

# ASSESSMENT SCHEDULES

## A PARTnerships Collaborative Project

This resource has been designed to assist academics in addressing some of the common challenges they face in their teaching. It guides and supports collaborative evaluation of current practices by encouraging individual and peer reflection, with a view to action.

This resource is comprised of three parts.

1. Assessment schedules: A brief guide
2. Assessment schedules: Individual reflection
3. Assessment schedules: Peer discussion

This project will take between 1 and 2 hours to complete.

# COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

For more information, contact the Centre for Teaching and Learning

**Centre for Teaching  
and Learning**

p: 4921 5350  
e: [ctl@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:ctl@newcastle.edu.au)  
[www.newcastle.edu.au/ctl](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/ctl)

## Assessment schedules: A brief guide

Boud and Associates (2010) claim that assessment is most effective when (among other things) it is used to engage students in learning that is productive, and assessment *for* learning is placed at the centre of subject and program design. Many options are available to us, which include using academic technologies. A good start is to consider your full assessment schedule.

### What should I consider when devising an assessment schedule?

Assessment activities should be:

Well-aligned with learning outcomes and activities	If alignment is not present students may be learning what is not assessed, students may be assessed on what they have not learned, and/or students' learning may be assessed inappropriately.
Engage students in a suitable activity	Are the types of activities contained within the tasks suitable for students to demonstrate, and for you to measure, their achievement of learning outcomes?
Set at the right level of difficulty	The difficulty (level and complexity) of the task reflects the entry level of the students, and their progression through a program.
Weighted appropriately	Task weighting takes into account the relative importance of aligned intended learning outcomes, and considers student workload.
Timed well	Timing affects student workload (within the course, and within the program), provision and use of good quality feedback, and marking considerations.
Add variety	Students are able to demonstrate a range of skills if given a variety of tasks within and across courses. Repetition of assessment types can restrict important learning development.
Cater for diversity	Assessment options can allow for students to show understanding in a variety of ways. Scaffolding provides advice for students in completing tasks if they are not familiar with them.
Clear	Assessment schedules and individual items should be clear and unambiguous. Too much or too little detail can be confusing and result in many student queries.

## Assessment schedules: Individual reflection

Use these tables to reflect on your current assessment schedule ( $\frac{1}{2}$  – 1 hour).

### 1 Alignment

For each of these principles associated with alignment (below), evaluate your course as it stands, and determine if changes should be made.

Principle	Comments
<p>Course learning outcomes should be measured by assessment tasks.</p> <p>Does your assessment schedule measure every learning outcome wholly or in part?</p> <p>Are some course outcomes being over-assessed, and others under-assessed?</p>	
<p>All graded assessment tasks should be represented by the learning outcomes.</p> <p>Are you assessing students' skills/knowledge that are not explicitly or implicitly articulated by the course learning outcomes?</p>	
<p>Assessment tasks should be valid.</p> <p>Will the schedule of tasks measure what they are actually intended to measure?</p>	
<p>Assessment tasks should be reliable.</p> <p>Will the schedule of tasks produce reliable results within and between cohorts of similar students?</p>	

## 2 Other aspects of your assessment schedule

Type of activity	Are the types of activities contained within the tasks suitable for students to demonstrate, and for you to measure, their achievement of learning outcomes?	Y N	Comments
Mode	Can the tasks be administered/assessed differently? For example, could the tasks be completed online? In groups? In parts? Within class?	Y N	Comments
Difficulty	Are the level and complexity of the tasks suitable for the students in the course?  Consider students' prior learning and experience, the program as a whole, and the students' progression through the program.	Y N	Comments
Weighting	Does the weighting of the tasks fairly reflect their relative roles within the course and the workload expected of the students?  Also consider the University's assessment policies: do your tasks reflect these?	Y N	Comments
Timing	Is the timing of the tasks suitable? Can students complete the tasks on time? Is there time for students to use feedback between tasks? Are other courses expecting submissions at the same time?	Y N	Comments
Variety	Is there variety in the set of tasks? Can students develop, practice and demonstrate a range of skills? Is there too much repetition?	Y N	Comments
Diversity	Is there a chance that some students are unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged by the tasks?	Y N	Comments
Clarity	Are the questions/directions clear and unambiguous?  Be careful of giving too little or too much information.	Y N	Comments

