

Enniscorthy Vocational College



Assessment Policy

Ratified by Board of Management on 18th December 2014

1. Introduction

This Assessment Policy was developed in partnership with all members of the school community- students, teachers, parents/guardians and management. It recognises the requirement of the school to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents/guardians. This Assessment Policy will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Management.

2. Definition

The term “Assessment” refers generally to the gathering and interpretation of information related to the student’s learning abilities, learning attainments, learning strengths and needs.

3. Why Assess?

Assessment should enable students:

- To improve their own learning.
- To be motivated and reach their full potential.
- To improve their grades.

Assessment should enable teachers:

- To assess progress and adapt planning if required.
- To evaluate their students’ learning needs.
- To evaluate teaching and learning styles and outcomes.
- To meet statutory requirements.
- To monitor a student’s progress and to provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the student is learning.
- To establish baseline data in relation to a student’s attainment in certain subjects.
- To assess a student’s eligibility for additional support and services and to inform consultations with the ETB or private psychologists where necessary.
- To assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred to an outside professional or agency for assessment or direct intervention.
- This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the students learning and adapt her/his teaching strategies and/or learning activities as appropriate.

Reporting of assessment should enable parents/guardians:

- To be involved in their child's learning.
- To understand and encourage the progress their child is making at school.
- To check their child's progress throughout their time in secondary school.

4. Legislation

The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to students and their parents. In fulfilling this requirement, schools develop assessment procedures, which provide an accurate account of a student's progress and achievement.

5. Types of Assessment

Formative Assessment:

This involves a range of strategies designed to give students, teachers and parents' feedback about students' understanding of elements of their learning in courses.

Enniscorthy Vocational College has adopted the Assessment for Learning (AFL) approach to formative assessment. Its purpose is to use the whole process of assessment to help learners improve their learning. It is formative because its intention is to form, shape or guide the next steps in learning.

Informal Assessment:

The most common types 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 and written classwork
- Essays and assignments
- Reading and writing in class
- Sample exam questions
- Homework- written or learned

Formal Assessment (Summative):

Summative Assessment refers to the assessment of learning and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the students.

There are numerous types of formal assessments that take place in the school, they include:

Monthly/End of Topic Test – These tests are conducted at the discretion of the teacher on a monthly or end of chapter basis. These formal tests are a vital component in providing feedback to teachers, students and parents, on the progress of student's in their subjects. Constructive feedback is given by the teachers to students and the results from these tests will be used in the school's formal reporting structure where appropriate.

House Exams – First, Second and Fifth Years will be tested by means of continuous assessment up to Christmas. This will be comprised of at least three sets of examinations and the results will be logged onto e-portal. Third and Sixth Years will either do the same or will sit a separate Christmas test. First, Second and Fifth Years will sit their summer exams at the end of May. These exams are of a very serious nature, and this is recognised by students, parents and teachers alike. All house exams follow the same operating rules as state exams. The results of these exams will be reported in the Christmas Reports and the Summer Reports. Third and Sixth Years will sit Mock exams. These Mock exams are seen as being very beneficial to the students in measuring their progress. Students will gain valuable experience in time management and answering techniques through sitting these exams. The results of these mock exams will form the basis for the Pre Junior Cert and Pre Leaving Cert Reports.

State Exams – The school will strive to ensure that all 3rd and 6th Year students 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, aurals, course work, practical work, portfolio work amongst others, will be operated in accordance with the regulations set down by the State Exams Commission.

Other Assessments – The school may engage in other forms of assessment from time to time. Literacy and Numeracy tracking of students up to third year takes place so as to monitor progress. Incoming First Years undertake a CAT assessment which is used to assist in class formation for first years. This assessment will offer an early indicator to the school of a student's potential. All third undertake a CATS 3 test to assist in their investigation of possible college and career choices, when they go onto fifth year. The school's NEPS psychologist, in consultation with school management, may carry out psychological assessments and other assessments on students at different times throughout the year.

General Guidelines – The form that these informal and formal assessments will take, are dependent on the subject area being assessed and will vary from subject to subject. Certain forms of assessment may oftentimes be peculiar to a particular subject.

All forms of assessment above will strive to meet the additional needs of students in the classroom when they arise. Classroom strategies such as differentiated assessment, visual aids, hearing aids, spelling waivers, increased time and dictionaries amongst others, may be used from time to time, as determined by the individual subject teacher.

Where feasible, and as determined by each subject department plan, common agreed assessment tests across a year group will be used in each subject area. Students are expected to treat all of the above forms of assessment with respect. Any student who willingly fails to participate fully, or who acts in a disrespectful way towards any form of assessment in the school will be dealt with accordingly.

Assessment and Reporting

There are a variety of ways the results of formal and informal assessments can be reported to parents/guardians.

1. Student Journal – The teacher may communicate the outcome of any assessment to the parent/guardian of a student by writing a note in the journal. This must be countersigned by the parent/guardian to acknowledge receipt of the note.
2. Parent Teacher Meetings – There is a meeting for each year group every year. At these meetings it is vital that for teachers to relay the outcomes of varying assessments to parents/guardians of individual students, that generates an accurate picture of the student's progress.
3. Written Reports - Formal written reports are posted to the parents/guardians of students on two occasions during the academic year.

