

HARLEM VILLAGE ACADEMIES HIGH ASSESSMENT POLICY

As a part of its mission, the teachers, staff, students, and community of Harlem Village Academies High are dedicated to fostering a culturally-responsive environment where students are respected as individuals – and where student differences are celebrated and valued. Our community is committed to developing a culture of critical thinking, leadership and service in an atmosphere that is respectful, collaborative, anti-racist and joyful. We provide graduates with a strong academic foundation that will enable them to gain admission to the colleges or universities of their choice, succeed in those institutions, and become responsible, ethical, creative and compassionate members of society. As a fundamental element of our mission is to achieve educational excellence, the philosophies and principles of student assessment must be well-defined, consistent, clearly articulated, and – importantly – linked to standards of merit.

As we view IB assessments as one of the many authentic representations of the demonstration of student understanding and mastery, a central feature of our assessment policy is the expectation that ALL students – including IEP students, ELL students, and students who have struggled academically – who are taking an IB course be required to sit for the IB examinations associated with their coursework or diploma series. This is made clear in our IB program policy regarding the connection between coursework and examinations:

The IB program at HVAH is marked by the development and completion of a number of internal and external assessments. When a Harlem Village Academies High student signs up for an IB course, they do so with the understanding that they should register for the IB examination that is aligned with that course, unless circumstances exist which disqualify them from examining. Note: The HVA network provides 100% of the funding for IB exams for all students, regardless of need. Finally, all students who qualify for an IEP or a 504 accommodation plan are required to contact the IB Coordinator during the exam registration process so that an IB exam accommodation request can be completed in a timely manner.

Assessment is one of many tools to help teachers to evaluate student success. All teachers regularly assess students by gathering, analyzing, and interpreting student work to measure understanding. We recognize that assessment can take a wide variety of forms - from the evaluation of simple reflective pieces of on-demand writing to public presentations, portfolios, or to more formal assessments and exams.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL ASSESSMENT: GOVERNING PRACTICES

At the most basic level, structured assessments will take many forms, including (but not limited to):

Individual oral presentations

Internal assessments

Reflective journals

Written commentary

Classroom discussions / Socratic seminars

Simulations

Essays	Labs and lab portfolios
Individual and Group projects	Portfolio math projects
Extended Research	Performance and Composition
Group presentations	On-demand writing
Extended Essay (for full-IB diploma candidates)	Written IB examinations (May)

Assessment of student learning, however, will also happen on an informal basis every day in the IB classroom. Effective instruction must be reflective, and our instructional methods are founded on the cornerstone of reflective practice by teachers who work to develop one-on-one relationships with students. Although observations may not typically be translated into formal grades, informal assessment and feedback is crucial for teachers to ensure that meaningful understanding of content knowledge is taking place.

HVAH will also work to ensure that grading aligns with our own restorative practices and with the IB's Approaches To Teaching and Learning. We recognize that students may not be successful at each and every task, but may still wish to promote their own growth mindset and self-management skills. As such, our assessments are broken down into two general categories:

Ungraded Tasks: These short tasks – like homework, classwork, or exit tickets – are intended to provide students with meaningful feedback on their ideas in order to promote understanding and reflection. As such, only teacher feedback/comments are placed on this work.

Graded Tasks/Formal Assessment: These tasks are planned, scheduled tasks (like quizzes, exams, essays, or labs) that receive grades on our 1-4 grading scale. Because learning does not end at the submission of an assessment, students will always have the opportunity to redo a Graded Task, if they are unhappy with their efforts. Our process will involve a meeting with the instructor and the submission of a student reflection, prior to the work being re-done.

As the IB has specific rules that govern teacher comments on formal IAs and on work to be submitted to the IB for scoring, those specific formal IB tasks cannot be resubmitted for re-marking for any reason. We will clearly follow the rules of each internal assessment, and will communicate those rules to students and families, on a timely basis.

Formal assessment will be transparent and standards-based – and clear, published, rubrics and exemplars will be available to all students for all IB courses. Instructors will work collaboratively during our defined weekly collaborative planning time to develop specific, common rubrics to evaluate student performance – and they will work during professional planning time – throughout the year – to standardize the assessment of student work. The development and discussion of the criteria being used will ALWAYS be communicated to students during our classroom time.

Rubrics shall be used for all dimensions of student work, both informal (homework and group projects) and formal (commentary and essays). Although the vast majority of IB rubrics and criteria are measured on the 0-7 scale, HVAH uses a 4.0 grading scale and an A-F scale to communicate grades to students. These systems are not in conflict with one another: they are simply different – and not opposing – means of communicating levels of success to students and parents. Teachers will communicate both the IB standard AND the local standard to students, so they can see “how IB would mark their work” before entering the local score in the gradebook. In either case, the same rubric is used.

A two-year calendar of all major IB assessment deadlines will be published by the Coordinator each September, so staff and students can balance stress on both students and teachers.

Finally, all student major written assignments – and all work being sent to the IBO – will be submitted to Turnitin.com for verification of authenticity, prior to grading or submission to IBIS. The HVA Honor Code - submitted as an additional upload during the Five-Year Self-Study process - is explicitly taught in each subject area, to students in both Grades 9/10 and in all IB classes. Instructors explicitly discuss the nature of malfeasance in all forms - and specific challenges in each subject area - during class time. A signed copy of the Honor Code is kept on file for all students.

COMMUNICATION – THE KEY TO REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Reflection is an essential element of any successful assessment, and students will regularly participate in, and reflect on, the assessment of their work. As clearly defined by the IBO, reflection helps students to be “a better judge of their own performance” as they work to develop their own strategies to improve themselves as learners. Full-IB diploma candidates will have this embedded in their program materials, as prescribed reflections are an essential component of CAS hours and the full diploma experience. In other subject areas, reflection may be less formal, but will still play a significant role in coursework.

Formal quarter and semester grading is a legal requirement of New York State, and both Google Classroom (for daily work and communication) and Powerschool (our formal gradebook system) shall be used by all instructors. As these systems are web-based, they are marked by their ability to have students and parents view assignments and grades at any time, from any connected device. In this way, students can track their progress at all times. Our systems are marked by their ability to broadcast messages to their entire class, subsets of any student population, or limit their communication to parents and guardians. Our instructors shall use these features on a regular basis as a way to inform students of deadlines and communicate student success with parents.

Our course expectations are public, and teachers will publish all of their course syllabi on their individual Google Classroom websites; the IB Coordinator will publish links to all of the IB course syllabi on the school’s IB website and in Managebac.

Managebac shall continue to be used to track the academic progress of our full-IB diploma candidates, the progress of the Extended Essay, the progress of our CAS hours, and as a tool to document Internal Assessments. Both Google Classroom and Managebac’s classroom features will continue to be used by

all IB instructors, who use the communication tools, classrooms, and forums to allow students to engage in dialogue that enriches their understanding of the curriculum.

Finally, our network shall continue to distribute formal progress reports to all students, four times a year, and issues formal grades (using the A-F scale) at the end of each semester. Teachers shall have the opportunity to add additional written comments to parents and students at that time, although these comments are not a part of the student's permanent transcript record.

TOOLS OF REFLECTION

Developing analytics is an important part of the work of the IB Coordinator, and the network has provided two tools for this work: Powerschool's white box design allows our data team to program our own unique reports to serve our understanding of the connection between instruction and assessment. In addition, our Coordinator uses Tableau visualizations of IB exam data to gain an understanding of the variety of attributes of student success in that data set.

As a core part of our reflective practice, the Coordinator will distribute all assessment data, as it is received from the IBO, purchase released exams, and make inquiries, where relevant, when exam scores are not aligned with Predicted Grades. During our collegial professional development time at the beginning of each school year, the IB Coordinator shall distribute exam results, and teachers from shared content areas will work together to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our program and make changes, where necessary.

Our complete grade set – both internal (gradebook bands) and external (IB Scores) is reported to our community and, importantly, included in the reported data sent to all colleges and universities (in our school profile).

IB DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS: THE EXTENDED ESSAY

The Extended Essay is both a requirement of the IB Diploma Series and a graduation requirement of full-IB diploma candidates at Harlem Village Academies High. Because it is a central element to the core, responsibility for supervision is embedded into professional responsibilities. Since the Extended Essay is one of the elements of the IB Core that is not placed into a particular classroom context, an effective use of resources and timing allows us the opportunity to place elements of communication into the Theory of Knowledge class, but in the workload of the EE Coordinator. We also use our Advisory sessions to instruct students regarding elements of the Extended Essay.

Students begin working on their Extended Essays about halfway through Y1, and work with a wide variety of instructors to identify subject interests and ideas for research questions prior to formalizing their mentor relationship with one instructor. When students have strong ideas for the Research Question, the IB Coordinator specifically "pairs" a student to an EE mentor. We use Managebac to track and monitor progress on the explicit deadlines that we have created to ensure that students demonstrate – and reflect upon – their learning. This works to both ensure the importance of reflection at the core of the EE experience, and ensure that the EE is the original work of the students. Our

bi-weekly bell schedule includes a regular advisory period, and this provides students informal connections to their mentors on a regular basis. By requiring a completed – formal – outline before the end of the Junior Year, we allow students to focus on their coursework and their college planning in the fall, before returning to the culmination of their essay later in the Winter.

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

The HVA Network shall follow NY State law in the establishment of IEPs (Individual Education Plans) and 504 learning accommodation plans to help students find greater academic success. Our IB program will honor these legally-binding accommodation plans when they involve school-based assessments. The IB Coordinator shall use established IB policy for the filing of D1 forms (with the IBO) for students who seek additional accommodations for formal IB assessments.