Fortiter et Humaniter

Portadown College Assessment, Reporting and Sixth Form Progression Policy

Rationale

As a 14 - 19 selective grammar school, Portadown College is particularly cognisant of the high stakes nature of public examinations in shaping the future life opportunities of our students. As an integral aspect of student experience, assessment (internal and external):

- provides students and parents with summative (Assessment of Learning - *AoL*) and formative (Assessment for Learning - *AfL*) feedback on progress and achievement;
- raises aspiration and maximises individual student attainment;
- awards accreditation in public examinations.

Assessment in College is conducted to meet regulatory and Awarding Body requirements for public examinations.

Reporting to parents/carers is carried out within the framework of the DE 2009 reporting regulations (DENI circular 2009/15).

Internal Assessment

Internal Examinations

Internal examinations, which are standardised, formative and diagnostic in nature, are undertaken by all year groups in January of each academic year. Reporting takes place in January/February. For Years 12, 13 and 14, this Trial examination period provides important preparation for external examinations in the Summer Term. Further Year 11 examination and reporting is carried out in June.

Each internal examination series is followed-up by a process of pastoral and academic review (coordinated by the Vice Principals) to identify and support individual students as appropriate.

Coursework and Controlled Assessment

Coursework and Controlled Assessment for external examinations are conducted internally in accordance with Awarding Body guidance, the College Coursework/Controlled Assessment Policy and the College schedule for completion of coursework/controlled assessment (published annually after consultation with Departments).

Classroom Based Assessment

Formal internal examinations are supplemented by a variety of strategies to promote *AfL* under the direction of the class teacher(s) and Head of Department as appropriate. These incorporate a number of assessment tools, Target Setting and Marking for Improvement.

Assessment tools may include:

- Homework (see guidelines page 2)
- Common Assessment Units (*CAUs*) to inform Target-Setting (see pages 3 and Appendix)
- Project/practical work, individual research tasks
- Classwork (oral, aural, written and practical)

Homework Guidelines:

- Homework should consolidate classroom learning and enhance students' ability to work independently. 'Finishing off' work begun in class does not constitute homework: all formally set homework must be undertaken by all students in the class.
- Homework should not be set for the week preceding the internal examination period in order to afford students time in which to structure and undertake personal revision.
- Recommended hours of homework per week:

Year 11	10 hours
Year 12	13 hours
Year 13	15 hours (including independent home study)
Year 14	15 hours (including independent home study)

- In Sixth Form, subject teachers should ensure that in addition to formal homework, students are guided on extension tasks/areas suitable for independent study. This guidance should assume an available study time of approximately 30 minutes for Year 13 and 1 hour for Year 14 per subject each week.
- Homework may contribute to the coursework components or provide preparation for Controlled Assessment tasks for some external examinations. Where this is the case, students must adhere to the guidelines for completion of work stated in the College Coursework/Controlled Assessment Policy.
- It is the role of the class teacher to:
    - set homework and record outcomes in accordance with departmental homework policy and subject schemes of work as agreed with SLT;
    - monitor that all homework is completed punctually, thoroughly and to the student's best ability;
    - assess and return written work promptly to the student in accordance with the department's Marking for Improvement Policy;
    - support, sanction and, where necessary, refer students who do not comply with the departmental homework policy to the HoD.

- It is the role of the Head of Department to:
    - support, sanction and, where necessary, refer students who do not comply with departmental homework policy through the appropriate whole-school support and sanction systems (ref: Code of Conduct).

Target Setting

The College's target-setting practices and procedures recognise the Education and Training Inspectorate's expectation for all schools to set students individual targets for improvement based on previous outcomes. We regard Target Setting as intrinsic to Assessment ***of*** and ***for*** Learning and believe that targets should be realistic, challenging but achievable. Informed by quantitative (e.g. Cognitive Ability Tests [*CATs]*, internal examination scores, *CAUs*) and qualitative data, Target Setting fuses the academic and pastoral aspects of student life to:

- motivate, monitor and support/challenge learners as appropriate;
- raise aspiration (student and teacher) and maximise individual student attainment;
- inform discussions between students, parents/carers and teachers about progress and potential.

Subject specific Target Setting takes place for all year groups as outlined in Appendix 1.

Marking for Improvement Guidelines

The purpose of MfI is to secure progression by facilitating students to improve the quality of their work and thereby enhance formative and summative outcomes.

MfI involves a partnership between teacher and student based on a shared understanding of success criteria and strategies to secure improvement. Departments are therefore encouraged to employ a variety of subject appropriate strategies to ensure that MfI is not a teacher-led passive exercise, but one in which students can assume ownership of their own learning.

MfI should be regarded not as an adjunct to, but rather as an integral dimension of classroom practice; as such, time for pre- and post-marking self-evaluation activities should be incorporated into student activity e.g. proof read work and complete self-assessment prior to submission/annotate improvements on return of work.

Effective MfI:

- Focuses on selective aspects of work. NB: students should understand the area of focus and the particular success criteria or areas which have been selected for specific comment e.g. a particular assessment objective, the use of specialist terms.
- Affirms attainment through positive annotation/comment and identifies an achievable number of areas for improvement.
- Avoids overly descriptive, prescriptive teacher comments and leaves scope for students to identify areas/strategies for improvement.
- Uses the Language of Learning, as suitable of the age and ability of students, to discuss what has been achieved and skills/knowledge required to make progress.
- Employs a variety of feedback modes to accommodate different learning styles e.g. written, verbal, whole class, group, one-to-one.
- Provides opportunities for self and peer assessment using agreed, understood assessment criteria and exemplar material as appropriate.
- Provides appropriately differentiated exemplar material to scaffold learning and help individual students bridge the gap between their own work and an achievable higher standard.
- Informs teacher planning and differentiation for subsequent learning.
- Gives students time to act upon initial feedback and provides follow-up feedback on subsequent work undertaken.
- Monitors and measures improvements in students' work over an agreed period of time.
- Provides alternative strategies where a student demonstrates limited or no progress over an agreed period of time.

Departments may employ subject-specific marking codes and student self-assessment proforma as appropriate. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to monitor, evaluate and review the Department's MfI policy and practice as part of the departmental self-evaluation cycle e.g. via file scoops.

External Assessment

It is the responsibility of class teacher(s) and the Head of Department (or other designated member of staff) to ensure students are appropriately prepared for the assessment and that all entry and other subject-specific requirements are completed as stipulated by the Examinations Officer.

Change of GCSE Entry Tier

Where there is evidence that a student may struggle to achieve at least a C grade at GCSE in a particular subject, or subjects, at Higher Tier (the normal level of entry), the subject teacher should:

- liaise with the student concerned and Head of Department to consider Foundation Tier entry;
- following discussion with the student and their parents/guardians, the Head of Department may recommend Foundation Tier entry only if a grade C pass is deemed more likely via this route;
- in this case, the relevant HoD must secure permission in writing for a change in entry from parents/carers as appropriate;
- the Head of Department should inform the Vice Principal (Curriculum) and Examinations Officer of this decision.

Withdrawal from a Subject

Non-completion and/or non-submission of coursework which constitutes a significant component of the external assessment will incur immediate withdrawal from the examination in the subject.

Where progress in a particular subject is very limited and evidence suggests that a pass grade at GCSE, AS or A2 is highly unlikely, it is at the discretion of the College to withdraw a student from the subject using the Academic Referral process.

This is a very rare occurrence retained for cases where all available support strategies have been implemented and found to be ineffective in securing the necessary improvements. The Principal or Vice Principal will liaise fully with the student and their parents/carers if this course of action is considered. Where a student is withdrawn from one or more subjects, suitable arrangements will be put in place to ensure best use of the student's study time in school.

Reporting

Formal Year 11 reports on Winter and Summer Examinations are issued in February and June respectively. Year 12, 13 and 14 reports are issued in February following Trial Examinations. These include quantitative data and qualitative comment on the student's progress and performance in each subject; an overview of performance and progress by the Year Head and a summative comment by the Principal.

Sixth Form Progression (with effect from August 2019)

1. Number of AS subjects studied in Year 13

All Year 13 students may start with 4 AS subjects if they choose.
There are 2 formal processes and timescales identified for dropping AS subjects:

(i) Students with 23 GCSE points (where A* = 4; A = 3; B = 2; C = 1 point) or below embarking on 4 AS subjects in Year 13 will do so on the understanding that 1 subject must be dropped by Autumn Half Term.

(ii) After Trials, any student not in the above category who is studying 4 subjects and has attained at least 1 E or below in Trials must drop 1 subject.

The above formal processes aside, students may drop a subject as appropriate during the academic year through discussion with relevant teachers, Year Head, CEIAG and SLT.

Progression to Year 14

Students are required to study a minimum of 3 subjects at A2 level.

Criteria for studying 3 subjects at A2 Level:

The minimum requirement for entry to A2 study in Year 14 is:

3 D grades

OR

7 points (where A = 5; B = 4; C = 3; D = 2; E = 1 point) across 3 AS subjects. A maximum 1 E grade is permitted/a U Grade is not permitted eg CCE, BDE is permitted/BCU is not permitted.

Students not attaining this minimum grade profile will not be permitted to return to College except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. significant medical or pastoral issues with documented mitigating evidence). The decision for a student being permitted to continue their studies rests with SLT.

Criteria for studying 4 subjects at A2 Level:

Students require a minimum of 4 B grades to continue with 4 subjects at A2. In cases where a student has attained grade C or below in a subject he/she requires at A2 for a particular university course, the student must decide, in consultation with teachers and CEIAG, on which other subject to drop: he/she cannot continue with 4 subjects.

The above policy was approved by the Board of Governors on 22 June 2017.

The above policy was updated by the Board of Governors on 10 January 2019.

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Governors.

APPENDIX 1: Target Setting 2018-19

Target Setting Key Stage 4 (Years 11 and 12)

Date	Action	Person(s) responsible
Mid - September	Year 11 - CATs administered	CM
Late September	CATs results available to all staff	CM
September/October	Year 12 Review Meeting Year 12 Parents' Meeting – review student progress and inform parents	RSH, GIB, PR, HoDS, YHs All staff
October	Year 11 Review Meeting	RSH, GIB, PR, HoDS, YHs
September - November	Each department sets 2 CAUs Results recorded on SIMS Tracking	All staff HODs monitor and review
By beginning of December	Year 12 subject targets set in class	All staff
Late January	Year 11/12 Post-examination Review (academic and pastoral) Year 12 set final subject target grades in each class	YHs, GTs and class teachers
February	Year 11 Parents' Meeting	All staff
By end of February	Year 11 subject targets set in class	All staff
February to April	Further CAU for Year 11 (recorded on SIMS)	All staff HoDs monitor and review
Mid- June	Post-examination Review (academic and pastoral) for Year 11	YHs, GTs, and class teachers

Target Setting Key Stage 5 (Years 13 and 14)

Date	Action	Person(s) responsible
Mid - September	Chance Analysis data available to all staff	CM
September - November	Each department sets 2 CAUs Results recorded on SIMS Tracking	All staff HODs monitor and review
October	Year 13/14 Review meetings– review student progress	RSH, GIB, PR, YHs, HODs
November	Year 13/14 Parents' Meeting	All staff
By beginning of December	Year 13/14 subject targets set in class	All staff
Late January	Year 13/14 Post-examination Review (academic and pastoral) Students set final subject targets for AS/A2	YHs, GTs and class teachers
February	Year 13/14 Parents' Meeting	All staff