

# Assessment

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In outcomes-based education, course assessments must assess the course learning outcomes, and only the learning outcomes. As you get started, it is recommended that you create an assessment blueprint – a document that maps your assessments to your learning outcomes. By the end of the semester, your students should be able to meet the learning outcomes of your course at the appropriate level (Bloom's Taxonomy).

An [Assessment Blueprint \(.docx\)](#) maps out the assessment methods and strategies in your course. Creating an assessment plan ensures that the evaluation of students' performance is comprehensive, fair, and balanced. Communicating this plan at the start of your course allows students to understand what is expected of them and enables them to prepare their best work.

For more about assessment blueprints, and the assessment plan for your courses, see the article in the Academic Newsletter.

## Types of Assessment

Assessment allows us to gather information about student performance, fine tune our teaching practices, and improve student success.

How do we determine that the students have met the learning outcomes of the course? How will we evaluate their learning and perhaps even more importantly how do we assess their learning as the course progresses?

Assessment **of**, **for**, and **as** learning asks us to consider how we intend on using the variety of tasks and assignments that are used in the classroom.

Assessment **of** learning is often called **summative** assessment. These are the major assessments of the course – the major projects, essays midterms, and final exams.

Assessment **for** learning is diagnostic and **formative** for the purposes of improving learning (involves both the instructor and the student in a process of continual reflection and review about achievement of the learning outcomes). To complete an assessment **for** learning, one identifies what the students already know, and/or what has been retained from previous lesson(s). The information gathered is used to determine how to proceed with the lesson(s).

Formative assessments may or may not be graded – they are “low stakes” assessments. Assessments for learning may be used as a guide for us to adjust classroom instruction based upon how well the students are understanding the course content. Similarly, students are provided valuable feedback on their own learning.

Assessment **as** learning is a process of developing and supporting students’ active participation in their learning. Self and peer assessments provide students with opportunity to use feedback to improve learning. Classroom polling, pre-lesson quizzes or assessment, and in-lesson quizzing or questioning allow students to “test” their skills and/or knowledge and to identify what they understand and what they need to keep working on. Find great ideas in [“Dipsticks: Efficient Ways to Check for Understanding”](#) (scroll half way down the page to find a list of 53 ways to check for understanding).

Here is a guide for [aligning assessments, learning outcomes and learning activities](#). In *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, Angelo and Cross suggest a myriad of techniques that can be used to assess learning, including these [Formative Assessment Techniques \(PDF\)](#).

[Learner Assessment in Online Courses: Best Practices & More](#) from LearnWorlds

Learn more about formative assessment, authentic assessment, and assessment design in the article in the Academic Newsletter.

[7 Ways to Do Formative Assessments in Your Virtual Classroom](#) from edutopia

## General Assessment Tips

**Provide ongoing and meaningful feedback to students about their progress and development.** Assessment is about more than awarding grades. It is a continuous process with the goal of understanding student learning in order to improve it. Assessments, and accompanying feedback, should be distributed throughout a course at regular intervals to allow students to learn from past performance.

**Align assessments with learning outcomes.** Assessments measure how well students can demonstrate the course learning outcomes. Each learning outcome should map to at least one assessment.

**Provide more than one opportunity to demonstrate each outcome.** If possible, give students several occasions to show what they have learned and how they have improved. This will provide a more accurate picture of their achievement of course learning goals.

**Make assessments appropriately varied.** Using a variety of assessment methods suitable to the subject matter ensures that students are evaluated on their knowledge and skills related

to the learning goals, and not on their ability to take a test. Consider assessments that require students to write, speak, perform, or create as appropriate.

**Reflect the skills required of graduates in the field.** You can make course material more interesting and engaging to students by designing assessments that recreate the tasks they will be performing as part of a “real job.” Authentic tasks require students to interact deeply with the content and can evaluate several skills at once.

**Include assessments “for, of, and as” learning.** Not all assessments are graded evaluations “of” student learning. In your blueprint, use regular, ungraded formative assessments (or check-ins) “for” learning what students do and do not understand during a lesson in order to adapt your teaching process. And include ungraded assessments that allow students to reflect on their own progress “as” they learn.

**Distribute graded assessments reasonably.** Give students ample time to complete assignments and study for tests. Return a minimum of 30% of their final grade to students at least one week before the course drop date. And make sure no single assessment is worth more than 40% of the total evaluation. (This aligns with the [Student Assessment Policy](#).)

## General Assessment Support

1. [A Focus on Learning Outcomes: Assessment of LOs](#)
2. Question Stems at Various Levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy: [A Focus on Learning Outcomes: Bloom’s Taxonomy](#)
3. [Georgian College Centre for Teaching and Learning](#)
4. [Digital Assessments Guide \(PDF\)](#)

## Other Factors to Consider:

- Professional associations’ guidelines regarding assessment (for programs where graduates require certification after graduation)
- [Seneca’s Student Assessment Policy](#)

## Rubrics

A rubric is a document which communicates performance expectations. It contains criteria which will be assessed, and levels of performance quality (often with mark ranges). When distributed to students with an assignment, the rubric ensures students are clear on the expectations for the assignment. It would also be used by the instructor to provide feedback

(marks and comments) on completed student work.

[Rubric Resources](#) from the Teaching & Learning Centre

## Resources on Multiple Choice Testing

1. [Tips for Writing Good Multiple Choice Questions](#) from the Teaching Professor (search for this publication through Seneca Libraries to read the entire article)
2. [Writing Good Multiple Choice Questions](#) from Vanderbilt University
3. [Creating a Test](#) in Learn@Seneca  
[Learn@Seneca Tests, Surveys and Pools support from Blackboard](#)

## Peer Review

[Peer Assessment](#) information from McGill University

tags : assess, assessment, assessment-blueprint, assessment-main, multiple-choice, peer-review, rubric, teaching-and-learning, teaching-and-learning-centre