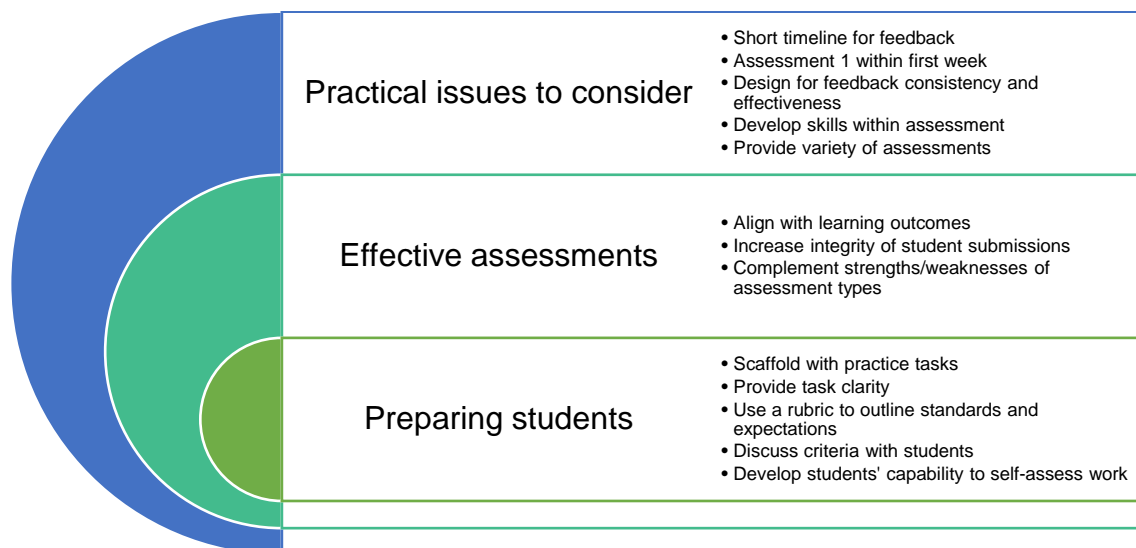**DESIGN** 📈

Assessment in the Block

Assessment drives student learning. Effective assessments encourage learning and the application of that knowledge and skills. Complementing this, effective assessment should evidence learning as well as develop and reinforce positive strategies and minimise negative/inappropriate behaviours.

Practical issues to consider	• Short timeline for feedback • Assessment 1 within first week • Design for feedback consistency and effectiveness • Develop skills within assessment • Provide variety of assessments
Effective assessments	• Align with learning outcomes • Increase integrity of student submissions • Complement strengths/weaknesses of assessment types
Preparing students	• Scaffold with practice tasks • Provide task clarity • Use a rubric to outline standards and expectations • Discuss criteria with students • Develop students' capability to self-assess work

Authentic assessment

Authentic assessment underpins assessment in the Block. Characteristics of authentic assessment include:

- mimicking professional practice to enable the acquisition and application of professional knowledge, skills and experience
- leveraging theoretical knowledge learned in the unit and connecting to workplace
- increasing validity, relevance and engagement through student-centeredness
- pulling together depth and breadth of learning
- maintaining a focus on future career through clear alignment with curriculum
- challenging and achievable
- providing conditions and contexts to adapt to the changing workplace

When designing an authentic assessment, a good place to start is to embed these ideas in any of the suggested examples provided in the Appendix.

Planning your assessments: Some practical issues to consider

- Apply a variety of assessment types to demonstrate learning
- Design for consistency and effectiveness in feedback and marking
- Build the development of skills into the assessment (e.g. students demonstrate accountability for individual contributions as well as achieving the group outcome)
- Keep in mind the short timeline for providing feedback in the block

How to effectively assess learning in the Block

Focus assessment tasks on evidencing the unit learning outcomes and demonstrating relevant professional skills. Consider a range of assessment tasks that can effectively:

- demonstrate skills, knowledge and capabilities outlined in the learning outcomes
- increase the likelihood that students are submitting their own work for assessment, and
- balance potential limitations of a particular method with a complementary assessment

Examples of assessments that work well in the Block

- Use a journal, a blog, oral presentation or a reflective statement to provide opportunities for students to articulate how they achieved the unit learning outcomes.
- Use reports, proposals, debates and case-based role-plays to assess students' ability to contribute individually and collectively to group outcomes.
- Integrate field trips with assessment tasks. Be sure to articulate the links between the field trip and in-class activities.
- Extend collaborative work in class to assessment tasks—incorporate expectations of the interaction required in the assessment criteria to reinforce this style of learning and to build on professional skills.
- Use strategies such as: including a reflective component, providing time to complete assessment tasks in class, personalising contributions and oral presentations/viva to minimise inappropriate sharing and/or contract cheating.
- To address breadth *vs* depth issues, use group presentations which include individual students sharing specialist knowledge and audience members providing peer feedback/ focused questions, thus enhancing learning for the whole class.

Preparing students for assessment

For these strategies to work, students need to specifically know what is expected from them.

- Provide clarity about the assessment task. Explain and stipulate all requirements.
- Provide ample opportunity to practise the task and appropriate scaffolding to undertake the assessment.
- Communicate performance expectations via a rubric. Align expectations to the unit's learning outcomes and AQF standards.
- Make sure students are able to interpret the assessment criteria—discuss the criteria in class, using examples of student work to illustrate.
- Develop students' ability to evaluate their own work. Encourage students to grade their own work by completing the rubric prior to submitting to the dropbox and discuss the differences between their self-evaluation and the assessor's.

VU Assessment Policy Requirements for Block

- The first assessment task must be submitted within the first week and must be weighted no more than 30%
- The last assessment task must be able to be marked efficiently because marks need to be uploaded by the Friday of the final week of the Block.
- Unsupervised tests should make up no more than 20% of the final grade in a unit

Want to know more?

Guides

- Scaffolding. Browse the '*Scaffolding for Assessment*' section.
  < https://vustaff.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/00032/budd/ERTASdlw0htEk0E-Jy2bNTgB303PW7YkspRZx1NYugi_3g?e=LRzv3R >

Policies

- VU Assessment for Learning - Standards for Assessment Procedure (HE)
  < https://policy.vu.edu.au/view.current.php?id=00327 >)

Websites

- University College Dublin (nd). *How do you Assess Student Learning?* (http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/assessment/howdoyouassessstudentlearning/)
- Rhodes University (2015). Assessment in Higher Education: Reframing Traditional Understandings and Practices.
  < https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/chertl/document/RU___Assessment_in_HE.pdf >.
  Refer, in particular, to the case studies from page 6 onwards

Related articles

- Deakin University (n.d). 'Authentic Assessment' retrieved 3 September 2020 from
  < https://www.deakin.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/268511/AUTHENTIC-ASSESSMENT.pdf >
- Francis, J.E. (2018). Linking rubrics and academic performance: An engagement theory perspective *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice.* 15(1) article 3.
  < https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1173810 >0)

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Appendix: Some suggested assessment tasks suitable for the Block

Field trips
- Analytical report on a community initiative
- Field trip report
- Groups report their field trip findings
- Portfolio of field-trip plans

Performance/ demonstrations
- Musical performance
- Political debate drawing on unit themes
- Practical test
- Rehearsal of performance
- Role play
- Short film production

Presentations
- Anatomical demonstrations
- Group presentations
- Oral debate
- Peer feedback (using rubric)
- Presentations based on poster/ physical model

Professional tasks
- Clinical appraisal
- Interviews
- Lesson plans and justification
- Observation checklists
- Web development task

Project-based collaborative tasks
- Peer review of group member contributions
- Problem-based learning activity/ assignment
- Team report in response to Client Brief
- Technical design report
- Scenario-based activity/ assignment

Research-based
- Analysis of scientific paper
- Collaborative investigation/ report
- Group annotated bibliography
- Outline of research aims and key questions
- Research proposal suitable for a small research project
- Sharing research/ideas via a blog

Tests/ worksheets
- Drug calculation test
- Guided-inquiry worksheets
- Online quizzes/ tests
- Problem based tests

Written tasks
- Argumentative essay
- Case report
- Expository essay
- Project: plan, report and presentation
- Reflective journal entries
- Short essay (800 words)
- Weekly blog based on pre-workshop readings
- Written responses to text

Other
- Group mind map