



## Glossary of Terminology that relates to Assessment

- [FAQ](#) [1]

### **Accommodations**

Refer to modifications in the way in which a test is administered while not altering what the test measures or the validity of its result. Accommodations may include changes to presentation format, response format, test setting or test timing.

Accommodations exist for candidates for state exams with permanent or long-term conditions, including visual and hearing difficulties, or specific learning difficulties, which may significantly impair performance in the examinations. In this instance accommodations are referred to as 'reasonable accommodations'. Applications for such accommodations are considered by the State Examinations Commission. More information on reasonable accommodations for state exams can be viewed at [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie) [2]

### **Alternate/Parallel Forms**

Two or more versions of a test that are considered interchangeable, in that they measure the same constructs in the same ways, are intended for the same purposes, and are administered using the same directions. Examples of such tests include the Drumcondra Primary Reading Test, the Drumcondra Primary Mathematics test, the MICRA-T and SIGMA- T.

### **Assessment**

In relation to education the term assessment can refer to the gathering and interpretation of information related to a pupil's learning abilities, learning attainments, learning strengths, and learning needs. In the school situation assessment processes can be formal or informal, and information obtained can measure pupils' progress and achievement in addition to providing valuable information for use in planning for learning and teaching.

### **Classroom Assessment**

An assessment developed, administered, and scored by a teacher to evaluate individual or classroom pupil performance.

### **Conversion Table**

A chart used to translate test scores into different measures of performance (e.g. class equivalents and percentile ranks).

### **Criterion Referenced Tests**

Where the pupil's performance is compared with a pre-specified standard or criterion rather than with other pupils. An example would include the criterion-referenced Primary Language Proficiency Benchmarks developed by the former Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT) to identify the progressive language proficiency levels of pupils who are learning English as an additional language in Irish primary schools. The benchmarks are linked to learning outcomes identified in the Primary School Curriculum and are adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. They are presented in the form of proficiency statements, which are referenced to the discrete language skills of listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing. Most tests and quizzes written by school teachers are criterion-referenced tests. The objective is simply to see whether or not the pupil has learned the content.

### **Curve of Normal Distribution**

## Glossary of Terminology that relates to Assessment

---

A bell shaped graphical representation of the results which emerge when certain factors are measured in a large, randomly selected sample.

An example would be the intelligence curve, where the scoring of modern intelligence quotient (IQ) tests such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children is based on a projection of the pupil's measured rank on the bell curve with a center value (average IQ) of 100, and a standard deviation of 15. It must be noted that different tests may have different standard deviations.

### **Diagnostic Tool/Test**

An instrument such as a test or an observation schedule which is designed to yield evidence on the particular aspects of learning in which the pupil is having difficulty. Examples of diagnostic tests include the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability, the Dyslexia Early Screening Test, the Quest Starter Pack, the Aston Index and the Jackson Phonics Skills Test.

### **Formative Assessment**

Assessment is formative where it is part of an on-going instructional process where teachers measure pupils' knowledge and progress in order to inform teaching. Examples of formative assessment may include concept maps, classroom questioning, journals, directed summarising, monitoring of pupils' performance on homework, diagnostic tests and quizzes. Thus, it is sometimes referred to as assessment for learning.

### **Individual or Group Administration**

Some tests have instructions and procedures which require that they are administered to only one person at a time. Other tests may be administered to a group of pupils at the same time.

### **Intelligence Tests**

Tests that measure intellectual aptitude or capacities - examples include: Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-III-R) and Stanford-Binet (SB: IV).

### **Norm-Referenced Tests**

A test in which the pupil's performance is compared with the performance of a specified group: e.g. Irish children of his/her age.

### **Percentile Rank**

This indicates the subject's test performance relative to that of the group on which the test was standardised. It records the percentage of this group whose scores were lower than that obtained by the subject. For example a test score of 66 and a percentile rank of 83 indicates that a score of 66 is as high as or higher than that of 83% of the comparison group.

### **Portfolio**

A collection of work that demonstrates progress, learning, effort, and/or achievement.

### **Raw Score**

A raw score is the number of questions answered correctly. For example, if a test has 60 items and the pupil gets 31 items correct, the raw score is 31. Raw scores can often be converted to percentile ranks, standard scores, and age equivalent scores.

### **Screening**

A process in which a measure or measures are applied to a group of pupils in order to identify individuals who will require more extensive examination. Examples of screening tests include the Bangor Dyslexia Test, the Movement ABC checklist and the Connors ADHD Rating Scales.

### **Standard Deviation**

A unit which is used to measure the spread or scatter of measures around the mean of those measures. The mean and standard deviation are important elements in understanding the outcome of norm-referenced tests such as the MICRA-T, SIGMA-T, Drumcondra Primary Reading Test, the Drumcondra Primary Mathematics Test. The British Picture Vocabulary Scale, the Bankson Language Test and the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability.

### **Standard STEN Scores**

This score allows the pupil's test performance to be related to that of the group on whom the test concerned was standardised. The table illustrates what scores may tell a teacher/parent about a pupil's achievement in

## Glossary of Terminology that relates to Assessment

---

standardised tests.

STEN Score	What the Score Means	Proportion of Pupils who get the score
8 – 10	Well above average	1/6
7	Above average	1/6
5 - 6	Average	1/3
4	Below average	1/6
1 - 3	Well below average	1/6

*Table from: Your Child and Standardised Testing (NCCA)*

### Standardised Tests

Tests that are uniformly developed, administered, and scored. Examples of standardised tests include the Drumcondra Primary Reading Test, the Drumcondra Primary Mathematics Test, the SIGMA- T and the MICRA- T.

The table below illustrates what scores may tell a teacher/parent about a pupil's achievement in standardised tests.

	What the Score Means	Approx % of pupils who get this score
130 and above	Very High	2%
120-129	High	7%
110-119	High average	16%
90-109	Average	50%
80-89	Low Average	16%
70-79	Low	7%
Below70	Very Low	2%

*Table from: Your Child and Standardised Testing (NCCA)*

### Summative Assessment

Summative assessment helps to assess a pupil's learning at a particular point or time in the instructional process.

## Glossary of Terminology that relates to Assessment

---

This is often achieved through assessments for specific tasks: for example, at the end of a topic or after teaching a specific skill or concept. State examinations are summative assessment processes and an example of the use of assessment as a way to gauge, at a particular point in time, pupils' learning relative to norms.



**Address:** SESS, c/o Cork Education Support Centre, The Rectory, Western Road, Cork **Tel:** 1850 200 884 - **Fax:** 021 425 5647 - **Email:** [info@sess.ie](mailto:info@sess.ie)

**Special Education Support Service** is an initiative of Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education and Skills, funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2007-2013, "Transforming Ireland - A Better Quality of Life for All".