



## Assessment in Higher Education

### 22 Tips for Designing an Effective Assessment

1. There should be a clear alignment in the assessment, the learning activities and the learning outcomes of the curriculum. Teacher should ensure that the assessment methods employed allow the students to demonstrate the learning outcomes appropriately. For example: do not use essays to measure knowledge or understanding that can be assessed using less time-consuming assessment methods or using group assessment to assess students' knowledge when the assessment can be done more or as efficiently by an individual. Do bear in mind what you are trying to test, they should align with the intended learning outcomes.
2. Assessment criteria and marking scheme, including grammar, spellings and other related items should be explicitly shown to students. Prepare a structured marking sheet for all assessors so to reduce marking reliability. For numerical answers, let the students know if they will receive marks for showing partial work (process based) or only the results (product based), also indicated the importance of the units. Let the students know what your marking style is like, is bullet point format acceptable, or does it have to be an essay format?
3. Student and staff contact hours, place and workload should be taken into consideration when designing the assessment.
4. Class size must also be taken into account.
5. Students should be clear on what the objectives of the assessment are. For example: if it is for pre-diagnosed or guiding student approaches through feedback.
6. Careful well-design assessment will discourage rote learning.
7. Teacher should ensure that there is no bias or disadvantage in an assessment towards any particular group of students.
8. Teachers should be aware of any university, faculty, departmental or programme standards that may affect the planning of assessment or a student's overall assessment outcomes.
9. Give sufficient time for students to respond.
10. Feedback is very important and should be incorporated into the design of the assessment.
11. A variety of assessment methods offers students the opportunity to show their particular skills in the best light.
12. Students appreciate and become more motivated when assessments are perceived with authentic factors.
13. Depending on the levels of difficulty in the subject, the assessment should cover some or all of Bloom's Taxonomy.
14. A course curriculum should have both formative and summative assessments, formative assessments will be more useful to employ at an early part of the course.
15. Use clear and direct language and avoid complex wordings which may confuse and frustrate students with sound understanding. Set the questions explicitly and precisely which are appropriate to the student cohort. Try



to reduce ambiguity in the written assessment, clearly define the expected response such as compare, evaluate, summarize, critique etc.

16. Unfamiliar assessment methods should be introduced in-class to provide the students some practices.
17. Provide students the time period, guidelines, requirements, assessment criteria and if there are items that are not to be included. The students should also be aware who is going to assess them – tutor, peers and/or self? And if peers or self are going to assess, would the weightings be the same as the tutor.
18. Avoid using unnecessary and irrelevant material.
19. Try not to use negatives in the assessment questions unless you are trying to catch your student out, if negatives are used, highlight, bold or italic it.
20. Can the item be answered briefly and concisely using a single word or short phrase?
21. Do instructions clearly specify the desired knowledge and specificity of response?
22. Be prepared to accept other equally acceptable answers, some of which you may not have predicted.

### **Web References and Resources**

- Core Principles of Effective Assessment, Centre for the study of Higher Education  
<http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/05/index.html>
- The 10 Principles: Assessment for Learning, QCA  
[http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_4336.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_4336.aspx)

### **To Reference these pages**

#### **Copy and paste the text below**

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