



**ALDENHAM**  
— SCHOOL —

# **ACADEMIC PROGRESSION POLICY**

**Reviewed by**  
**Assistant Head Student Progress**  
**June 2025**

<b>Policy Owner</b>	Assistant Head Student Progress
<b>Last Amended</b>	June 2025
<b>Last Review</b>	June 2025
<b>Review schedule</b>	Annual

## **Introduction**

At Aldenham, we focus on ensuring that all students make academic progress. We believe that all elements of academic learning should be directed towards this goal.

This Academic Progression Policy comprises four areas which underpin academic progress. These are:

1. Assessment and Marking
2. Feedback
3. Exams, tests and grading
4. Academic Intervention

These strands all encourage the Aldenham Attributes: aspiration, courage, co-operation, curiosity, independence and respect, which are all required inside and outside the classroom if a student is to progress academically.

This policy helps to ensure that:

- ...all pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability...
- ...A framework is in place to evaluate pupils' work and performance regularly and thoroughly, which refers to the school's aims as provided to parents, and/or national norms...
- ...teachers ... plan lessons well ... with understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of pupils, gained from regular and thorough assessment of pupils' work...
- ...all pupils acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding, and develop their skills (make good progress) according to their ability in the subjects taught...

ISI Inspection Framework, Sections 54, 55

<https://www.isi.net/inspection-explained/inspection-framework/>

## **Acronyms**

AHSP	Assistant Head Student Progress
AtL	Attitude to Learning
CPG	Current Projected Grade
DHA	Deputy Head Academic
HoD	Head of Department
HSM	Housemaster/mistress
KS3	Key Stage 3 – Year 7 to 8 (or 9) – depending on subject
KS4	Key Stage 4 – Year 9/10 to 11 – (i)GCSE years depending on subject
KS5	Key Stage 5 – Year 12 to 13 – A Level years
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SLT	Senior Leadership Team

## 1 – Assessment and Marking

### 1.1 General rationale

The academic assessment system and processes:

- allow students to develop and maintain a desire to learn
- prepare students suitably for the content, format and experience of formal external (public) exams
- meet the key competencies of the Teaching Standards which require that teachers regularly set work which is assessed, marked, recorded and returned to students – this applies to work completed inside and outside the classroom
- have the flexibility to work with digital devices and blended/hybrid learning
- provide a framework which is unambiguous to students, parents and staff
- retain appropriate subject specific autonomy
- can be appropriately adapted to students with identified Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

This policy provides the over-arching set of guiding standards regarding academic assessment and marking. Each department develops an annual 'Assessment Plan' that contextualises the policy for the subject, providing more specific guidance for all teachers in that department.

Assessment is a continual process which cannot always be recorded/tracked. Teachers use their professional skills to assess students' progress, skills and knowledge every lesson; not all of this is formally recorded. This policy reflects this with interleaving Tiers of assessments that provide feedback to students in sufficient quantities to maximise their progress.

The distinction between Summative Assessment (Assessment **of** Learning) and Formative Assessment (Assessment **for** Learning) is recognised – both are important in student's academic progress. Further details are provided in the Student Progress Notebook ([Assessment](#) ([Web view](#))).

Assessment at KS3 will include a focus on the knowledge and skills that support the development and progress of the student towards the courses leading to formal qualifications. In KS4 and KS5, assessments will normally be informed by the standards of work necessary for achieving those formal qualifications.

### 1.2 Assessment Tiering

All classwork and prep (homework) tasks are categorised into Tiers of assessment which interleave into one assessment journey. Each piece of work will have different elements and foci which will combine to allow for student progress throughout the year.

Tier	Name	Main (additional) assessment type
1	Public exams	Summative
2	Formal internal exams	Summative (Formative)
3	Unit / chapter / section tests	Summative / Formative
4	Regular assessed works (RAWs)	Formative (Summative)
5	'Live' assessment	Formative

### 1.3 Tiers 2-4

Assessments within Tiers 2-4 are pieces of work, whether done in class or for prep, for which the student will be provided with individualised, recorded feedback. **Tier 2 and Tier 3 assessments must be conducted as hand-written assessments on paper to reflect the nature of external exams (with access arrangements as appropriate).** Teacher will provide marks/grades as appropriate as a summative assessment. Teachers will also provide targeted formative feedback in line with the Section 2 of this policy. These assessments may cover anything relevant to the progress of the student for that subject, be it skills, content or other learning attitudes. Each subject schedules an agreed number of pieces of assessment (inclusive of Tier 1) per number of lessons, according to the following *minimum* ratios. Departments may decide to include more assessments than this.

- KS3 - 1 per 6 to 8 lessons *minimum*<sup>1</sup>
- KS4 - 1 per 7 to 9 lessons *minimum*
- KS5 - 1 per 7 to 9 lessons *minimum*

The department 'Assessment Plan' is created annually by each Head of Department and shared with all teachers within that department. The Plan will specify the nature and distribution of Tier 2-4 assessments over the subject courses. The plans are reviewed annually by DHA/AHSP (as part of the Assessment Checking Exercise – see below).

Heads of Department will provide subject-based guidance on the appropriate nature of Tier 4 assessments. Teachers have the flexibility to adapt these Tier 4 assessments to the context of their classes if the assessment remain within the guidance of this policy and subject-based guidance. For example, a Tier 4 assessment may be identified as:

- a quiz on a particular text, with the questions adapted to account for the different rate of progress through the text and depth of analysis made by students in different classes.
- a worksheet on a particular concept with different versions used depending on whether the students are studying at GCSE Foundation or Higher level.

Students' assessed work should be stored in a way that makes it as accessible as needed, for example for work scrutiny by Heads of Department, Senior Leaders and/or Inspectors. See the Digital Learning Policy for details of how Class Notebooks / OneNote can be used to consolidate Assessed Work electronically.

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<sup>1</sup> For Drama at KS3, there is no requirement for written feedback in addition to the grades and reports done throughout the year. Drama is a purely practical subject at this stage and thus we consider instant, consistent verbal feedback to be sufficient and appropriate. For KS4 and KS5, written feedback must be given in line with the policy for the written element of the course. Therefore, there is no expectation of more than 40% of a fully examined course's feedback structure.

For Music at KS3, written feedback is to be provided once a term, in addition to the grades and reports done throughout the year. Music is a majority practical subject at this stage and thus we consider instant, consistent verbal feedback to be sufficient and appropriate. For KS4 and KS5, as 30% of the course is a practical performance element, written feedback must be given for in line with the policy for 70% of the stated ratio.

## **1.4 Recording of summative marks/grades**

Summative marks/grades support students' academic progress over time, including by helping students to understand their current and potential future academic attainment, and tracking of academic progress at all levels (including individual, class, department, whole school and specific cohort)

All Tier 2 and 3 assessments must produce a summative mark or grade, which must be recorded in departmental spreadsheets available to all members of the department and to senior leaders upon request.

Tier 2 marks/grades will also be recorded in iSAMs for communication to parents/guardians.

Tier 4 assessments do not require summative marks/grades, but these can be given if appropriate and useful. Such marks/grades should be recorded as preferred by the teacher in, for example:

- Physical mark books
- Personal spreadsheets
- Teams Assignment (for example via the Grades section)

Non-mark/grade feedback is of particular importance for Tier 4 assessments, given the formative nature of these assessments – see Section 2 below.

Any assessments beyond those explicitly outlined in the department 'Assessment Plan' do not need to be centrally recorded.

Heads of Departments should perform regular checks (half-termly) to ensure that teachers are following the department 'Assessment Plan' and recording accurately in line with this policy.

## **1.5 Tier 5 – Live assessment and work checking**

The process of live assessment and work checking is a key element of supporting student progress, and happens in almost every lesson. The specific nature and format of this varies according to subject.

This type of assessment applies to many traditional forms of work. For example, checking the quality of students' note taking, or a discussion to elicit what they have learnt from independent and wider reading, starter quizzes, self-/peer-assessed work, assessment during skills practice etc. Each department will outline in their department policy/Schemes of Work the most common and important forms of student work and activity, as well as how this work is commonly assessed.

Live assessment and work checking constitutes a significant part of teachers' developing understanding of individual students' academic performance, and is invaluable in contributing to discussions concerning high-performing and underperforming students, and whether parents/guardians should be contacted outside of usual reporting cycles.

## **1.6 Prep (homework)**

At Aldenham School, work done outside the classroom is called "prep" (short for "preparation"). Work done independently of teacher supervision should support students' academic progress.

There is no expectation that prep is marked unless it is a Tier 4 assessment. Student completion of prep should be assessed in line with Tier 5 assessment.

Prep is set at KS3 and KS4 according to the prep timetable. The prep timetable provides a guideline for teachers, students and parents on the quantity and frequency of work expected. On occasion, for legitimate pedagogical reasons, more or less prep may be set at the professional discretion of the teacher/department. Students are additionally encouraged to conduct independent consolidation of the material studied to date, and to ask their teacher for extension work. The overall quantity of prep set over an academic year should be in line with the prep timetable.

At KS5, prep is set according to teacher discretion and under the direction of the appropriate Head of Department.

## **1.7 Assessment Checking Exercise**

Each year, each academic department is asked to provide the following:

- a link to the current Department Assessment Plan showing where and when Tier 1-4 assessments are occurring
- a link to departmental mark-books showing records of Tier 2 and 3 marks/grades.
- confirmation that all Tier 4 assessments are being set and marked by all teachers, and that teachers are recording appropriate outcomes
- confirmation that the Head of Department is checking that teachers' marking and feedback is in line with this policy
- one example per teacher of particularly effective assessment and feedback that has led to improved student progress

## 2 – Feedback

All feedback on assessed work (Tiers 2-4) must:

- be communicated clearly to students, in written, type, audio-recorded form, or other form as appropriate
- be recorded for/by the students
- be easily accessible to students
- clearly state the required action from the student
- provide the opportunity for students to respond orally or in writing, as appropriate
- be such that, if a student were to act upon it, they would progress academically from their current position, even if they appear to have mastered the skills/content required by that specific assessment

A useful form of feedback is a comment on what the student has done well (What Went Well or WWW) and a way to improve the work (Even Better If or EBI). The availability of personal student digital devices and OneNote Class Notebooks allows multimedia feedback to be given, such as personal and/or summary audio and video recordings.

Department-based codes or marking grids may be used where common feedback is identified or expected. Equally, common feedback points identified during the assessment of a specific piece of work may be shared during 'whole class feedback', and the students guided in highlighting/annotating the points most pertinent to them.

A balance needs to be struck between the competing factors relating to feedback, such that feedback is both timely and useful in supporting students' academic progress. Factors include:

- providing individualised verses group feedback
- the time taken to provide such feedback
- the time given for students to respond to the feedback
- other uses of professional time such as adapting planning of future teaching and learning based on the assessment of student work

This balance will vary by Subject, Key Stage, Academic and SEND profile of groups of students. Heads of Department play the critical role of providing the subject context for feedback practices, providing guidance and support for department members, and holding the professional trust in selecting the most appropriate feedback practices for departmental assessed work. Feedback methods and good practice should be regularly shared, reviewed and discussed in department meetings, and shared more widely through appropriate forums (eg Heads of Department meetings and INSET sessions). See also Appendix 1.

The DHA/AHSP perform regular checks to ensure that feedback is being provided adequately by all teachers as part of the Assessment Checking Exercise.

Longer range feedback to students and parents is provide by written reports and parents' evenings. These are scheduled to allow for comprehensive, focussed and documented formative and summative feedback to students and parents at key points throughout the year.

Further details of feedback practices and examples are provided in the Student Progress Notebook ([Assessment](#) ([Web view](#))).



### **3 – Exams, tests and grading**

#### **3.1 Baseline testing**

Students complete baseline testing<sup>2</sup> at different points in their school career, specifically:

- Year 7 and 9 – MidYIS
- Year 12 – ALIS (if GCSE results are not available)

Information from the baseline tests is used to

- help identify students' overall academic ability (including potential strengths and weaknesses)
- help identify possible special educational needs
- construct formal academic targets (predicted grades).

Formal baseline data is also used in calculating value added data and assists with the Academic Intervention programme.

#### **3.2 Predicted grades**

Year 7-11: Predicted grades are produced for the students for all subjects. These predicted grades are not shared directly with students given the tendency of predicted grades to be seen as a ceiling to possible achievement. Predicted grades are used for internal analysis and identification of students likely to require Academic Intervention.

Year 12-13: Each student is issued with a copy of their 'chances graphs' that show the grade distributions by subject achieved by students in previous cohorts with similar academic profiles. The 'most likely' grade is used as the predicted grade for internal processes as above.

#### **3.3 Exam construction**

Exams in this context refer to:

- Year 7-9 Exams: Summer Exams
- Year 10-13 Exams: Year 10 Summer Exam, Year 11 Mocks, Year 12/13 Predicted Grade Exams and Mocks

Exams are constructed with the following principles.

- Year 7-9 Exams: papers contain assessment of relevant contents and skills relating to curriculum of these year groups
- Year 10-13 exams: paper(s) constructed from least two awarding organisation's past papers, ensuring a realistic distribution of Assessment Objectives and Question Demand, and of realistic length.

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<sup>2</sup> Introductory videos: <https://www.cem.org/introduction-videos> and blog <https://www.cem.org/blog/how-we-make-predictions>

### 3.4 Exam grading

Exams are graded with the following principles:

- Year 7-9 Exams: Grade boundaries are constructed to produce a cohort grade distribution broadly matching the MidYIS Predicted Grade distribution (norm referencing). Grade 9 is not awarded to Year 7/8 students. Grade 8 is used with due caution for Year 7/8 students – ie only if the student is showing exceptional ability.
- Year 10-13 Exams: Grade boundaries are constructed by reference to analysis of the published grade boundaries (criterion/standards referencing).

Exam grades are determined based on these principles, and not systematically up/downgraded for subjective/motivational purposes.

Where a student has more than one teacher of a subject, identical grades must be reported by each teacher for that student in that subject.

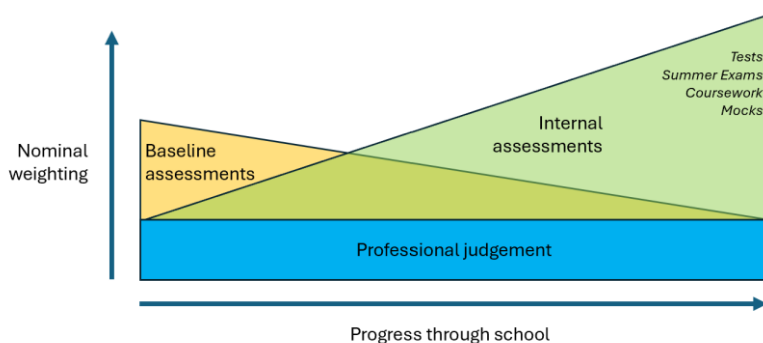
### 3.5 In-year Grading – subject grades

During an academic year, students receive reports of their Current Projected Grades (CPGs) which are defined as *"the current projection of the students' most likely grade at GCSE or A Level with all the information available to that date."*<sup>3</sup>

Multiple sources of information will be used in projecting grades, and the weighting of the use of this evidence will change over time. Specifically:

- professional judgement is applied across time
- some weight on MidYIS/ALIS early on, decreasing over time
- increasing weight on internal assessment/evidence as this is built up over time.

### Weighting of evidence in determining CPG



CPGs are determined based on these principles, and not systematically up/downgraded for purely subjective/motivational purposes.

<sup>3</sup> CPGs replace 'Current Attainment' Grades, or C.At.s from September 2025

### 3.6 In-year grading – Attitude to Learning

During an academic year, students receive reports of their Attitude to Learning (AtL) for their in-class and out-of-class work. Students are grading as Outstanding, Working Well, Requires Improvement or Cause for Concern. Rubrics for each grade are available in the Student Progress Notebook: [Reports](#) ([Web view](#))

## 4 – Academic Intervention, including Academic Monitoring

Academic Intervention is any activity or process that supports student academic progress, beyond regular classroom teaching and learning activities or processes. The processes outlined here provide consistency in supporting students' progress. Full details and resources are available in the Student Progress Notebook ([Academic Intervention](#) ([Web view](#))).

Academic intervention is likely to be triggered by concerns about average Attitude to Learning Grades and/or Current Projected Grades (average and by subject). Students may require Academic Intervention if their learning progress falls below a threshold relative to the School's expectations. Figure 1 provides a flow diagram that summarises the decision-making process and Intervention strategies.

The main data used for comparison are:

- CPGs vs baseline predictions
- Overall AtL grades - absolute and in relation to Year Group averages.

Lists of students likely to require Academic Intervention are then assessed by senior leaders, Heads of Departments and Housemasters/mistresses. Students may be added/removed from the list based on additional information/professional judgements.

[Academic Intervention](#) may include:

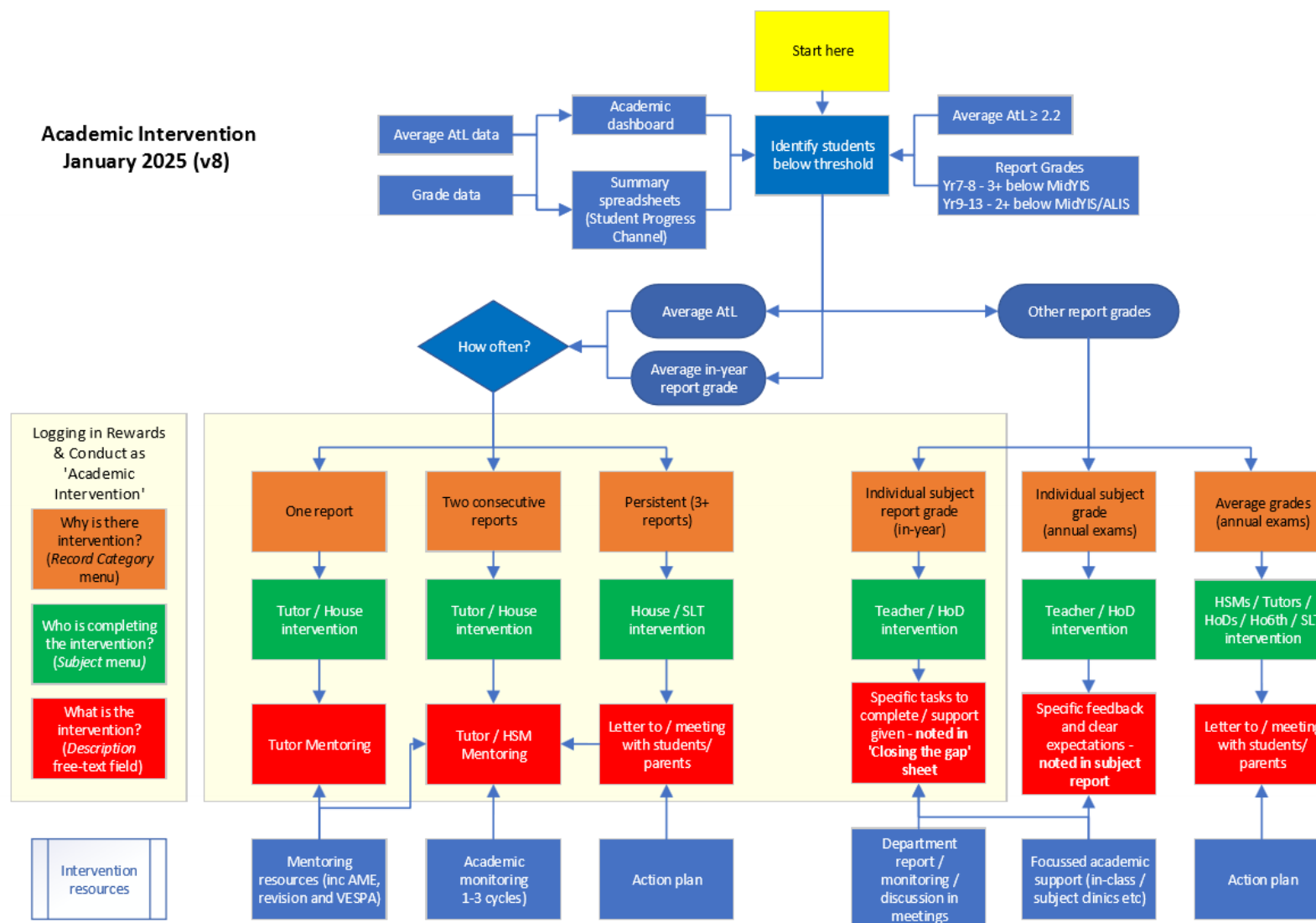
- [Mentoring / development of study habits](#)
- [Monitoring](#) – short fortnightly reports from teachers/tutors
- Required attendance at [support sessions/clinics](#)
- Departmental/whole school [lesson report](#)
- Development of agreed action plan ([Closing the Gap](#)).

Individual subject AtL reports of R/3 (Requires Improvement) or C/4 (Cause for Concern) are recorded with written comments in reports to parents/guardians. Where there is significant 'Cause for Concern' outside of the regular reporting cycle, 'Cause for Concern' letters can be sent to parents/guardians via Heads of Department/Common Room Secretary - [Cause for Concern Letters](#) ([Web view](#))

Academic Intervention is logged in the iSAMS Rewards and Conduct module ([Logging Academic Intervention](#) ([Web view](#))).

Students showing very strong academic progress and attainment are covered by the Aspire Policy.

## Academic Intervention January 2025 (v8)



**Figure 1: Academic Intervention flow diagram**

Check the Student Progress Notebook for most up to date version: [Academic Intervention - Flow diagram \(Web view\)](#)

## **Appendix 1: Staff Concerns**

Should it be brought to the Head of Department's attention that a member of the department has not been providing adequate assessment/feedback, the Head of Department should:

- advise the staff member of the concern
- ask to see the work and the records for that class
- consider observing lessons with that class.

Should the concerns prove to be well founded, a clear statement of the remedial action to be taken with specified due dates should be written out and agreed by both parties and this record kept.

## Change Log

Version	Changes
January 2025	First logged in Change Log
June 2025	Addition of Exam construction and Grading section General redraft and update