

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES
at Abbotsford Christian Secondary School
2007-08

As a result of our ongoing discussions about the nature of grading and assessment as well as a desire to constantly improve our educational practices, we are adopting the following guidelines for assessment and grading of student learning. The guidelines reflect a move towards “Standards-based Assessment” which seeks to improve student learning through assessment. It also increases the reliability of our assessment of student learning, and results in grades having greater validity.

In order for teachers to become more familiar with the concept of standards-based assessment, we are sending a contingent of teachers to the “Sound Grading Practices” conference in Portland, Oregon next fall. If you are interested in attending, you should talk to Trent or Rob.

Standards-based assessment requires the teacher to reliably evaluate the student’s mastery of clearly stated learning outcomes or “standards”. These standards are clearly described to the students and they are reviewed so that students know what it is they are required to learn. They are also shown examples of what mastery of these standards looks like. Teachers will need to identify the learning standards and communicate them to students in course outlines.

ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

1. **Grading should include only student achievement in mastering the stated learning standards.** Behaviour should not be reflected in a student’s grade.
2. **Late work should be treated as a behavioural (or discipline) issue.** Consider options for getting late work in but don’t reduce the student’s mark for late work.
3. **Use incompletes (“I”) for missing or unfinished work.** Don’t give zeroes since this implies no learning has occurred. Consider ways to ensure that work is completed.
4. **Consider how high achievement will be evaluated.** Refrain from giving extra marks for extra work or “bonus” work.
5. **Impress on students that academic dishonesty will be treated as a discipline issue.** Don’t reduce marks on assignments on which cheating has occurred.
6. **Use only individual evidence when grading students.** Don’t include group scores.
7. **Distinguish between formative (typically homework) and summative assessment.** Although formative assessment is important and should continue, use only summative assessment for grading.
8. **Try to emphasize recent achievement in final grading for each unit.**

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In addition to the above, there are practices that need to be developed over time. These may be different for various subject areas and will likely have to be developed within departments. These include:

- The development of policies regarding the importance of effort and participation in grading.
- Developing ways (such as peer evaluation) to include students in the assessment process.
- Changing grade books to reflect standards rather than assessment types.
- Developing written standards for units. These should reflect new developments in the areas of differentiated learning and “curriculum by design” (essential questions).
- Development of course outlines (the information that is sent home) that more accurately reflect the new assessment practices. These are not to be confused with the detailed course overviews that were prepared several years ago. These outlines will have to be developed for distribution next September.
- Move toward modification of our report card format to reflect changes in curriculum design and assessment.