St. Bricin's College – Assessment Policy

2026-2029

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1. Mission Statement

St. Bricin's College is committed to providing quality learning in a safe and positive environment for all learners. A learning community driven by high expectations, inclusiveness and respect for all. Our work is guided by the belief that every child matters and will achieve more when standards are set high and demands their personal best.

2. Rationale

Assessment is a vital component of teaching and learning in our school, serving multiple purposes that support student development, curriculum delivery, and educational equity. It enables teachers to monitor progress, identify learning needs, and adapt instruction to ensure all students can achieve their potential. In our inclusive and multi-denominational setting, assessment practices are designed to be fair, transparent, and supportive of diverse learning styles and backgrounds. We value both formative and summative assessment as tools to promote reflection, encourage student agency, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. Ultimately, assessment helps us uphold high standards while nurturing the holistic development of every learner.

3. Types of Assessment

3.1 Formative Assessment

3.1.1 Definition

Formative assessment refers to a range of informal and formal assessment processes used by teachers during the learning process to monitor student understanding, provide feedback, and guide future teaching. Its primary purpose is to support learning by identifying strengths and areas for improvement, rather than assigning grades. Formative assessment is ongoing and helps students become active participants in their own learning journey.

3.1.2 Examples

- **Teacher questioning** during lessons to check understanding and prompt deeper thinking.
- **Exit tickets** where students write a brief response to a question at the end of a lesson.
- **Peer assessment** where students review each other's work using clear criteria.
- **Self-assessment checklists** that encourage students to reflect on their progress.
- **Learning journals or reflections** where students document what they've learned and any challenges.
- **Draft submissions** with teacher feedback before final grading.
- **Concept mapping** to visually represent understanding of a topic.
- **Quizzes or polls** used to gauge comprehension in real time.

3.2 Summative Assessment

3.2.1 Definition

Summative assessment refers to the evaluation of student learning at the end of an instructional period, unit, or course. It is used to measure achievement against defined learning outcomes and curriculum standards. Unlike formative assessment, summative assessment is typically graded and contributes to a student's overall academic record. It provides a snapshot of what students have learned and helps inform decisions about progression, certification, and reporting.4. Junior Cycle Assessment

3.2.2 Examples

- End-of-term or end-of-year exams that assess cumulative knowledge.
- Standardised tests such as Junior Cycle or Leaving Certificate examinations.
- Final projects or coursework portfolios submitted for grading.
- Oral presentations or performances evaluated against set criteria.
- Written assignments or essays completed at the end of a unit.
- Practical assessments in subjects like Science, Home Economics, or Technology.
- State examinations administered by the State Examinations Commission.

4. Junior Cycle Assessments

As part of the Junior Cycle Framework, our school implements a balanced approach to assessment that includes both formative and summative elements. Formal assessment at Junior Cycle includes Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs), which are undertaken in second and third year across all subjects. These assessments allow students to demonstrate their learning through varied formats such as projects, presentations, and investigations, and are reported using descriptors aligned with national standards. In third year, students also complete an Assessment Task, which is marked by the State Examinations Commission and contributes to their final grade. The Final Examination in each subject, also administered by the SEC, provides a summative evaluation of student achievement. Together, these components form a comprehensive picture of student learning, supporting the development of key skills and promoting equity and inclusion in assessment practices.

In-House Assessment

Our in-house assessments occur every 11 weeks. Formal Winter, Spring and Summer Exams are held annually for First-, Second- and Third-Year students. The exam durations are as follows:

	Winter	Spring	Summer
First	in class	in class	1 hour
Second	1.5 hour	in class/CBA	1.5 hour
Third	2 hours (1.5HE)	Mocks	State Exams

For First year students, in class assessments are used until the Summer Exams, as the class contact time is reduced due to subject sampling. In class assessments for all subjects may consist of a variety of assignments, observations, class tests etc.

For Third year students, the Spring Assessment is replaced with Mock examinations, and the Summer Exams are replaced by the official State exams.

These exams simulate the structure and expectations of the Junior Cycle, helping students develop exam technique and time management.

Mock Examinations are conducted in February of Third Year, often using externally sourced papers and corrected either internally or externally.

Rules for these exams can be found at Appendix A

5. Transition Year Assessment

5.1 Philosophy and Purpose

TY is designed to promote experiential learning, personal development, and student reflection. Assessment in TY is formative, flexible, and student-centred, recognising diverse learning experiences inside and outside the classroom.

5.2. Core Components of TY Assessment

5.2.1. Portfolio Work

Students compile a digital portfolio throughout the year.

Portfolios include:

- Project work (written, visual, digital)
- Reflections (journals, diaries)
- Reports on activities, trips, guest speakers
- Creative outputs (artwork, presentations, essays)
- Evidence of participation in extracurricular and community activities

Portfolios are reviewed periodically and presented during end-of-term assessments.

5.2.2. Subject-Based Assessments

TY subjects are assessed through varied methods:

- Projects
- Presentations
- Tests (written or online)
- Creative tasks (e.g., posters, performances)
- Journaling and reflective writing

Teachers, tutors and Year Heads input grades and comments during St. Bricin's College three assessment periods, Winter, Spring and Summer.

5.2.3. Attendance and Engagement

School record (attendance, punctuality, participation) contributes to the overall TY grade.

5.3. Grading and Certification

TY students are typically awarded a Pass, Merit, or Distinction based on cumulative credits or performance indicators.

Cumulative credits can change year on year depending on the number of modules undertaken. However, an example is provided below from the 2019 program.

> "There is a total of 400 credits available:
>
> - Distinction: Above 320 credits
> - Merit: Between 240 and 319 credits
> - Pass: Between 160 and 239 credits"

Certificates are presented at all TY students at Graduation Ceremonies, alongside awards for specific academic achievements.

6. Senior Cycle Assessments

In alignment with national guidelines and school policy, our Senior Cycle assessment framework supports both academic achievement and personal development, integrating formative and summative approaches to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of student learning.

6.1. Formative Assessment

Throughout Fifth and Sixth Year, students engage in ongoing formative assessment across subjects.

Methods include:

- Class tests
- Homework assignments
- Project work
- Oral presentations
- Practical tasks
- Self and peer assessment

Feedback is provided regularly to guide improvement and support independent learning.

6.2. In-House Examinations

Formal Winter, Spring and Summer exams are held annually for Fifth- and Sixth-Year students, these occur at 11-week intervals.

	Winter	Spring	Summer
Fifth	1 hour/1.5 hour	In class	2 hours
Sixth	2 hours	Mocks	State Exams
LCA	1 hour	1hour	1hour

For Sixth year students, the Spring Assessment is replaced with Mock examinations, and the Summer Exams are replaced by the official State exams

Rules for these exams can be found at Appendix A

These exams simulate the structure and expectations of the Leaving Certificate/Senior Cycle, helping students develop exam technique and time management.

Mock Examinations are conducted in February of Sixth Year, often using externally sourced papers and corrected either internally or externally.

Where possible St. Bricin's College will endeavour to facilitate the sitting of winter and mock examinations of external subjects in a candidate's final year. However, we cannot guarantee its correction depending on the subject undertaken and availability of an appropriate examiner.

6.3. Coursework and Practical Assessments

Many subjects include coursework components assessed during the school year:

- Portfolios (e.g., Link Modules, Art, DCG)
- Project work (e.g., Agricultural Science, Geography, Engineering, History)
- Oral and Aural exams (e.g., Irish, French, German)
- Practical exams (e.g., Music, Constructions Studies, Engineering, Home Economics, PE)

These components are assessed according to State Examinations Commission (SEC) guidelines and contribute to final grades.

Additional Assessment Components (AACs)

Over the course of this policy, the new and revised curriculum for the Senior Cycle will be coming into effect. Additional Assessment Components are a key feature of the redeveloped Senior Cycle and are designed to broaden how student learning is assessed beyond the traditional written examination. Each new and revised subject now includes an AAC worth a minimum of 40% of the overall marks, which is externally set and assessed by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

6.4. Final State Examinations

Administered by the SEC in June of Sixth Year. Subjects are assessed through written exams, practical's, orals, and coursework depending on the subject. Grades are awarded using the Leaving Certificate grading scale:

H1–H8 for Higher Level

O1–O8 for Ordinary Level

Distinction/Merit/Pass for LCVP and LCA modules

Senior Cycle

Higher Level				Ordinary Level			
Grade	%	Points	HL Maths Only *	Grade	%	Points	Foundation Maths
H1	90-100%	100	125	O1	90-100%	56	20 (F1)
H2	80-89%	88	113	O2	80-89%	46	12 (F2)
H3	70-79%	77	102	O3	70-79%	37	
H4	60-69%	66	91	O4	60-69%	28	
H5	50-59%	56	81	O5	50-59%	20	
H6	40-49%	46	71	O6	40-49%	12	
H7	30-39%	37	37	O7	30-39%	0	
H8	0-29%	0	0	O8	0-29%	0	

***25 Bonus Points awarded for Higher Level Maths H6 or above LCVP**

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)			
Continuous Assessment (200 Credits)		**Awards**	
Completing courses	62 credits (31%)	Pass	120-139 credits (60-69%)
Student Tasks	70 credits (35%)	Merit	140-169 credits (70-84%)
Written Exam (end of Year 2)	68 credits (34%)	Distinction	170-200 credits (85-100%)

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)		
Grade	**%**	**CAO Points**
Distinction	80-100%	66
Merit	65-79%	46
Pass	50-64%	28

7. Reporting Procedures

St. Bricin's College splits the school year into three 11-week terms. Each with a 10-week instructional window followed by a week of assessments. Our Winter Assessments fall in the middle of November, our spring assessments at the start of February and our summer assessments at the end of May.

Winter Assessments are formal in-house exams, in full exam conditions.

Spring Assessments are based on, in class assessments for 1st, 2nd, TY and 5th year students. Our exam year students sit their mocks at this time.

Summer Assessments are formal in-house exams for non-exam years.

At the end of each reporting period grades and comments are inputted on VSware. These reports are then made available to parents and guardians. Any queries that arise need to be raised with the subject teachers at parent/teacher/student meetings.

8. Support Systems

To ensure equitable access to learning and assessment, our school provides a robust system of supports tailored to meet the diverse needs of students. Standardised diagnostic tools such as the CAT4 (Cognitive Abilities Test), NGRT (New Group Reading Test), WIAT (Wechsler Individual Achievement Test), P-PADE (Post Primary Assessment and Diagnosis) and PTM (Progress Test in Maths) are administered to identify students' learning profiles, strengths, and areas requiring intervention. Where further assessment is needed, the WIAT III is used to evaluate literacy and numeracy skills in greater depth. Students identified with additional needs may be referred to the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) for formal assessment and guidance. Based on these insights, students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are supported through tailored interventions, including Student Support Plans, reasonable accommodations in assessments (e.g., use of a scribe, reader, or assistive technology), and access to resource teaching. Teachers implement differentiated learning strategies across subjects to ensure all students can engage meaningfully with the curriculum and demonstrate their learning. Collaboration among subject departments, SEN team, and guidance counsellor ensures that assessment practices are inclusive, responsive, and aligned with each student's individual learning journey.

8.1 CAT4

CAT4 measures a student's potential for learning and problem-solving, helping educators understand how they think and process information. It's often used for:

- Identifying strengths and weaknesses
- Informing teaching strategies
- Supporting decisions about setting or streaming

8.2 NGRT

The **NGRT** stands for the **New Group Reading Test**. It's a standardized assessment used in schools to measure students' reading ability and comprehension.

8.3 PPAD-E

PPAD-E stands for Post-Primary Assessment and Diagnosis – English. It is a standardised literacy assessment developed for Irish post-primary schools by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the Educational Research Centre (ERC).

What does PPAD-E test?

It measures key components of English literacy through **five subtests**:

1. **Word Reading** – Assesses decoding and word recognition (individually administered).
2. **Spelling** – Evaluates spelling accuracy.
3. **Reading Speed** – Measures fluency and automaticity.
4. **Reading Comprehension** – Tests understanding of written text.
5. **Writing Samples** – Looks at written expression and structure

8.4 PTM

A **Progress Test in Maths (PTM)** is a standardized assessment designed to measure a student's understanding and application of mathematical concepts taught in school. It's commonly used in UK and international schools.

Purpose

- Tracks progress in mathematics over time.
- Identifies strengths and areas for improvement.
- Provides data for teachers to inform instruction and interventions
- Identifies reading levels and progress over time.
- Helps teachers spot students who may need extra support or challenge.
- Often used for screening and tracking literacy development

8.5 WIAT

WIAT stands for the **Wechsler Individual Achievement Test**. It's a standardized assessment designed to measure an individual's academic skills and achievement in areas typically taught in school.

WIAT covers a broad range of academic areas, including:

- **Reading** (word reading, reading comprehension, oral reading fluency)
- **Writing** (spelling, sentence composition, essay writing)
- **Mathematics** (numerical operations, math problem solving)
- **Oral Language** (listening comprehension, oral expression)

All students will undergo these tests so that we can implement the best supports for each individual student.

9. Technology Integration

Our school embraces digital technologies to enhance assessment practices, streamline reporting, and support student learning. Platforms such as Office 365 and Microsoft Teams are integral to our approach, enabling students to submit assignments, receive feedback, and engage in collaborative learning. Digital portfolios, created using tools like OneNote, Word, or PowerPoint, allow students to document and reflect on their progress over time. Teachers use Teams to share success criteria, exemplars, and formative feedback, while assessments and reports are securely managed and communicated through systems such as VSware. This integration of technology fosters transparency, encourages independent learning, and ensures that assessment is accessible, inclusive, and aligned with modern educational standards.

10. Review Process

All school policies will remain in effect for up to three years before undergoing review. If any changes are required, they will be incorporated into the policy, which will then be submitted to the Board of Management for ratification.

This policy was ratified by the St. Bricin's College Board of Management on_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)

Appendix A – Exam Rules St. Bricin's College Rules for Examinations

BEFORE THE EXAMS

- All students must be in their exam centre before the start of their exam/study period.
- Ensure you have taken care of any toilet needs **before** the exam.
- Ensure to fill your water bottle before the exam.
- Sit in your assigned seat.

DURING THE EXAMS

- All normal school rules apply.
- A clean desk policy is in place during the exams- you are only permitted to bring with you writing materials and materials needed for the exam. E.g. calculator, math set, art supplies etc.
- All devices, phones, smart watches, ear buds etc, need to be placed in their Yondr pouches prior to the exam.
- Students must follow any instruction given by the supervising teacher. If you are requested to move seats, 100% cooperation is required.
- No communication with another student is allowed at any time during the examinations.
- All students must sign a "sign out" sheet when leaving the exam and mark the time they leave.
- All exams will finish at the time scheduled. No extra time will be added.
- The Exam supervisor's role is to implement the above rules. They cannot help students with exam questions.

TOILET BREAKS

- In the instance of recurrent/frequent visits made to the designated toilet facilities over the course of the exam period, students must provide a letter issued by their GP outlining a definitive medical need to frequent the toilet facilities on such a regular basis. All toilet breaks are recorded by the examination supervisor.