Assessment design takes a whole of course approach

Assessment is continuous and powerful

Assessment practices are inclusive, fair and equitable

Assessment incorporates high quality feedback

Assessment is based on set criteria and standards

Assessment is benchmarked, moderated, reviewed and continuously improved

Assessment requirements are clearly communicated

Assessment cards

Developed by the Southern Cross University Centre for Teaching and Learning 2017.
Assessment cards

Each of these cards illustrates a single assessment principle from the University’s Assessment Policy on one side, and on the flip side a series of key questions to stimulate reflection and guide planning in relation to assessment design.

These cards are also effective as a set of activity cards in professional learning contexts.

The concept of the cards is adapted from the REAP Re-engineering Assessment Practices in Higher Education project (2007) and the Ulster Viewpoints Project funded by the JISC in the UK (2008-2012). Questions used on each card were adapted from the Office of Learning and Teaching project Assessment Design Decisions Framework (2014).

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Assessment design takes a whole of course approach

- Assessment is aligned with intended course and unit learning outcomes.
- Assessment shapes learning and teaching activities.
- A wide variety of assessment tasks are used across the course.
Questions to ask

- What assessment tasks best encompass the key learning outcomes for the unit?
- How much choice do students have in the topics, methods, criteria, weighting and/or timing of assessment tasks in your unit?
- When during the unit do students apply what they have learned from the completion of a task to subsequent work?
Principle 2

Assessment is continuous and powerful

- Formative and summative assessments are woven together throughout the unit.
- Assessment is powerful through real-world tasks related to future disciplinary or professional practices.
- Assessment encourages time, interaction and dialogue on deep and challenging learning tasks.
- Assessment tasks are designed to facilitate academic integrity.
Principle 2

Questions to ask

- How do your assessment tasks encourage regular study during and outside of formal learning sessions?
- How do your assessment tasks encourage deep learning rather than surface learning?
- How do non-graded tasks, with opportunities for feedback, support graded activities?
- How do accepted forms of assessment in your discipline match with the overall purpose of assessment?
Principle 3

Assessment practices are inclusive, fair and equitable

- Assessment is designed to be inclusive, fair and equitable.
- Assessment tasks are written in simple, clear and plain English.
- Assessment workloads are manageable for students and staff.
- Assessment facilitates students’ induction into higher education.
Principle 3

Questions to ask

- How does each assessment task build capacity for students to engage with future study?
- How do you make assessment engaging for all students?
- How do you support students who underperform or miss earlier tasks so they have a chance to complete later tasks?
Assessment incorporates high quality feedback

- Assessment provides opportunities for students to act on formative feedback.
- Feedback is clear, constructive, respectful, and timely.
- Feedback guides students to judge and improve the quality of their work.
- Feedback facilitates a positive attitude towards future learning.
Questions to ask

• How do you design feedback so students can respond to it constructively?
• To what extent is feedback attended to and acted upon by students? And, if so, in what ways?
• How does the final graded activity in a unit build upon prior tasks?
Assessment is based on clearly articulated criteria and standards aligned with learning outcomes. Assessment is evaluated solely on the basis of students’ achievement against criteria and standards. Assessment is valid and reliable. Standards-based assessment is aligned to disciplinary standards and requirements.
To what extent do students in your unit have opportunities to engage actively with learning outcomes, criteria and standards:
- before an assessment task?
- during an assessment task?
- after an assessment task?

How does the rationale for each assessment task link to the overall aim of the unit and the course?
Principle 6: Assessment is benchmarked, moderated, reviewed and continuously improved

- Assessment is moderated, reviewed and continuously improved.
- Assessment is peer reviewed to ensure course and unit learning outcomes are aligned.
- Benchmarking of assessment ensures consistency with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded.
- Assessment benchmarking uses national/international comparatives.
- Professional learning in contemporary assessment practice is available.
What data are available to draw upon to help you design assessment?
How do you engage in peer review of assessment within and outside of the University?
Do you engage students in the future design of assessment?
• Assessment requirements are communicated with sufficient clarity to enable students to understand and complete their assessment tasks to the standards required.
Principle 7

Questions to ask

• How do you best convey to students what they need to do to address the assessment tasks?
• How do you use examples of past students’ work to clarify what constitutes good work for current students?
• How do you make best use of marking rubrics to clarify students’ expectations of assessment tasks?
• What does writing or revising a rubric tell you about the design of the assessment task?