# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

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**Abstract** *Assessment criteria are descriptive statements that provide learners and instructors with information about the qualities, characteristics, and aspects of a given learning task. Assessment criteria make it clear to learners what they are expected to do to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes and factors instructors will take into account when making judgments about their performance. Sharing assessment criteria with students at the beginning of the course is an effective way to help students build confidence in their learning and improve their performance. Making assessment criteria explicit helps them recognize what is important and valued in the curriculum, focus their efforts on key learning outcomes and evaluate their own performance through self-assessment and reflection. Assessment criteria are a way to provide formative feedback throughout a course to support ongoing learning, as well as to provide end-of-term summative assessment.*

**Key words** *assessment criteria,support,examine*

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief introduction to a very broad set of concepts: assessment, evaluation, and accountability. In doing so, we also include related terms of "measurement" and "testing." We begin with a series of definitions of terms, then introduce a list of modifiers that have been used in relation to these terms, such as, high and low stakes assessments, criterion and norm referenced assessments, standards-based assessments, and several others. We also examine the categories and sub-categories of these concepts, and how they are related. Following these definitions, we describe the process of educational measurement in general, how it is accomplished, key characteristics, types of

decisions made from measurements, and trends and innovations in testing. We focus in particular on formative and <u>summative assessment</u> at the student level, and large-scale assessments at the state, national, and international levels, as these issues are critical in the current educational climate.

Assessment criteria take the "guess-work" out of grading for instructors and students. Well-defined assessment criteria allow instructors to evaluate learners' work more openly, consistently and objectively. This increases a sense of fairness from the students' perspective and makes it easy for the instructor to explain / justify how marks have been awarded. Examples of Assessment Criteria □ create a design brief that incorporates design process and principles □ analyze distributions using probability and data analysis techniques □ use tools and models to integrate quantitative and qualitative information in problem-based analysis using relevant tools and models □ adopt a variety of roles on a consulting team task force □ justify management's actions in selecting specific recommendations among alternative possibilities Types of Assessment Criteria □ Threshold – threshold standards tell the student what must be done to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcome, i.e. identify the minimum standard to pass □ Grading – grading criteria provides a general description of the standard required for allocation of a particular grade within a hierarchy of grades (A+, A, A- to Fail) □ General – general criteria provide general outcome descriptors that can be achieved more or less well. Students' work will be judged within a performance range and marks are allocated accordingly. Typically, criteria of this sort are used to evaluate such things as the use of referencing, accuracy of language, use of supporting evidence in drawing conclusions, quality of critical thinking, etc.

Check to ensure that assessment tasks: □ are designed to provide adequate opportunity for students to demonstrate that they've achieved the intended learning outcomes □ are constructively aligned with the learning outcomes, learning opportunities, and assessment method. Alignment is key to creating effective assessment tasks. As defined by Ralph Tyler almost fifty years ago, alignment simply means starting with the 'desired outcomes' of the course and working

backwards so that the assessment tasks reflect and support them. In some sense a successful course can be considered as an exercise in reverse engineering. Figure out first where you want your students to end up, and (only) then how best to help them get there. (Jim Wilkinson (2010) 2. Articulate the terms and distinguish the difference between 'criteria' and 'standards' ' Assessment criteria include two components - criterion and performance standards. Sadler (1987) defines these terms as: Criterion: a property or characteristic by which the quality of something may be judged. Criteria specify qualities of interest and utility, but make no statement or assumptions about actual quality. Standard: a definite level of achievement aspired to or attained. Standards are about definite levels of quality (or achievement, or performance).

WRITING ASSESSESSMENT CRITERIA 4. List, describe, curate and organize criteria □ Criteria are more than a set of headings. For example, 'use of theory', is not on its own, a criterion. Criteria about theory must describe what aspects of the use of theory are being assessed. You may value any one of the following: the students' ability to make an appropriate choice of theory to address a particular problem, or to give an accurate summary of that theory as it applies to the problem, or to apply it correctly, imaginatively, and/or with originality, or to critique the theory, or to compare and contrast it with other theories. □ Analyze the learning outcomes and identify the specific characteristics that contribute to the overall assignment. The verb in the learning outcome becomes the category of performance for which you will generate criteria. The verb describes the intention of the learning outcome and indicates the level of learning that you are looking for or expecting in the assessment and the category of performance for which you will generate criteria. For example, if the verb is 'analyze' then you ask yourself 'what are the essential characteristics of the analyze skill that must be performed by the learner?' These characteristics then form the criteria. □ List all the things that students need to know and be able to do to pass the course (or the assignment). Keep the list to a manageable size so students can handle the cognitive load and clearly understand what is expected of them - four or five criteria per unit are

usually sufficient or between 3 and 10 per course. These criteria and these should be roughly of equal importance ☐ Reflect on ways to measure the outcome(s). ☐ Imagine what the ideal assignment (that aligns with the learning outcome(s)) would look like and list all the elements it should contain.

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