formal exams similar in nature to the state exams. All house exams will follow the same operating rules as state exams. The results of these Christmas Exams and Summer Exams will be reported in the Christmas Reports and Summer Reports respectively. Continuous assessment in some subject areas leading up to these exams will also be taken into consideration in the Christmas Reports and Summer Reports. Transition Year students do sit house exams in the school. Their Christmas and summer reports, may also be based on continuous assessments in the classroom as determined by their individual subject teacher. As Transition Year is focused on experiential learning and personal development, the forms of assessment used may vary from the standard practices used in other years.

III. Mock Exams

3rd and 6th Year students will undertake Pre-Junior and Pre-Leaving Cert Mock Exams in February, each year to prepare them for their state exams in June. These mock exams are seen as being very beneficial to the students in measuring their progress in their Junior Cert and Leaving Cert years. Students will gain valuable experience in time management and answering technique through sitting these mock exams. The results of these mock exams will form the basis for the Pre-Junior Cert and Pre-Leaving Cert Reports sent out before Easter of that year. Mock results may be used in guiding students and their teachers in relation to level options for State Exams. 3rd Year and 6th Year students do not sit any formal house exams at the end of May, and do not receive a Summer Report.

IV. State Exams

3rd and 6th Year students are expected to participate - as directed by the State Exams Commission - in the many assessments that make up the Junior Cert and Leaving Cert exams. These assessments which may include orals, course work, practical work, portfolio work amongst others, will be operated in accordance with the regulations set down by the State Examinations Commission.

V. Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)

The new Junior Cycle spreads assessment across 2nd and 3rd Year of Junior Cycle, giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning away from the exam hall. The CBAs take place towards the end of second year and from November to February of Third Year. Each CBA is different, but they focus around project work, presentations and experiments. They are a form of continuous assessment. The results of CBAs will be recognised on each student's official Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). Subject teachers will explain the Classroom – Based Assessment procedures in more detail to students in class. The CBAs will allow each student to work over a period of time supported by the feedback from their teachers and others, ensuring that they can produce their best work. The CBAs are reported on using the following descriptors:

- Exceptional
- Above Expectations
- In-Line with Expectations
- Yet to meet Expectations

It is important that both teachers and parents/guardians affirm to each student that it is not only the grade that matters but also what they have learned about themselves throughout the CBA experience. In particular, they should reflect on how their project work or experiments have helped them engage with their subjects and how the feedback they have received will enable them to progress further in the future.

VI. Assessment Task

Students will complete a formal written Assessment Task to be submitted to the SEC for marking along with the final Junior Cycle examination. The Assessment Task links to the priorities of the Presentation, which offers students the opportunity to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding to different real-life settings and to develop their communication skills. The knowledge and skills developed by students during this Classroom-Based Assessment emerge from their growing awareness of the dynamics of the business environment. The Assessment Task will assess the students in aspects of their learning including:

- their ability to evaluate new knowledge or understanding that has emerged through their experience of the Presentation.
- their capacity to reflect on the skills they have developed, and to apply them to unfamiliar situations.

- their ability to reflect on how their value system has been influenced through the experience of the Presentation.

VII. Other Assessments

The school may engage in other forms of assessment from time to time.

- Cognitive Abilities Test 4 (CAT4) which is made up of a series of short reasoning tests which assess the student's reasoning abilities in key areas (First Year and Transition Year).
- New Group Reading Test (NGRT) which assesses the reading age of incoming students (First Year, Second Year and Third Year)
- New Group Spelling Test (NGST) which assesses the Spelling age of incoming students (First Year, Second Year and Third Year)
- Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT 5) which assesses reading recognition, spelling, and arithmetic computation (First Year, Second Year and Third Year)
- Drumcondra Test (Irish) is a set of standardised tests of achievement in Irish (First Year, Second Year and Third Year)
- The school's NEPS psychologist, in consultation with school management and parents/guardians, may carry out psychological assessments and other assessments on students at different times throughout the year. Classroom strategies such as differentiated assessment, team teaching, one-to-one tuition, visual aids, spelling waivers, increased time and dictionaries amongst others will be used. The psychologist from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) assigned to Gaelcholáiste Chomáin, in consultation with school management, may carry out psychological assessments and other assessments on students at different times of the year.
- Students engage in assessments for the purposes of school planning or school self-evaluation (SSE). At times, the school is invited to involve student groups in assessment for national or international studies, e.g. PISA, etc. Participation in such studies is in line with best practice and is a means, for the school, of accessing useful data that informs planning and practice.
- Online assessment may be used due to unforeseen circumstance which would involve the closure of the school.

7. Reporting Descriptors for Programmes

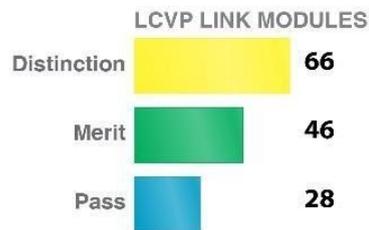
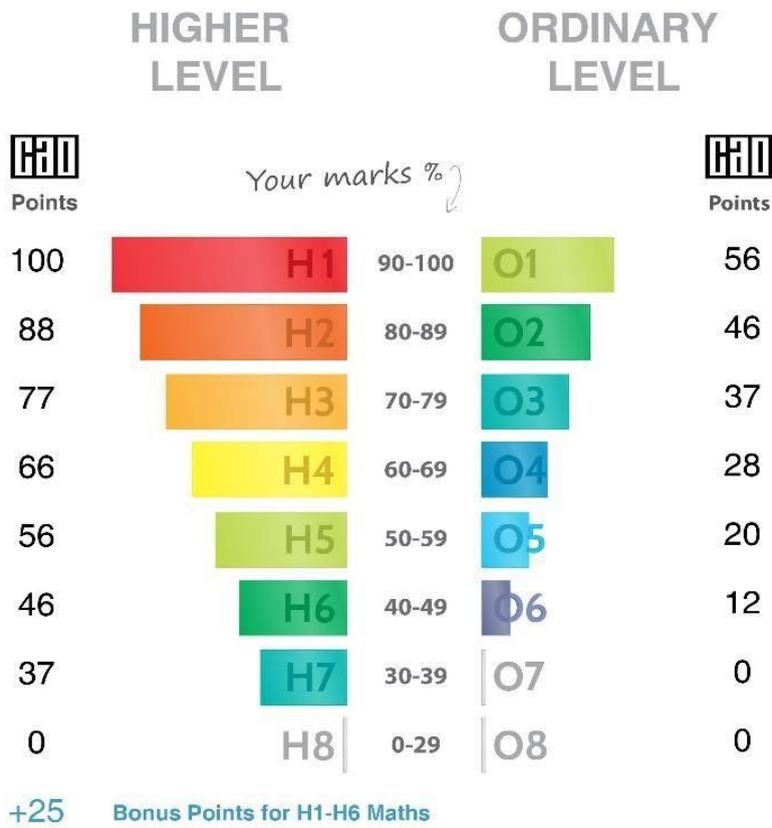
Reporting Descriptors for Junior Cycle

New Junior Cycle Subject Grade Descriptors	
Distinction	> 90 to 100
Higher Merit	> 75 and < 90
Merit	> 55 and < 75
Achieved	> 40 and < 55
Partially Achieved	> 20 and < 40
Not Graded (NG)	> 0 and < 20

Reporting Descriptors for Junior Cycle CBA's

Classroom-Based Assessment Descriptors
Exceptional
Above Expectations
In line with Expectations
Yet to Meet Expectations

Reporting Descriptors for Leaving Certificate



8. The Teachers' Duty

- In accordance with The Education Act each teacher has the duty to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents.
- Gaelcholáiste Chomáin sets out a yearly scheme for in-house examinations and this plan is made available to students and parents.
- The in-house examinations scheme is regularly discussed at staff meetings and reviewed accordingly.
- Parents are provided with written reports on their child's progress for Christmas tests, summer tests, monthly tests, and online tests, with a grade and a written statement regarding his/her progress in each subject. This grade can be based on written/oral /practical assessment.
- Along with this, assessment for learning is carried out on the students' written and oral work in each subject area on a regular ongoing basis as part of The School Self Evaluation Plan.
- Each student in 1st /2nd/3rd year are given a standardised examination to do at the beginning of the school year in order to identify any learning difficulties and develop an individual educational plan for any such student. [See Special Education needs Policy]

9. Rules and Guidelines for the Students

It is important that students comply with the rules and guidelines laid down herewith in order to ensure good order in the running of examinations so as to help students achieve their academic potential; not alone in state exams but in- house exams also.

9.1 In-House Examinations:

The students are expected to accept and comply with the following rules during in-house examinations.

1. Students must be on time and organised for every exam.
2. Food and drink are not allowed in the examination rooms.
3. School bags are not allowed in the examination rooms.
4. Students will not be allowed to go to the toilet during the exam, except in the case of a medical complaint, which will be confirmed by a medical certificate.
5. If a student is found speaking during the exam the supervising teacher will make a note of it on the student's exam paper and the subject teacher will deduct 5% from that student's result.
6. First Year students will be permitted to use an Irish/English dictionary in exams (exception language subjects).
7. Students coming from English primary schools will be allowed the use of Irish/English dictionaries in first and second year if they so wish (exception language subjects).
8. If a student is absent for an exam the parents are expected to inform the school and the student will have to sit the exam at another suitable time for the school/ student.
9. Reports will be posted home, or sent by email.
10. Parents are advised to discuss this report in detail with their child each time.

12. Students in 3/4/5/6 year are given the option to attend the parent/teacher meeting with their parents to discuss their report and progress.

9.2 State Examination Rules:

The students are expected to accept and comply with the following rules during state examinations.

1. Students will take all their examinations through Irish except in the case of English.
2. School uniform must be worn every day during the examination period. (Junior Certificate).
3. Students walking or cycling to school are advised to wear a rain jacket in the event of getting wet.
4. It is strongly recommended that students remain in the exam centre until the exam is over, to ensure all students try their best.
5. Students may not leave the school during the examinations without written permission from a parent. (Under 18 years).
6. The school cannot provide supervision during the state examinations. It is expected that students display good and responsible behaviour and if a student leaves the school grounds the responsibility will lie with the parents/ guardians.
7. Students must attend school half an hour before their first exam and then fifteen minutes before any exams thereafter.
8. A note from the parents with the student's name and exam number is required for a change in subject level e.g. from higher level to ordinary level. (Junior Certificate).
9. Students should use their exam number on all documentation relating to the exams, rather than their name.
10. Students are not allowed to bring any books /notes/dictionaries /mobile phone /paper into the examination centre with them.
11. Students may not communicate with one another during exams. They should put up their hand to request assistance from the superintendent if necessary.
12. It is expected that each student be well prepared for the exams with pens, pencils, colouring pencils, an eraser, a ruler, a highlighter, a calculator and a maths set.
13. Sharing materials will not be allowed.
14. It is forbidden to submit money or any other extra material with the examination paper.
15. The State Examination Policy is explained to the students prior to sitting the state examinations.
16. Rules and regulations issued by the State Examinations Commission annually must also be adhered to by all students.

10. Glossary of Terms

Assessment	Assessment is the process of generating, gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting evidence of learning in individuals, groups or systems. Educational assessment provides information about progress in learning, and achievement in developing skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes.
Assessment Task	The Assessment Task is a written task completed by students during class time, and is sent to the State Examinations Commission for marking. The Assessment Task is specified by the NCCA and is related to the learning outcomes of the second Classroom-Based Assessment. The Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessments and Assessment Task for each subject will provide all the necessary details and they are also available in the Assessment Toolkit.
Assessment Method	This is a term that encompasses the various strategies and techniques that can be used to collect information from students about their progress towards attaining the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be learned. The assessment method chosen should allow for the generation of evidence and provision of timely feedback in order to make appropriate instructional decisions and improve student learning.
Blended Learning	This refers to the practice of using both online and real-time learning experiences when teaching students. This combination of content delivery allows for both methods to support and complement each other and personalise the learning process. This can also be referred to as 'hybrid learning' or 'mixed mode learning'.
Classroom Based Assessment CBA	Classroom-Based Assessments in subjects and short courses provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and skills in ways not possible in a formal examination. Classroom-Based Assessments, facilitated by the classroom teacher, are undertaken by students in a defined time period, within class contact time and to a national timetable. (Click 'subjects' on the left for further subject specific information).

Assessment Policy

Diagnostic Assessment	This is a type of assessment that is intended to diagnose the strengths and/or areas of need in students prior to a learning activity. It allows for the identification and provision of the appropriate interventions and pedagogical approaches necessary to scaffold the learning to meet the individual learning needs of students.
Differentiated Instruction	Differentiated instruction refers to the wide range of strategies, techniques and approaches that are used to support student learning and help every student to achieve and to realise his or her potential.
Examples of student work	Annotated samples of authentic student work are published online to illustrate levels of achievement in relation to features of quality. They are developed so that teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders can familiarise themselves with achievement levels.

Expectations for Learners/Students	An umbrella term that links learning outcomes with annotated examples of student work and demonstrates the extent to which the learning outcomes are being realised.
Features of Quality	Features of quality are the statements in the short course/subject specifications that support teachers in making judgements about the quality of student work for the purpose of awarding achievement grades for certification. As success criteria are closely linked to learning intentions and based on the day-to-day processes in the classroom, student learning will gradually come to reflect the requirements set out in the features of quality which are used for assessment and reporting purposes.
Formative Assessment	Assessment is formative when either formal or informal procedures are used to gather evidence of learning during the learning process, and used to adapt teaching to meet student needs. The process permits teachers and students to collect information about student progress and to suggest adjustments to the teacher's approach to instruction and the student's approach to learning. Assessment for learning covers all aspects of formative assessment but has a particular focus on the student having an active role in his/her learning.
Individual Education Plans	Plans developed in schools which detail the teaching and learning approaches intended to address the distinct learning needs, interests and aspirations of individual students.

Assessment Policy

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement	The JCPA is the award that students will receive at the end of their junior cycle. The award will reward achievement across all areas of learning and assessment including ongoing, formative assessment; Classroom-Based Assessments; and SEC grades, which include results from the final examinations and the Assessment Tasks.
Learning Intention	A learning intention for a lesson or series of lessons is a statement, created by the teacher, which describes clearly what the teacher wants the students to know, understand and be able to do as a result of the learning and teaching activities.
Learning Outcome	Learning outcomes are statements in curriculum specifications to describe the knowledge, understanding, skills and values students should be able to demonstrate after a period of learning.
Moderation	Moderation is a collaborative process that enables teachers to reach consistency in their judgements of student work against agreed success criteria or features of quality. The moderation process involves teachers discussing the qualities demonstrated in examples of student work to reach agreement about the standard of that work.
Ongoing Assessment	As part of their classroom work, students engage in assessment activities that can be either formative or summative in nature. Teachers assess as part of their daily practice by observing and listening as students carry out tasks, by looking at what they write and make, and by considering how they respond to, frame and ask questions. Teachers use this assessment information to help students plan the next steps in their learning. Periodically, this assessment will be in more structured, formalised settings where teachers will need to obtain a snapshot of the students' progress in order to make decisions on future planning and to report on progress. This may involve the students in doing projects, investigations, case studies and/or tests and may occur at defined points in the school calendar.
Peer Assessment	Peer assessment is the assessment of the work of others of equal status. In the context of student learning, peer assessment is used by students to estimate the worth of other students' work with reference to specific and agreed criteria.
Reliability	This is the extent to which the assessment would give the same result if repeated. Reliability in assessment means that high quality evidence and information is provided on student performance and is comparable (i.e. it stands up when compared to judgements across learners, departments and schools).

Assessment Policy

Reporting	The communication of information on the results of assessment of student achievement.
Self-Assessment	Self-assessment is the involvement of students in making judgements about their own work, based on features of quality. It is a measure of the extent to which their own work has met these features of quality.
Specification	A subject or short course specification details the intended learning outcomes, and how they can be achieved and demonstrated. The specification outlines how the learning in any subject or short course is linked to particular statements of learning and key skills.
Standardised Test	This is a test that is given in a consistent way to all the test takers and uses uniform procedures for administration and scoring. This term is primarily associated with large-scale tests administered to sizeable populations of students, and allows for comparison of relative performance of individual students or groups of students. These tests will provide an additional indicator of student progress and are devised to supplement and not replace the teacher's professional judgement.
Subject Learning Assessment and Review (SLAR) Meeting	Following the completion of a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers will engage in review meetings, where they will share and discuss samples of their assessments of student work and build common understanding about the quality of student learning.
Success Criteria	Success criteria are linked to learning intentions. They are developed by the teacher and/or the student and describe what success looks like. They help the teacher and student to make judgements about the quality of student learning.
Summative Assessment	Assessment is summative when it is used to evaluate student learning at the end of the instructional process or of a period of learning. The purpose is to summarise the students' achievements and to determine whether and to what degree the students have demonstrated understanding of that learning by comparing it against agreed success criteria or features of quality.
Validity	This is the degree to which an assessment instrument accurately measures what it was designed to measure.

Adopted by the BOM of Gaelcholáiste Chomáin on the 11/02/2021