



هيئة الشارقة للتعليم الخاص  
SHARJAH PRIVATE EDUCATION AUTHORITY

# Guidelines

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT IN A DISTANCE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

APRIL 2020



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## Part 1: General Assessment Guidelines

### Mandatory requirement:

Sharjah private schools are expected to develop and implement a policy for student assessment that is compatible with the SPEA Policy on Distance Learning Circular (13) 2020 (SPEA-6.1-01.0) dated March 17, 2020.

#### 1) Links to existing student assessment policy in schools

- Sharjah private schools will build upon their existing student assessment policy but they will adapt, as necessary, to the unique demands of distance learning.
- Distance learning should meet the same assessment and evaluation standards as courses taught in traditional classrooms. Assessment instruments may be even more diverse, but they should still be robust. For example, schools should review their core practices and systems to ensure assessment, evaluation and reporting of student progress are valid and reliable in the distance learning environment. Teachers should use practices that:
  - Are fair, transparent and equitable to all students.
  - support all students, including those with special education needs.
  - are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning objectives and, as much as possible, to the interests, learning styles and preferences, needs, and experiences of all students.
  - are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the distance learning period.
  - are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning.
  - provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement.
  - develop students' self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning.
- Student assessment policy and guidelines should be consistent with the schools' attempts to address their KAFI's (Key Areas for Improvement) and/or their latest school improvement plan.

#### 2) Development of student assessment policy for distance learning

- Policy development should consider best practice, contemporary research and case studies from recent international experience where other schools have developed expertise in the online environment.
- The policy should consider:
  - clear instructions on how students will submit work online.
  - assignments that are a mix of individual and collaborative learning. If the teacher is working directly with groups of students on their work, the teacher is able to monitor what the students are doing and check their understanding.
  - questions and inquiry-based learning that requires students to embed their personal experience into any assessed content. Therefore, it is expected that the curriculum will be contextualized for assessment purposes.





- the use of plagiarism checkers whenever students have to submit individual work. Most plagiarism checkers can accept drafts of assignments to check against final submissions.
- multimedia assignments that require students to remix pictures, videos and text into their own creations.
- libraries and pathfinders for older students to use as part of assignments, then ask students to quote from them as part of their work. These check how well they are able to reference and cite work as well as reduce opportunities for copying the work of others.
- interviewing students about their work using a synchronous chat with audio or video feeds, if possible. It is much more difficult to produce spontaneous answers when talking online.
- using a Learning Management System to check login time, collaboration data, and submission types to see how often and how long students are involved with assignments. Very short assignment-involvement times may indicate students are submitting unauthenticated work.
- the variety and robustness of tools within the learning management system – they may include chats, threaded discussions, blogs, whiteboards, quizzes, student tracking tools, and teacher feedback tools.
- provisions for teacher moderation of distance learning assessment; including allowing teachers to modify the course content to meet their students' needs.

### 3) Evidence of student achievement

- Evidence should be collected over time from different sources – observations, conversations, and student products. Using multiple sources of evidence increases the reliability and validity of the evaluation of student learning.
- Student products will predominantly be in the form of tests or exams, and/or assignments, but may also include other forms such as electronic portfolios, self-assessment, etc.
- Assignments may include rich performance tasks, demonstrations, projects, and/or essays. To ensure equity for all students, assignments and tests or exams are to be completed, whenever possible, under the supervision of a teacher.

### 4) Cheating / Plagiarism

- Schools should include guidelines about prevention of cheating and plagiarizing; detection of incidents of cheating and plagiarizing; and consequences for students who cheat or plagiarize.

### 5) Late or missed assignments

- As above, guidelines would include expectations and consequences, keeping in mind cultural sensitivities. For instance, guidelines should:
  - describe how schools will inform students and their parents about the importance of submitting assignments for assessment when they are due, and about the





consequences for students who submit assignments late or fail to submit assignments.

- recognize that procedures should be designed to motivate and facilitate completion of work and, where appropriate, allow for additional and/or alternative opportunities to do so.
- recognize that it is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to monitor deadlines for the submission of assignments and clearly communicate those deadlines to students and, where appropriate, to parents.

## 6) Formative versus summative assessment

We acknowledge that schools already have systems in place to provide formative and summative student assessment. The following principles provide guidance for schools:

- **Formative assessments** (*assessment for learning, assessment as learning*) should encourage students to use online resources.
  - For the best results, teachers should work together to interrogate the curriculum and use their professional expertise and knowledge of their students to outline a learning continuum.
  - It's important to check in with students during online lessons to make sure they understand the content being taught. This can help a teacher focus attention on students who need extra help and support.
  - With technology tools, teachers can use their time efficiently and strategically, making it easier to differentiate learning and meet the needs of all of their students.
  - Formative assessments in an online world should be embedded *during* the lesson.
  - Project-based or problem-based learning with a focus on practical, hands-on learning ought to be encouraged - particularly for younger students.
  - Where assignments are submitted online, schools should consider safeguards around online privacy and confidentiality.
- **Summative Assessment** (*assessment of learning*) should be aligned to learning/achievement objectives from your curriculum – particularly if it is formally assessed and graded. Typically, a summative assessment is administered *at the end* of an e-Learning lesson, unit, or assignment; and it provides learners with a final grade. Examples of summative assessments in an online world could include:
  - Online multiple-choice exams. Students must choose from a specific set of answers. Written responses are not necessarily required.
  - Online Presentations. Learners create an online presentation that delves into a particular topic, which they must then share with their peers or in a public forum. The online presentation shows their mastery of the subject and determines whether they have learned the key concepts and ideas.
  - Creating a website or blog. This is a modern twist on online presentation assessments, wherein learners are asked to create a site or blog that covers all aspects of the topic in question. They must put the information they find using their own words and create a design for the site, which also tests their communication and technology skills.





- Learners' online portfolios. Throughout the eLearning course, learners are asked to place important online assignments and eLearning activities into an online portfolio, which is then assessed at the end of the term by the facilitator of the eLearning course. They can also create an online portfolio comprised entirely of new work that is used to determine their final grade.
- Online group projects. Learners work with their peers to complete an online group project that showcases their comprehension and skill mastery. For example, they might create a slideshow that highlights the key takeaways from the eLearning course.

**Note:** Every learner is unique. They each have different learning needs and require different learning materials and eLearning activities to absorb information effectively. This is why it's essential to offer them a variety of assessment types when creating your e-Learning assessment strategy. Some learners may need more interactive assessments, such as scenarios or simulations, to effectively gauge their proficiency, while others may not have the language or communication skills required for an essay-based exam. If possible, include a good mix of summative assessments to cater for the range of learning styles at home and during such times when many students may not have the same access to the same technology. Remember though, it is formative assessment that provides learners with the feedback they require to improve their learning.

#### 7) Inclusion

- it is recommended that schools include assessment of students with special needs and disabilities (people of determination), as well as those who are gifted and talented, in their distance learning assessment policy.
- clear assessment and tracking of uptake + completion of assigned tasks should apply to students with special needs as well as those who are gifted and talented.

## Part 2: External Assessment and Internal Assessment

### 1) External Assessment

In light of the rapidly evolving situation of COVID-19, most of the Exam Boards have cancelled their external exams. SPEA is closely coordinating with these boards to keep schools, students and parents updated with the latest decisions.

Below is a list of cancelled external international examinations, as officially announced by Exam Boards. The list is broken down by curriculum type and is listed in alphabetical order as follows:

- **American and SABIS Curriculum College (US) Exam Board:**
  - SAT and ACT (Affected grades: 11 - 12), and AP (Affected grades: 10 - 12) - Note: AP students are given the option of taking the exam online, as per the information provided on this page.





- **British Curriculum:**
  - The following international exams have the same affected grades 10 - 13  
Cambridge International Exam Board: IGCSE, O-Level, International AS & A- Level, AICE Diploma and Pre
- **Oxford AQA Exam Board:**
  - International GCSE and A-level Indian Curriculum
- **Pearson (EdEXcel) Exam Board:**
  - GCSE, A Level, iPrimary, iLower Secondary, International GCSE and A-Level
- **The following international exams have the same affected grades:**
  - 10 - 12 **CBSE** Exam Board: Class 10 (X) and Class 12 (XII) board examinations
  - **Kerala** Exam Board: Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) and Higher secondary exams
  - **International Baccalaureate (IB)** Curriculum IB Exam Board: Diploma Programme and Career-related Programme (Affected grades: 12)
- **Pakistani Curriculum** Federal (Pakistan) Exam Board: SSC and HSSC (Affected grades: 10-12)

## 2) Internal Assessment

In regard to Internal Assessment, the following should be read in conjunction with the previously shared information (SPEA Circular dated 13<sup>th</sup> October 2019):

Curriculum المنهاج	Recommended assessment tests الاختبارات الموصى بها	Targeted grades الفصول المستهدفة
<b>UK curriculum schools</b> المدارس التي تتبع المنهاج البريطاني	▪ GL (PTE, PTS and PTM)	Grades 3,5,7 and 9 (Years 4,6,8 and 10)
<b>Update</b> <i>Tests due to take place in April/May has been moved to the new 2020-21 academic year. The PT tests will be moved to the first term of the 2020/21 academic year (dates to be confirmed). The cohorts will be tested using the same levels that would have been used in the summer so that progress can be analysed. This data will provide a useful benchmark to support teaching and learning along with CAT4 data, and will be essential to inform schools' teaching strategies for the 2020 - 21 academic year. The data will also be used as a starting point to measure future progress.</i>		
<b>US curriculum schools</b> المدارس التي تتبع المنهاج الأمريكي <b>IB curriculum schools</b> المدارس التي تتبع منهاج البكالوريا الدولية فقط <b>SABIS curriculum schools</b> المدارس التي تتبع منهاج سابيس	▪ MAP (normally three times/year)	Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9
<b>Update</b> <i>All MAP testing for Term 3 is cancelled.</i>		
<b>Indian curriculum schools (CBSE, CISCE, KSB)</b> المدارس التي تتبع المنهاج الهندي <b>Others: Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Philippine</b> المدارس التي تتبع المناهج الاخرى : الباكستاني، البنغلاديشي، الفلبيني	▪ ASSET	Grades 3, 4 ,5, 6, 7, 8 and 9
<b>Not affected as this is the start of a new school year.</b>		





<b>MoE curriculum schools</b> المدارس التي تتبع المنهاج الوزاري	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>IBT Arabic language</li><li>IBT Mathematics and Science (in Arabic)</li></ul>	Grades 4,5,6,7,8 and 9
<b><u>Update</u></b> <i>Private schools that are following the MoE curriculum must comply with the assessment policies and guidelines from the MoE.</i>		
<b>Australian curriculum schools</b> المدارس التي تتبع المنهاج الأسترالي	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ACER PAT tests in Science, Maths and English</li></ul>	Grades 3-9
<i>Not affected as the two Australian Schools are able to carry out PATs whenever they wish.</i>		
<b>CAT 4</b>	Online	From September 2020
<i>Not affected as CAT4 is not mandatory for every year and CAT4 test dates commence in September.</i>		
<b>IBT</b>	Online/paper	November 2020
<i>Not affected as IBT test dates commence in November 2020</i>		

#### Please Note:

Literacy is a leading indicator of academic performance in schools, so GL Education is offering **free administrations of the New Group Reading Test (NGRT) to students in the UAE who would normally be participating in Progress Series Testing at this time.** This adaptive literacy test will provide a measure of students' reading and comprehension skills as well as guidance for teaching and learning that can be shared with parents to support students at home.

The NGRT reports will provide valuable insight when normal classroom evaluation is difficult to achieve, to ensure academic performance is not hindered and students receive the most appropriate support to meet their learning needs:

- Instant data including student's reading age.
- Combination reports with CAT4 to identify lower (or higher) than expected reading performance.
- Helps parental engagement with literacy strategies to support students at home.

Testing will take place during the first week in May, allowing schools to make use of the data for the majority of the third term. To help schools in understanding the reports, a series of webinars and data consultations will be available to support all participating schools and guidance for home testing will be sent to schools in advance.

These free credits for NGRT are available for schools that have registered students for PT Testing in September by the 30th April.

To find out more or to sign up for this offer, contact GL Education at [international@gl-education.com](mailto:international@gl-education.com).





## Other Contacts

Company	Name	Email	Phone
GL for (CAT 4 and GL tests)	James Neill	<a href="mailto:James.Neill@gl-assessment.co.uk">James.Neill@gl-assessment.co.uk</a>	T: +44 (0) 208 996 3367 M: +44 (0) 774 124 8760
NWEA for (MAP test)	Jorge Navarro	<a href="mailto:Jorge.navarro@nwea.org">Jorge.navarro@nwea.org</a>	Office: 415-690-5062 Skype: Jorge.navarroNWEA
ACER for (IBT test)	Alan Egbert	<a href="mailto:Alan.Egbert@acer.edu.au">Alan.Egbert@acer.edu.au</a>	
ASSET for (ASSET test)	Savitri Sreevalsan	<a href="mailto:savitri@sageuae.com">savitri@sageuae.com</a>	T: 04 239 2977 M: 056 674 4513





## Part 3: Specific Assessment Guidelines

### Assessment Options for Schools

Internal moderation is essential to quality assure the assessment grading within schools. Where possible, teachers within the same grade or subject should share their assessment practices to calibrate and provide a fair and reliable assessment.

SPEA respects the autonomy of all private schools to make assessment and reporting decisions that take into consideration curriculum, external exam board requirements and the context within the school. All schools must have assessment options for each of the core subjects. Following is a range of options within each of the scenarios:

- Scenario A: Term 3 assessments for non-Asian curriculum Schools
- Scenario B: Final grades for non-Asian curriculum Schools
- Scenario C: Term 1 assessments for Asian curriculum schools

#### **Scenario A: Assessment of students *throughout* Term 3 (Academic Year 2019/20) for non-Asian curriculum schools**

**Option 1:** Schools continue with their existing assessment practices, adapted to fit distance learning.

**Option 2:** Numeric Grades: Schools adjust their expectations and use a balanced model during distance learning with 50% towards participation and engagement, and 50% towards progress and attainment.

Component	Description	Suggested weighting
Student engagement	The number of activities completed and submitted on time out of the number expected	50%
Progress and Attainment	Demonstrated task success on assigned and assessable formative and summative tasks.	50%

**Option 3:** School can follow variations of Option 2.

#### **Scenario B: Final assessment or grades for students for the Academic Year 2019/20 for non-Asian curriculum schools**

For students in schools that follow an external board exam, schools should work directly with these boards to ensure compliance with their assessment guidelines. SPEA expects that all these boards will provide advice for schools to follow to arrive at the end of year final assessment.

For students in grades where an external board does not mandate the final assessment, there are two options for schools to consider.

**Option 1:** Schools continue with their existing assessment practices.

**Option 2:** Schools consider the reliable student assessment data in Terms 1 and 2 as 70% of the final Academic Year 2019/2020 result, and 30% from formative and summative





assessments conducted during Term 3. For schools that are not assessing the non-core subjects in Term 3, schools can consider the result from Terms 1 and 2 as the final assessment.

For the final assessment or grades, schools must provide a numeric grade.

### **Scenario C: Assessment of students *throughout* Term 1 (Academic Year 2020/21) for Asian curriculum schools**

**Option 1:** Schools continue with their existing assessment practices which typically make up 40% of the final academic year assessment.

**Option 2:** Numeric Grades: Schools adjust their expectations and use a balanced model during distance learning with 50% towards participation and engagement, and 50% towards progress and attainment.

Component	Description	Suggested weighting
Participation and engagement	The number of activities completed and submitted on time out of the number of expected	50%
Progress and Attainment	Demonstrated task success on assigned and assessable formative and summative tasks.	50%

**Option 3:** School can follow variations of Option 2





## Part 4: Distance Learning Examples

Assessment Type	Explanation	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Type of Assessment	Example Tools
Questioning, Discussion Threads, Comments	<b>Questioning students during an activity</b> During a lesson, teachers can pause to send a comprehension question to students. This provides a window into student thinking, when there is still time in a lesson to intervene.	❖		Formative	<b>Examples</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chat Tools</li> <li>• Mentimeter</li> <li>• QR Codes</li> <li>• Google Forms (Google Forms Checklist)</li> <li>• One Note</li> <li>• Within the e-learning system or LMS e.g. See-Saw</li> <li>• Mobile device</li> </ul>
	<b>Embedded questions</b> e.g. When you hear the word biodiversity, what does this bring to mind? What does it mean?	❖	❖	Predominantly formative	
	<b>Questioning at the end of the lesson/unit/topic</b> Questions be answered in students own time, but still within a timeframe	❖	❖	Predominantly formative	
	<b>Matching Questions</b> Similar to multiple choice questions in quizzes, matching questions offer students a bank of words or phrases from which to choose their answers. When using matching questions, teachers provide text and/or images and ask students to pick an option from column A, and the corresponding matching option in column B.	❖	❖	Formative and Summative	
	<b>Discussion Threads</b> Students can post a question, or response to a prompt, on a discussion thread.	❖	❖	Predominantly formative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chalk-Up</li> <li>• Within the e-learning system or LMS e.g. See-Saw</li> <li>• Kinteract</li> </ul>
	<b>Comments</b> Annotated comments giving feedback on progress and achievement.	❖	❖	Formative	





<p><b>Polls</b></p>	<p>Teachers can check for understanding, gauge student interest, or form groups based on poll responses. Conducting a student poll is a great way for students to answer questions truthfully and anonymously, and to see, in real time, how they stack up to the rest of the class. Many LMS's have a built-in poll feature, which calculates and displays results in real-time. Polls are made especially powerful when paired with a forum post or live quiz. Students may be polled first, and asked to explain why they voted in the way they did in a forum post.</p>	❖	❖	Formative and Summative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kahoots</li> <li>• Mentimeter</li> <li>• Clickers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment Rubrics</b></p>	<p>Assessment rubrics are great for all types of work – predominantly assignment work, Problem and Project-based learning and all types of inquiry. The rubrics are simple to create and translate to the grade in the grade- book within the LMS directly so students can see their feedback and teacher comments. Rubrics are easy to align to curriculum standards.</p>	❖	❖	Formative and Summative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rubistar</li> <li>• The schools LMS or e-learning system (SeeSaw, Schoology, Google Classroom, etc)</li> <li>• Google Forms</li> </ul>
<p><b>Note-taking</b></p>	<p>Research, video, student/teacher comments and lecture.</p>	❖	❖	Formative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word</li> <li>• OneNote</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mini-Tests and Quizzes</b></p>	<p>Automated or manually generated using online tools. Quizzes are very popular as both a formative and summative assessment tool. Such tools can auto grade and utilise adaptive questioning and assessment techniques to match student learning needs.</p>	❖	❖	Formative and Summative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frogplay</li> <li>• Google Classrom</li> <li>• Quizslides</li> <li>• Quizziz</li> <li>• Socrative</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pre/Post testing</b></p>	<p>A very simple and powerful way of assessing pre and post learning. Commonly used in Maths.</p>	❖	❖	Formative and Summative	





<p><b>E-learning portfolios</b></p>	<p>An e-portfolio is an electronic format for learners to record their work, their achievements and goals, to reflect on their learning, and to share and be supported in this. It enables learners to represent the information in different formats and to take the information with them between schools</p> <p><b>Assessment of learning</b> e-Portfolios can be a digital platform for information collected throughout a designated time period that can be used as summative assessment</p> <p><b>Assessment for learning</b> e-Portfolios offer functionality for instant and formative feedback on learning activities, informing the direction of learning for both teacher and learner.</p> <p><b>Assessment as learning</b> A learner can use an e-portfolio for personal reflection, to help them to become aware of their own learning habits and identify strategies to assist with their learning needs.</p>	❖	❖	<p>See 'Explanation' column</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class Dojo</li> <li>• SeeSaw</li> <li>• Edmodo</li> <li>• Schoology</li> <li>• Tapestry</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gradebook</b></p>	<p>Many LMS have a gradebook feature which can be set-up according to the school's specific grading scale and preferences. It is possible to have this open to parents for viewing constantly, periodically, or never.</p>	❖	❖	<p>Captures Formative and Summative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paradigm</li> <li>• Office365</li> <li>• Google Classroom</li> <li>• Onenote</li> </ul>
<p><b>Self-assessment</b></p>	<p>Teachers can provide students with a self-assessment template or rubric. This is a great way to have students reflect on their learning. That can use rating scales and self-assessment scores.</p>	❖	❖	<p>Formative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SeeSaw</li> <li>• Popplet</li> </ul>
<p><b>Peer Observation and Review</b></p>	<p>Peer evaluation and review allows students to anonymously review and edit each other's work. Third-party platforms, such as TurnItIn and PeerMark facilitate distribution</p>	❖	❖	<p>Formative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TurnItIn</li> <li>• PeerMark</li> </ul>



	and the collection of data using rubrics or prescribed assessment questions. Teachers are able to log in and track individual participation in the activity, as well as monitor comments or peer evaluation feedback.				
<b>Individual and Small Group Assignment</b>	Student collaborative assignments and tasks.	❖	❖	Formative and Summative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The schools LMS or e-learning system</li> <li>• SeeSaw</li> <li>• Schoology</li> <li>• Google Classroom</li> </ul>
<b>Task-based simulations</b>	Test practical and experiential knowledge Online learners must use all of their resources and skills to complete the task in a safe virtual environment.	❖	❖	Formative and Summative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The schools LMS or e-learning system</li> </ul>
<b>Cloze Activities</b>	Ideal as a short-answer assessment tool. This type of assessment may take the form of a quiz. The most common type is 'fill in the blank'.	❖	❖	Predominantly formative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn Click</li> <li>• Gap Fill Gamble</li> </ul>
<b>Exit Cards</b>	Exit cards, also called "minute papers" are question-and-answer style tasks that students must complete in the final 5 or 10 minutes of a class. Though they may contain questions similar to those covered in the quiz and fill-in-the-blank sections above, they are most useful when students are asked to exercise critical thinking ability in a short answer response. Exit cards are quick to assess, as they contain only a few sentences at most, but they can help the teacher gauge student understanding of learning targets in a short amount of time.	❖	❖	Predominantly formative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google Forms</li> <li>• Plickers</li> <li>• Socrative</li> <li>• Poll Everywhere</li> <li>• Geddit</li> <li>• Padlet</li> </ul>

