Assessment Policy

TERENURE COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

Terenure College is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship of the Irish Province of Carmelites. Terenure College, rooted in the Carmelite tradition, places a strong emphasis on academic excellence, personal growth and student wellbeing. This policy, devised and agreed as part of a consultative process between the Board of Management, Senior Management, Parents, Students and Staff of Terenure College is designed to reflect these values.

DEFINITION OF 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.[1]

RELATIONSHIP TO THE SCHOOL'S MISSION STATEMENT

Amongst the core values outlined in the school's Mission Statement is the emphasis on 'the intellectual formation of our pupils through the provision of a curriculum to the highest academic standards, mindful of the diverse God-given abilities and talents'. Following from this the curriculum delivered at Terenure College 'is designed to prepare for the Department of Education and Skills examinations as well as to fulfil their personal needs. It is wide-ranging, balanced and relevant to the context in which the pupils live'. Therefore assessment practices at Terenure College strive to help all students to reach their full potential.

RATIONALE

Assessment is a central element of the teaching and learning process as it provides valuable information to the student, the teacher and parents/guardians. It facilitates students' awareness of what they are aiming to achieve, provides affirmation on what they have achieved and guidance on how they can improve. Assessment should have a positive impact on students' attitudes to learning, motivation and self-esteem. Assessment provides teachers valuable insight into student' progress and achievement. It facilitates teachers in making evidence-based decisions about the teaching and learning process and in planning how future learning can be supported most effectively. Assessment provides parents / guardians with valuable information about their child's achievement and progress allowing them to support and encourage their child's learning. This policy aims to create an environment where students can thrive academically while being fully supported in their overall development. Our assessment

[1] https://ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/glossary/

practices are grounded in fairness, ensuring that all students are provided with the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

CORE PRINCIPLES

This assessment policy is guided by the following principles:

- Fairness: Assessments are designed to be equitable, with clear criteria provided to students in advance.
- Student Responsibility: Assessments encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and progress.
- Inclusivity: The policy ensures that all students, including those with additional educational needs (AEN), are given the support they require to succeed.
- Growth and Improvement: The policy encourage continuous improvement in both student performance and teaching strategies.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide a clear and consistent framework for assessing student learning and progress.
- To support students in achieving their academic goals through regular feedback and monitoring.
- To encourage continuous reflection and improvement in practices.

TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AT TERENURE COLLEGE

Assessment encompasses the various methods and techniques that can be used to collect information from students about their progress towards attaining the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be learned. Terenure College uses a range of assessment methods to provide a comprehensive evaluation of student learning and progress. These assessments are designed support students in achieving their best.

- **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.[2]

  Summative assessment at Terenure College is conducted by the following methods:

  - Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Exams
  - Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Project Based Assessments

[2] Assessment in Post- Primary Schools (NCCA). Available at: https://sites.google.com/pdst.ie/post-primary-context/teaching-learning/assessment

- Winter, Spring and Summer House Exams (see Appendix A)
- Transition Year Project Based Assessments (e.g Future Science)
- Mock Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Exams (see Appendix A)
- Oral and Aural Language Assessments
- Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) for Junior Cycle (see Appendix B)
- Psychometric Tests
- Class based, end-of-unit assessments i.e. class tests, projects and presentations
- Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement

- **FORMATIVE**

  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 of the aspects of formative assessment but has a particular focus on the student having an active role in his/her learning.[3]

  Formative assessment is conducted by a wide variety of methods, selected by the individual teacher and/or subject faculties cognisant of best practice and each student's individual needs.

  Formative assessment methods may include but are not limited to the following:

  - Establishing clear learning intentions for each lesson
  - Asking a question that will be answered through the course of the lesson
  - Orally questioning throughout the lesson
  - Structured discussion as a class and in groups
  - Assessment and feedback on homework
  - Practice of past exam papers
  - Project work
  - Presentations
  - Written tasks / worksheets
  - Group work
  - Practical work
  - Quizzes (oral and written)
  - Student self-assessment and peer assessment
  - Written and verbal feedback with guidance for improvement

[3] Assessment in Post- Primary Schools (NCCA). Available at: https://sites.google.com/pdst.ie/post-primary-context/teaching-learning/assessment

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

Schools should only use assessment instruments which are appropriate and have a clear and defined purpose.

Assessment results should not be regarded as definitive nor interpreted in isolation. Students' needs and other contextual information should always be taken into consideration.

Standardised ability tests are designed to be curriculum-independent and measure more enduring and long-term traits than the attainment of learning. They measure what a student is capable of knowing rather than what is known.

Standardised attainment tests (sometimes referred to as achievement tests) measure what a student knows and can be used to assess, for example, students' knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy, and to determine progress in these areas and/or to determine eligibility for reasonable accommodations (RACE) in the state examinations.

On foot of information garnered from various assessment practices including ability and achievement tests, further information may be gathered through the administration of diagnostic tests to provide a more detailed view of a student's learning strengths and needs.

A diagnostic test is designed to provide specific information about a student's strengths and needs in some aspect of learning, for example, word identification skills or understanding of number concepts.

In addition, guidance counsellors may use the outcomes of ability, interest, values and motivation tests to guide and to support students' decision-making regarding subject choice and senior- cycle programme options and to support their career development, including planning for higher education, further education and training, apprenticeships or work. [4]

Rationale for using Assessment Instruments in our School

These tests are used for gathering baseline data and to track progress as well as identifying emerging needs that will help to inform actions that will best address them.

At Terenure College students will have the opportunity to engage in a wide range of assessment activity as part of normal teaching and learning.

Other specialist tests may also be administered to support an individual student's educational development and learning as well as his career development. Examples of such tests are outlined below. There may also be occasion to administer tests on an individual basis to support a student's learning, progress, and achievement. Such tests will only be administered following consultation with parents/guardians.

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[4] Circular letter 0067/2020 (Department of Education and Skills). Available at: https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/87791/f4e37eca-20a7-4762-88ea-f5c88da42af2.pdf#page=null

How will Informed Consent be obtained

Consent obtained through communication with Parents / Guardians

Selection of Assessment Instrument Tests

Selected accordingly to identified need as part of a solution focused approach. Assessment instruments are used in accordance with the continuum of support

Administration of Assessment Instrument

Assessments will take place in base classrooms – in group scenario where appropriate or Learning Support Room – in the case of individuals.

Assessment may be conducted online where possible.

Assessment takes place in exam style conditions. Students complete assessment on school computers where possible –(Eirquest, My Aptitude and Careers Portal)

Names of suitably qualified staff administering the Assessment Instruments

- AEN coordinator – Jenni Prior
- Guidance Counsellors – Emer Aherne and Mairead Deffely
- Learning Support Teacher – Roisin Coughlan, Patrice Bowe, Deirdre Reid
- Subject teachers may also be involved in some instances.

Provision of Feedback to the Parents/Guardians/Students

Feedback will be given as appropriate.

Parents/Guardians will be informed of the test scores in a format that can be easily understood.

Students will be given feedback through a meeting with Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support teacher or the teacher that administered the test.

(The following list is not exhaustive and achievement tests are used as appropriate)

- **Entry to Post- Primary School**:
  - New Group Reading Test 2010 (NGRT)
  - Access Maths 2018

- **Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations**
    - Wide Range Achievement Test 5th Edition 2017 (WRAT 5)

- **DARE**
    - For the purposes of DARE, reading and mathematical test (WRAT) may be administered if required.

- **Guidance**

First Year

- Ability & Aptitude: Cognitive Abilities Test – 4th Edition 2012 (CAT4)
- Measures four principal areas of reasoning- verbal, non-verbal, quantitative, and spatial to provide a comprehensive profile of the core abilities relating to learning. Provides basis for Athena Analytics academic tracking.

Transition Year/Fifth Year

- My Future Choice - Eirquest
- A careers selection programme matching a student's interests and academic abilities with suitable and worthwhile careers and courses.
- Future Choice – My Aptitude: The test provides an independent assessment of academic potential, which can supplement the school's own estimates of future academic performance. Students often discover outstanding personal strengths which can give them greater confidence in their academic work and career planning.
  Tests include: Verbal Reasoning, Numerical Reasoning, Abstract Reasoning ,2D Spatial Reasoning, 3D Spatial Reasoning, Arithmetic Calculation, Working Quickly & Accurately, Spelling.
- Reach+ & Careers Portal.
- Careers portal offers a Career Exploration Toolbox including an Interest Profiler.

Achievement Tests

- Literacy Battery of 5 subtests including, word reading, spelling, reading speed, reading comprehension, and writing samples.

- Hedderly Sentence Completion test (Administered individually)
- Writing speed

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES TO INCLUDE STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

At Terenure College we endeavour to ensure that our assessment methods are as inclusive as possible. Teachers are provided with training and guidance on using differentiated learning and assessment.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator applies to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) for assistance for particular students whose assessment reports indicate that additional supports are essential (e.g. Assistive Technology support where deemed appropriate in relevant professional reports from Educational Psychologists and/or others meeting the criteria of the NCSE).

Teachers employ a range of differentiated learning and assessment strategies, individual/small group tuition, co-teaching, visual aids, spelling and grammar waivers, and bi-lingual dictionaries amongst others, as determined by the SET Team in consultation with individual subject teachers and students' parents. These accommodations are in accordance with those available through the RACE scheme.

In some circumstances, in consultation with parents, the psychologist from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) will be requested to conduct educational assessments on a small number of students and/or advise on suitable supports for individual students.

Where possible, and subject to available resources, we endeavour to provide reasonable accommodations for students who have a specific physical or learning difficulty and who may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in the State Examinations. A reasonable accommodation may be, for example, a waiver from assessment of spellings, grammar and punctuation in language subjects, the provision of a reading assistant, the use of assistive technology and / or support provided by a Special Needs Assistant, and is subject to available resources. This is done to remove, as far as practicable, the impact of the student's disability on their performance in assessments. Usually, key formal assessments may be supported in this way (e.g. House Exam / Mock Exams) but is subject to resources. Accommodations will be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student's learning throughout the year.

The SEN Co-Ordinator will apply to the State Examinations Commission for the appropriate Reasonable Accommodations in State Exams based on the students', professional reports (e.g. Occupational Therapist, or clinical psychologist or psychiatrist) and school-based Learning Support Assessments. Students in Third Year and Sixth Year are prioritised so that relevant applications can be submitted before the deadlines. Where a student has been granted a Reasonable Accommodation for Junior Cycle, reactivation does not require further testing.

Students may be withdrawn for individual assessments, and samples of their writing may be gleaned from their House Exams and during individual sessions for this purpose. The SEN Coordinator will keep accurate testing data results on file as well as professional reports for

relevant students, and make them available for inspection purposes, or to seek advice from NEPS, should they be required. Copies of all RACE applications will be kept on file in case of query. Decisions of the DES in relation to RACE applications will be communicated to relevant parents in a timely manner once they are received by the school, and a copy kept on file by the SEN Coordinator and also by the State Examinations Secretary.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective assessment involves the entire school community.

- **School Management:**
    - Support teachers and students in smooth and effective running of assessment and reporting procedures.
    - Encourage and support development of best practice in assessment and reporting.
    - Analyse and evaluate assessment results to inform developments in teaching and assessment.
    - Monitor and evaluate assessment and reporting within the school.

- **Year Heads:**
    - Liaise with subject teachers, students and parents on issues related to assessment and reporting.
    - Ensure supports are provided to students who require them.
    - Lead affirmation of achievement.
    - Inform students of the relevant aspects of assessment and reporting.
    - Monitor student assessment data and liaise with teachers, students and parents as required.
    - Provide parents / guardians with written and oral feedback on their child's achievement and progress.

- **Teachers:**
    - Monitor and record students' progress through regular formative and summative assessments
    - Record students' progress
    - Ensure students are aware of their achievements and how they can reach their potential
    - Share learning intentions and success criteria with students.
    - Prepare students for assessment by exploring methods of study, assessment vocabulary, layout of exams, awareness of materials and equipment needed, approaches to answering exam questions.
    - Prepare students for upcoming Leaving Cert projects and CBAs etc. by advising students on the correct methods and technologies to assist them
    - Use assessment data to inform lesson planning and assessment activities
    - Create assessments that mirror real world tasks such as; case studies, simulations or port folio based evaluations.

- Consult with the SEN team to ascertain students in their classes who have additional needs and plan and implement differentiated teaching, learning and assessment accordingly. And assist the SEN team with the identifying of students with additional needs.
- Complete the relevant sections of formal school reports
- Facilitate and support the conduct of House / Mock Exams
- Provide parents / guardians regular feedback on their child's achievement and progress

- **Students:**
  - Follow directions and advice of their teachers in relation to assessment, progress and achievement
  - Strive to reach their potential in all areas of school life
  - Take responsibility for their own learning and progress
  - Reflect on assessment feedback and take steps for improvement in consultation with their teachers, so that students can become self-guided critical thinkers and independent learners.

- **Parents / Guardians:**
  - Support and encourage their child's learning by working in partnership with the school, e.g. attending Parent – Teacher meeting, monitoring homework, being familiar with the school's assessment arrangements, reviewing school reports with their child.
  - Support their child's learning by providing an environment conducive to study and homework.
  - Communicate with Year Heads regarding concerns related to learning and assessment.

MONITORING

1. Homework and Assignments

   - Regular homework and assignments play an important role in reinforcing classroom learning and developing independent study skills.
   - The completion of homework is encouraged and valued, in specific years such as with Third-year Credit System, there is specific encouragement given which rewards consistent effort.

2. Athena

   - The Athena system is used to track student academic progress throughout the year and years.
   - Real-time tracking allows monitoring of performance and progress.
   - Athena also provides teachers with detailed insights into student progress, enabling early identification of students who may require additional support.

3. Study Coaches for Senior Students

    - Study coaches work with students in Fifth and Sixth Year, offering personalised academic guidance and support in preparation for the Leaving Certificate.
    - These coaches work closely with year heads and the SEN team where necessary to ensure that students are equipped with the skills and strategies necessary for success. This can help reduce stress and build resilience amongst our Senior Cycle students.

REPORTING AND FEEDBACK

Reporting is the part of the assessment process that provides feedback in support of student learning. There is strong evidence that when reporting on progress is done effectively students feel involved in their learning, are helped to see how well they are progressing and how they can improve. Reporting goes beyond giving marks and grades; it is an important way of sharing progress between teachers, students and parents.[5]

Formal reporting on summative assessments benefits the students' progress in the following ways:

- Clearly communicates students' progress in learning and provides information on a broad range of achievement.
- Provides students with formal acknowledgement of their achievements and guidance on further on how to progress.
- Provides parents/guardians with an overview of their child's progress
- Involves parents/guardians in their child's learning and enables them track progress and to discuss achievements, goals and ambitions with their child.

Formal progress reports are made available on VSWare to all parents after formal in-house examinations. Formal reports will indicate the student's progress in subjects by the inclusion of an assessment mark, a descriptor, the level at which the exam was taken. In addition, teachers will provide a comment and guidance on how a student can further progress. All reports will include a comment by the relevant Year Head.

The descriptors employed will reflect the descriptors used in state examinations for each cycle of education (Junior and Senior Cycle).

Further reporting on achievement and progress is provided to parents / guardians at Parent-Teacher meetings. These are held annually to discuss academic performance and progress.

Individual teachers and / or subject faculties may provide parents with interim and adhoc reports on class-based tests, projects etc.

Effective feedback is central to the learning process and is used to help students improve their performance:

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[5] Ongoing reporting for effective teaching and learning (NCCA). Available at: https://ncca.ie/media/3465/reporting-booklet-1.pdf

- Timely Feedback: Teachers aim to provide feedback on assessments as soon as they can, allowing students to reflect on their progress and make improvements.

- Constructive Feedback: Feedback is designed to highlight strengths and identity areas for Improvement, supporting students in achieving their full potential.
- Feedback on Junior Cycle reports include a 'How to Improve Learning' section along with feedback on some of the six key skills of the Junior Cycle.

ASSESSMENT IN STATE EXAMINATIONS

The Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate State Examinations are conducted by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) nationally for students in Third Year and Sixth Year each June. For Third Year students these results will be included on students' Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement.

Exam Centre rules are issued by the SEC and apply throughout the duration of the exams.

Students in Terenure College must be in full school uniform and adhere to the normal school rules and policies throughout the examination period.

For students who have been granted Reasonable Accommodations in the State Examinations, appropriate arrangements will be put in place for the proper conduct of students' exams in order that the assessment procedures are applied in a fair manner so as not to disadvantage any student (e.g. access to a reader / scribe / individual or shared exam centre, access to assistive technology e.g. laptop etc.).

REVIEW PROCEDURE

Terenure College is committed to continuously improving its assessment practices.

This Assessment Policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with teaching staff, the Student Council and the parents association under the direction of the school's Senior Management Team to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and aligned with current educational best practices. The review process will be guided by developments in State assessments and will be responsive to opportunities and challenges presented by emerging technologies.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:

Signed: _____

Ms. Patricia Bourden,

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 09.12.2024

Signed: _____

Mr. Philip Wallace

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 09.12.2024

APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT CALENDAR

Winter Assessment (Completed in the second half of the first term)	First Year: Formal Summative Assessment (1 hour per exam) Second Year: Formal Summative Assessment (1 ½ hours per exam) Third Year: Formal Summative Assessment (2 hours per exam) Transition Year: Formal Summative Assessment (1 or 1 ½ hour(s) per exam) Fifth Year: Formal Summative Assessment (1 1/2 hours per exam) Sixth Year: Formal Summative Assessment (2 hours per exam)
Spring Assessment (Completed in the second half of the second term)	First Year: Classroom Based Summative Assessment Second Year: Classroom Based Summative Assessment Third Year: Mock Junior Cycle Exams Transition Year: No formal assessment Fifth Year: Formal Summative Assessment (1 1/2 hours per exam) Sixth Year: Mock Leaving Certificate Exams
Summer Assessment (Completed in the third term)	First Year: Formal Summative Assessment (1 hour per exam) Second Year: Formal Summative Assessment (1 ½ hours per exam) Third Year: SEC Junior Cycle Exams Transition Year: Formal Summative Assessment (1 or 1 ½ hour(s) per exam) Fifth Year: Formal Summative Assessment (1 1/2 hours per exam) Sixth Year:

APPENDIX B: JUNIOR CYCLE CLASSROOM BASED ASSESSMENT CALENDAR

CBA 1 CALENDAR 2024/5 SUBJECT	CBA 1	DURATION	DATES
MUSIC	*COMPOSITION PORTFOLIO*	ALL YEAR	CALENDAR YEAR
RELIGION	*A PERSON OF COMMITMENT*	3 WEEKS	25th Nov – 13th Dec
SCIENCE	*EXTENDED EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION*	3 WEEKS	25th Nov – 13th Dec
HOME ECONOMICS	*CREATIVE TEXTILES*	8 WEEKS	25th Nov – 31st Jan
VISUAL ART	*FROM PROCESS TO REALISATION*	8 WEEKS	25th Nov – 31st Jan
ENGLISH	*ORAL COMMUNICATION*	3 WEEKS	6th Jan – 24th Jan
BUSINESS	*BUSINESS IN ACTION – GROUP PROJECT*	3 WEEKS	13th Jan – 31st Jan
MFL	*ORAL COMMUNICATION*	3 WEEKS	20th Jan – 7th Feb
HISTORY	*THE PAST IN MY PLACE*	3 WEEKS	27th Jan – 16th Feb
MATHS	*MATHEMATICAL INVESTIGATION*	3 WEEKS	24th Feb – 7th Mar
GEOGRAPHY	*GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS*	3 WEEKS	24th Feb – 7th Mar
CLASSICS	*STORYTELLING USING MYTH*	3 WEEKS	10th Mar – 28th Mar
GRAPHICS	*COMMUNICATING THROUGH SKETCHING*	3 WEEKS	10th Mar – 28th Mar
WOOD TECHNOLOGY	WOOD SCIENCE IN OUR ENVIRONMENT	3 WEEKS	10th Mar – 28th Mar

APPENDIX C: HOUSE EXAM RULES

(1) Students are to be in the Exam Centre 15 minutes before the start of the exam.

(2) Mobile phones and smart watches must not be used in the exam hall.

(They may not be used as calculators for any exam)

(3) Students must have books for NEXT exam under desk to study if finished early.

(4) No food or drink allowed during exams.

(5) Full uniform must be worn at all times.

(6) Students are not allowed to go to the toilet DURING exams. No leaving exam early.

(7) For PERSISTENT DISRUPTION during an exam:

(a) Paper cancelled.

(b) Recorded on report as cancelled.

(c) Repeated during Detention.

(8) **Exams in Gymnasium.**

(a) Sit at the correct desk. (Your name will be on it.)

(b) Do not move desks.

Exams in Classrooms

(a) Sit at your usual desk.

(b) Do not move desks.