
Supporting Progress for Every Child

Transforming Statutory Assessment:
An Independent Review for Northern Ireland

Assessment Principles



The Panel has developed a set of principles to inform and support assessment policy in Northern Ireland. They are designed to be useful at both system and school level. This document should be read in conjunction with the full report.

| | Principle | What this means |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Purpose-driven, inclusive and equitable | <p>Assessments must have clearly defined purpose(s) and be specifically designed to meet the stated purpose(s). They should generate information that supports the progression and development of every child across all educational pathways.</p> <p>Assessments must be designed to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with additional or exceptional learning requirements.</p> |
| 2 | Growth-orientated attainment | <p>Assessment should be grounded in the understanding that attainment is the combined result of the effort of the pupil and the quality of education. Assessments should promote learning, progression and growth rather than models of fixed ability or predetermined outcomes.</p> |
| 3 | Curriculum-aligned | <p>Assessments must align with and support attainment in the statutory curriculum for Northern Ireland.</p> |
| 4 | Fair, transparent and supportive of learning | <p>Assessment processes and outcomes must be transparent, building trust among pupils, parents, carers, educators and stakeholders. Reporting and data from assessments should be clear, with information that supports accurate interpretation and meaningful use of assessment outcomes.</p> <p>All assessment outcomes must be treated as consequential and used responsibly to enhance learning.</p> <p>Statutory assessment should complement high-quality school-based assessment practices, recognising their essential role in informing teaching and providing a fuller picture of pupil progress.</p> |

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|---|---|--|
| 5 | High technical quality: valid, reliable and free from bias | <p>Assessments should be based on clear constructs and appropriately sample the intended domain of attainment. They should assess what they are intended to assess, sample adequately from the relevant domain and be used consistently with their intended purpose and design.</p> <p>Assessment outcomes must be consistent and dependable; meaning that similar performance yields similar results across occasions and assessments.</p> <p>Assessment design must not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any individual or group.</p> |
| 6 | Efficient and proportionate | All assessment processes should be low workload, cost-effective and proportionate providing value for money. They must deliver clear educational benefit relative to the cost, time and effort required. |
| 7 | Agreed service standards | <p>All assessment providers must meet agreed service standards and ensure a sustainable supply of high-quality statutory assessments.</p> <p>All assessment outcomes and reports should be provided to agreed schedules and service standards.</p> <p>Publicly available information should include technical evaluations, reliability data, participation statistics and other evidence relating to assessment performance.</p> <p>Assessments must be monitored, evaluated and improved regularly. New elements and processes should be introduced only when they demonstrably meet the assessment principles and provide improvement to statutory assessment.</p> |
| 8 | Strong professional competence in assessment | Initial teacher education and continuing professional development must support teachers to conduct assessment effectively, interpret outcomes accurately and take appropriate action based on the information generated. |
| 9 | Clear communication with parents, carers and stakeholders on assessment and its outcomes | Parents, carers and stakeholders must receive timely, clear and useful information about the purpose and nature of assessments and their outcomes, enabling them to understand results and support learners effectively. |

