

ABC of Assessment

City of Oulu
Assessment section
of basic education curriculum
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Oulu – Educational and Cultural Services

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Foreword

The ABC of Assessment summarises the policies and guidelines of assessment drawn up in the City of Oulu curriculum. The ABC provides guidelines for formative and summative assessment during the school year for grades 7–9. Additional material for assessment practices in the appendix.

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1. Purpose and Principles of Assessment

The purpose of assessment of a pupil in basic education, according to the Basic Education Act and Decree, is twofold with one procedure supporting the other.

The aim of pupil assessment

- *is to guide and encourage learning and to develop the pupil's skills for self-assessment (formative assessment).*
- *is to describe the attainment of goals for a given subject (summative assessment).*

Assessment of Education is based on learning, competence, working and behaviour.

The purpose of **formative assessment** is to guide teaching and learning in relation to the set goals. It helps students to understand their learning processes, identify their strengths and develop working methods to achieve their goals.

The purpose of **summative assessment** is to describe the level of attainment of the goals set for subjects in the curriculum. The overall evaluation carried out in the end of a school year is a summative assessment of a pupil's performance during the entire school year.

The curriculum defines the learning goals of each subject. **The goals include both subject-specific competence goals and content goals.** Subject-specific competence goals mean the working and transversal competence skills.

Working skills mean the skills developing during basic education

- *to work independently as well as with others*
- *to plan and self-assess one's work*
- *to listen to feedback and act accordingly*
- *to act responsibly, trying one's best and*
- *to act constructively in interactive situations.*

Transversal competence means the skill to implement one's knowledge and competence as required under the circumstances. Transverse competence is being built in each subject and the progress is assessed as a part of the assessment of subjects. Transversal competence is divided into seven sub-sections.

Behaviour is assessed according to the City of Oulu assessment criteria (Appendix 2). The goals set for behaviour are based on the school policy and rules. Behaviour is assessed as an independent entity.

Assessment is

- ▶ fair
- ▶ interactive
- ▶ subject to transparency, cooperation and inclusion
- ▶ age-appropriate and in line with capabilities
- ▶ based on goals and criteria
- ▶ structured and consistent
- ▶ comprehensive.



2. Annual Assessment Plan

Learning is assessed by formative and summative methods over the school year. These assessment methods provide information about progress in studies for the pupils and their parents.

Development discussion

The development discussion focuses on a pupil's strengths, learning and working skills as well as relevant study and age-specific questions.

- *7th graders and their guardians are offered an option of having a Let's Talk about Children discussion instead. If the guardians prefer the Let's Talk about Children discussion, it will substitute the development discussion.*
- *Held for grades 7-9 by mid-term holiday.*
- *The meeting is held by the homeroom teacher or the group's teacher-in-charge.*
- *Development discussion structure is appended to this guideline (App. 1).*

This guideline contains the time-schedule for assessments outlined by the City of Oulu. Implementation and documentation is arranged individually with each school.

- *A goal defined in cooperation will be entered in the field reserved for assessment and development discussion in the learning plan in Wilma.*

The goal is something relating to a pupil's progress in learning, working skills, transversal competence skills and/or behaviour that promotes learning.

- *Meeting arrangements are school-specific, however, held outside classes without cutting down a pupil's weekly lessons.*
- *The time spent for meetings is included in the participatory planning time, which shall be taken into account in the time allocation plan.*

Communication with home

Parents' evenings are organized at school in autumn to discuss, among other things, grade-specific annual assessment plans and report templates. We also talk about goals for each grade and various methods pupils can implement to demonstrate their learning and competence.

- *For instance through Wilma, in the form of discussions and notifications*
- *Grades in the school year report card must not come as a surprise to the pupil or his or her guardians.*
- *Parents play also an active role in communication.*
- *Headmasters should notify homes about the assessment criteria.*

Intermediate report

- *Intermediate report cards will be given in the end of the autumn term.*
- *Verbal assessment may be given also on grades 7–9 to support numerical assessment.*

School Year Report

- *In the end of the school year pupils are given school year report cards. The school year report is a summary of all assessment of learning over the school year.*
- *The report assesses a pupil's attainment for the goals set in the curriculum.*
- *The school year report includes assessment of behaviour.*
- *The school year report is also a decision on promotion or retention.*

Basic education certificate

- *In the end of grade 9 pupils are given Basic Education Certificate.*
- *Conforms with final assessment criteria*

Intermediate report, grades 7 to 9

Interaction between pupils and teachers -- self-assessment and peer-feedback

Kuukaudet:

- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December

Development discussions, grades 7 to 9

- Held by mid-term holiday
- Goal updated to learning plan
- Parents can participate
- Teacher can use structured discussion (App. 1)



School year report is a summary of the assessment of the school year.

9th grade basic education report

3. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is carried out during learning and for the learning. It is feedback that supports, guides and encourages learning. The feedback is to help pupils understand the goals of a subject, understand their progress in relation to the goals and also, how to improve their performance in relation to the goals and assessment criteria. Pupils have an active role in understanding and managing their learning (self-assessment). Peer feedback helps a pupil to learn to assess shared activities, work and output. A part of a pupil's learning process is to produce material, which will be implemented for formative assessment. Based on the formative assessment, teachers are also able to develop their teaching strategies.

- *Pupils know the goals and assessment criteria.*
- *We practise self-assessment and peer feedback skills.*
- *When giving feedback, the goals set previously in cooperation and previously achieved competence will be taken into account.*
- *Pupils' performances are not to be compared.*
- *Methods of continuous assessment will be defined in accordance with school-specific assessment practices. Formative assessment is supported by e.g.*

— *working on notebook, learning diary, portfolio, project walls,
any other work etc.*

— *pupil and teacher observations* —

electronic tools

4. Assessment of Finnish as Second Language

In middle school, S2 syllabus is assessed either numerically or by verbal grading scale excluding the final assessment (i.e. assessment in the end of spring term for grade 9), when numerical assessment has to be given for all subjects.

S2 assessment is marked as *"Aloitteleva - Kehittyvä - Voimakkaasti kehittyvä - Hyvin edistynyt"* (*"Beginning - Developing - Developing well - Accomplished"*) for the following goals:

- *Acting in interactive situations*
- *Understands texts*
- *Produces texts*

- *Understanding language, literature and culture, use of language is supportive of all learning*

Entries to Wilma, either

- *"H-hyväksytty" for passed and verbal grading scale or*
- *numerical grade.*

If so preferred, numerical assessment may be complemented in writing by using Descriptor Bank phrases, which can be modified, if necessary. Also individual description can be used.

Appendix 1

Structured development discussion, grades 7 to 9

Directions for guardians

You can talk in advance with the pupil about the topics you would like to discuss in the meeting. The pupil has a leading role in the meeting and steers his or her learning path to the direction of his or her strengths and goals.

1. The following topics, among other things, will be discussed in the meeting

- *Attendance: school day activities (lessons incl. basic requirements for effective learning, lunch, breaks), enjoying school, friends*
- *Day to day routines: meals, sleep, going to school and coming home, TV, computer and games, recreation and interests, homework assignments*
- *Working skills (strengths and developing skills): ability to work independently and together with others, skill to plan, assess and regulate one's work, skill to act responsibly and trying one's best, skill to work in constructive interaction*
- *Progress in subjects: is a pupil progressing easily, strengths in learning and skills still developing (focus on main points)*
- *Classroom behaviour*

2. The pupil will set a goal in the meeting. The goal regards progress in a subject, working skills, or behaviour.

- *The goal / major goals are entered in the learning plan in Wilma.*

Appendix 2.

Assessment Criteria for behaviour in Oulu

Pupils are assessed in accordance with their consideration of other people and the environment, evaluate their own and others' work and respect school rules and good manners. A part of a school's task is to provide guidance and educate pupils in understanding and skills relating to behaviour. When assessing behaviour, a pupil's age is also taken into account.

When assessing behaviour, the following criteria may be applied:

exemplary 10

- is considerate of others and the learning environment and shows a positive example to peers and in the learning environment
- acts constructively for the best of the group and school community in different situations
- takes initiative in the school community

excellent 9

- is considerate of others and the learning environment
- acts responsibly in the school community according to the agreed rules and instructions
- is kind and helpful and strives to build a positive working atmosphere

good 8

- behaves appropriately according to the situation
- follows school rules most of the time
- usually demonstrates good manners
- is able to solve conflict situations independently
- is able to work in a group

satisfactory 7

- behaves appropriately in different situations most of the time
- knows and accepts the school rules
- is able to solve conflict situations with guidance
- is able to work in a group with support

mediocre 6

- often shows indifference towards other members of the community, to school work and the school environment
- breaks school rules repeatedly
- creates a negative atmosphere through their attitude and behaviour
- needs constant guidance and advice about behaviour

poor 5

- shows extremely indifferent behaviour towards other members of the community, to school work and the school environment
- requires special measures to guarantee learning

very poor 4

- behaviour is totally inappropriate for the normal school environment