

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF BELGIUM

1. ASSESSMENT

Important notice: In Belgium, the principle of educational freedom grants schools the right to develop a school-specific vision on quality of education within the boundaries set by the Flemish government and the Flemish parliament. This vision is elaborated in a school-specific curriculum and school-specific teaching and assessment practices. The Flemish government (referred to as FG) clearly states that *'the assessment- and evaluation policy belongs to the complete autonomy of the school.'*

(<https://www.vlaanderen.be/nl/publicaties/detail/het-regeerakkoord-van-de-vlaamse-regering-2014-2019>) Hence, not much real policy measures can be found. Mainly advisory guidelines, particularly given by the umbrella organizations (referred to as UO), will be listed. Next to the analyses of policy documents, interviews within the department of educational policy making at the Flemish Ministry of Education, and the catholic umbrella organization (the biggest UO in Belgium) were conducted.

1.1. Purposes of assessment						
Policy Measure	No clear Policy or Encouragement or Requirement or Accountability	For secondary only (lower, upper secondary or both) or both primary and secondary or other	Mathematics only or other subjects too	In line with the literature	Differentiation regarding the group of teachers (e.g., newly appointed) or group of students (e.g. with special needs)	Period of establishment/Evaluation and Adjustment of policy
FG: The class council ('klassenraad'), the group of teachers who are involved with a pupil, assesses autonomously whether a pupil obtains the certificate of primary education. The class council	accountability	Only primary	Other too	yes	yes	1998 Adjustment 2015

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<p>bases this decision on the attainment of the curriculum goals, set out by the school, the umbrella organization and the Flemish government and on the overall picture of the concerned pupil. (https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=9287)</p>						
<p>FG: The same applies for the secondary education. (https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=9418#10)</p>	accountability	Only secondary	Other too	yes	yes	1999 Adjustment 2018
<p>UO (public): Good assessments need to meet two main conditions: they need to be effective and fair. Effective means evaluating what you intend (valid), giving the same results when repeated under the same circumstances (reliable) and occurring within the available time with the available sources (effective). Fair contains objectivity, transparency and standardization. (http://www.g-o.be/evalueren)</p>	Encouragement	Both primary and secondary	Other too	Yes	Yes	2012
<p>UO (public): When learning is based on competences two extra conditions are added. First the assessment of competences needs to take place within authentic situations. Second the reality of the assessment should be as high as possible. (http://www.g-o.be/evalueren)</p>	Encouragement	Both primary and secondary	Other too	Yes	Yes	2012
<p>FG: Assessment is an instrument to test learning progress and learning efficiency. In some schools assessment is, wrongly, viewed as a goal in itself. (https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=13093#6)</p>	Encouragement	Only secondary	Other too	Yes	Yes	2001 Adjustment 2017

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<p>UO (catholic): Throughout the schoolyear assessment takes place for various reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To get an interim view on the pupil's progress. • To get an interim view on the quality of the learning situation. • To evaluate if a pupil attains the learning objectives and is able to pass on to the next level. <p>(https://pincette.vsko.be/meta/properties/dc-identifier/MLER_083) & interviews</p>	Encouragement	Only secondary	Other too	Yes	Yes	2014 Adjustment 2018
<p>UO (catholic): The Flemish government gives autonomy, the catholic umbrella organization gives direction indicators. And 3 of them are important to mention here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The curriculum based on the final objectives given by the FG. - The frame of reference for educational quality (ROK – Referentiekader OnderwijsKwaliteit). - The development scales from the inspection services. (interviews) 	Accountability	Both primary and secondary	Other too	Yes	Yes	/

1.2. Techniques of assessment						
Policy Measure	No clear Policy or Encouragement or Requirement or Accountability	For secondary only (lower, upper secondary or both) or both primary and secondary or other	Mathematics only or other subjects too	In line with the literature	Differentiation regarding the group of teachers (e.g., newly appointed) or group of students (e.g. with special needs)	Period of establishment/Evaluation and Adjustment of policy
UO (public): Teachers should, in consultation with pupils, create objective criteria for evaluation. These criteria need to be clearly communicated in order to provide a base for correct estimation of assessment purposes by pupils and their parents. (http://www.g-o.be/media/1945/go-visietekst-evalueren-in-het-so-def.pdf)	Encouragement	Only secondary	Other too	yes	no	2012
FG: How evaluation criteria are conceived is the responsibility of the schoolboard (and not of the government). With one exception in the secondary education: at the end of the technical, art and vocational education, schools are obliged to organize an integrated exam in which the specific competence are tested. (https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=9418#10)	Accountability	Only secondary	Other too	Yes	Yes	1999 Adjustment 2018

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1.3. Reporting results to students, parents etc.						
Policy Measure	No clear Policy or Encouragement or Requirement or Accountability	For secondary only (lower, upper secondary or both) or both primary and secondary or other	Mathematics only or other subjects too	In line with the literature	Differentiation regarding the group of teachers (e.g., newly appointed) or group of students (e.g. with special needs)	Period of establishment/Evaluation and Adjustment of policy
FG: The schoolboard decides when and how pupils and their parents are informed about the decision made by the class council (if they passed successfully or not). However, schools must communicate this in the school regulations and the date of reporting shouldn't pass the 30 th of June (last day of the schoolyear). (https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=9418#10)	Accountability	Only secondary	Other too	Yes	Yes	1999 Adjustment 2018
FG: If pupils don't pass the final assessment ('orientation certificate B or C') schools must motivate this decision written down. Hereby they are obliged to refer to the possibility and conditions of appeal. (https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=9418#10)	Accountability	Only secondary	Other too	Yes	Yes	1999 Adjustment 2018

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<p>UO (catholic): Reporting results to students and parents should be based on a content classification or clustering, with a separate quotation for each course. In this way schools can specify the assessment for different course components. (https://pincette.vsko.be/meta/properties/dc-identifier/MLER_083)</p>	<p>Encouragement</p>	<p>Only secondary</p>	<p>Other too</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>2014 Adjustment 2018</p>

1.4. Provision of resources to support teacher assessment (e.g. battery of tests to be used, item banks, financial resources)						
Policy Measure	No clear Policy or Encouragement or Requirement or Accountability	For secondary only (lower, upper secondary or both) or both primary and secondary or other	Mathematics only or other subjects too	In line with the literature	Differentiation regarding the group of teachers (e.g., newly appointed) or group of students (e.g. with special needs)	Period of establishment/Evaluation and Adjustment of policy
<p>FG: At the end of the primary education schools are obliged to take a validated test of at least three learning areas. The results obtained are used for internal quality assurance and can be a part of the elements the class council takes into account when awarding a certificate for primary education (see also 1.5). https://codex.vlaanderen.be/Portals/Codex/documenten/1005384.html</p>	Accountability	Primary only	Others too	Yes	Yes	2017
<p>FG: The government organizes an annual national polling test to evaluate the quality of primary and secondary education. School that aren't in the sample can use a parallel test to evaluate their quality and check to what extent the final objectives or developmental objectives have been reached. https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/paralleltoetsen-van-peilingen</p>	Encouragement	Both primary and secondary	Others too	Yes	Yes	/

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<p>FG: The government offers toolkits to support teachers Dutch, language policy- and care coordinators and schools with the choice for evaluation methods for Dutch competencies. These toolkits focus on broad evaluation: evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, of all possible talents from different perspectives, at different moments with different evaluation tools and in different situations. https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/toolkits-breed-evalueren-competenties-nederlands</p>	Encouragement	Both primary and secondary	Only Dutch (in this stage?)	Yes	Yes	/
<p>UO (catholic): The school advisory service made an evaluation indicator to help teachers develop a vision about and goals for assessment. (interviews)</p>	Encouragement	Only secondary	Others too	Yes	Yes	2014

1.5. National assessment mechanisms (if any)						
Policy Measure	No clear Policy or Encouragement or Requirement or Accountability	For secondary only (lower, upper secondary or both) or both primary and secondary or other	Mathematics only or other subjects too	In line with the literature	Differentiation regarding the group of teachers (e.g., newly appointed) or group of students (e.g. with special needs)	Period of establishment/Evaluation and Adjustment of policy
FG and UO: The National Assessment Program ('Peilingen') is commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Training to an academic institute under the supervision of the agency AHOVOKS. The National Assessment Program aims to collect information on the extent to which the attainment targets and developmental objectives imposed by the Parliament have been obtained in reality. The program aims to provide reliable information on the validity and feasibility of the attainment targets, on the outputs of the school system regarding those attainment targets and on the effectiveness of processes used in the current school system to achieve these outputs. http://www.oecd.org/education/school/46974684.pdf	encouragement	Both primary and secondary	Other too	yes	yes	2002

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These assessments only have a development goal and are not used to evaluate individual schools. However, schools have the possibility to employ these assessments for self-evaluation purposes (see 1.4).						
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2. TEACHER TRAINING ON ASSESSMENT (INITIAL AND IN SERVICE) AND COLLABORATION AMONG TEACHERS

2.1. Teacher initial training in terms of the programs of study offered by the universities, leading to teachers' graduate or post graduate diploma (i.e., whether the Ministry of Education is in any kind involved to the programs of study of the Universities)						
Policy Measure	No clear Policy or Encouragement or Requirement or Accountability	For secondary only (lower, upper secondary or both) or both primary and secondary or other	Mathematics only or other subjects too	In line with the literature	Differentiation regarding the group of teachers (e.g., newly appointed) or group of students (e.g. with special needs)	Period of establishment/Evaluation and Adjustment of policy
We see cooperation between the catholic umbrella organization and the graduate schools or universities for teacher training. But these collaborations are non-structured and ad hoc. Again: the autonomy of all schools leads tot very little policy about assessment.						

2.2. Teacher professional development: in service training courses, including mentoring system for newly appointed teachers							
Policy Measure	No clear Policy or Encouragement or Requirement or Accountability	For secondary only (lower, upper secondary or both) or both primary and secondary or other	Mathematics only or other subjects too	In line with the literature	Differentiation regarding the group of teachers (e.g., newly appointed) or group of students (e.g. with special needs)	Period of establishment/Evaluation and Adjustment of policy	Who is offering and where? (e.g. school based in service training)
FG: All schools are obliged to create an annual plan for in service training. This plan takes into account every training effort that focuses on the development of teacher's knowledge, competences and attitudes. https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=14129	Accountability	Both primary and secondary	Other too	Yes	No	2009 Adjustment 2018	/
UO (catholic): Flemish government is looking for collaboration between graduate schools and universities for teacher training and the school in which the teachers will be working in view of creating guidance for newly appointed teachers. (interviews)	No clear policy (yet)	Both primary and secondary	Other too	Yes	Yes	/	/

2.3. Support offered by school advisory bodies (this may not be applicable for centralized systems such as Cyprus and Greece)						
Policy Measure	No clear Policy or Encouragement or Requirement or Accountability	For secondary only (lower, upper secondary or both) or both primary and secondary or other	Mathematics only or other subjects too	In line with the literature	Differentiation regarding the group of teachers (e.g., newly appointed) or group of students (e.g. with special needs)	Period of establishment/Evaluation and Adjustment of policy
FG & UO: Each educational umbrella organization has its own School Advisory Service ('Pedagogische begeleidingsdienst'), which ensures professional internal support to schools. Schools can call on them for educational and methodological advisory	encouragement	Both primary and secondary	Others too	Yes	Yes	2009 Adjustment 2018

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services (e.g. innovation projects, self- evaluation projects, support initiatives). School advisors work across schools for the in- service training and support of school principals and school teams. They also support and stimulate quality assurance mechanisms in the schools. There has been a shift from supporting individual teachers towards support at the system level. (http://www.oecd.org/education/school/46974684.pdf + https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=14129) (interviews)						
UO (catholic): Several in service training are organized by the school advisory services to develop teachers assessment and reporting policy, both on demand (of school leaders) as on offer (for leaders and teachers). (interviews)	No clear policy	Both primary and secondary	Others too	Yes	Yes	/

2.4. Teacher cooperation about assessment within a school (including team teaching, exchange of visits among teachers etc.)

Policy Measure	No clear Policy or Encouragement or Requirement or Accountability	For secondary only (lower, upper secondary or both) or both primary and	Mathematics only or other subjects too	In line with the literature	Differentiation regarding the group of teachers (e.g., newly appointed) or group of students	Period of establishment/Evaluation and Adjustment of policy

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		secondary or other			(e.g. with special needs)	
UO (catholic): Teachers are expected to investigate in their department and work together with the colleagues from the same field. (interviews)	No clear policy	For secondary only	Other subjects too	yes	yes	/

2.5. Promoting networking between schools						
Policy Measure	No clear Policy or Encouragement or Requirement or Accountability	For secondary only (lower, upper secondary or both) or both primary and secondary or other	Mathematics only or other subjects too	In line with the literature	Differentiation regarding the group of teachers (e.g., newly appointed) or group of students (e.g. with special needs)	Period of establishment/Evaluation and Adjustment of policy
UO (catholic): School advisory services support networks between school: educators who teach in the same field are brought together. (interviews)	No clear policy	Both primary and secondary	Others too	Yes	Yes	/

2. EVALUATION MECHANISMS IN REGARD TO THE POLICY ON ASSESSMENT AND TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The constitutional freedom of education (see page 1) has as a consequence that the Flemish government mainly advises schools in their policy with regard to (formative) assessment, but the control is limited and consequently the evaluation of assessment non-existent. Since there is no national policy on the evaluation of (formative) assessment, it was not possible to answer the following questions. The school inspectorate (appointed by the Flemish Ministry) investigates if the quality in schools is assured and investigates the policy-making capacities of the school. However, evaluation and assessment is part of the freedom of education.

3.1.	How frequently evaluation projects are undertaken? none
3.2.	Sources of data (e.g. views of different stakeholders, impact on learning) used in evaluating the national policy. none
3.3.	Please tell us when a reform policy is typically evaluated. Is it normally continually evaluated (i.e., from the introduction of a reform or whether data only at the end of a reform are collected)?

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	none
3.4.	Processes that are used in order to control the validity of evaluation instruments (if any). none
3.5	Please indicate the focus of evaluation based on the following and provide details: a) Perceptions of different stakeholders about the appropriateness of the policy b) Abilities of stakeholders to implement the policy c) Impact of policy on student learning

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3.6.	Please give your views about who has access to the reports of policy reform evaluations (Officials of the ministry, Teachers, School stakeholders, Public, Others).
3.7.	Please state whether the evaluation results are used and for whom. <i>In case they are used</i> specify <u>how</u> they are used. If possible, provide specific examples of how evaluation results have been used in the past.

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