

Developing and Using a Course Assessment Plan

A course assessment plan helps you to look at the "big picture" to ensure that your learning outcomes are given the appropriate "weight" across the entire course. It includes a list of all course assessments, the points assigned to each assessment, and the total weight assigned to each learning outcome/cognitive level.

To create your own course assessment plan, complete the following chart with your course information.

Course Assessment	LO1 (Cog. Level)	LO2 (Cog. Level)	LO3 (Cog. Level)	LO4 (Cog. Level)	Number of points
Total Points	pts	pts	pts	pts	pts
% of Assessment Points	%	%	%	%	100%

Following is an example of a completed chart:

Course Assessment	LO1 (Remember)	LO2 (Understand)	LO3 (Create)	LO4 (Create)	LO4 (Evaluate)	Number of points
Assignment #1	25 pts					25 pts
Midterm Exam	25 pts	25 pts				50 pts
Assignment #2		25 pts				25 pts
Teaching Philosophy	10 pts	10 pts	50 pts			70 pts
Final Assignment: Design Plan				25 pts	15 pts	40 pts
Final Assignment: Curriculum				50 pts	25 pts	75 pts
Total Points	60 pts	60 pts	50 pts	75 pts	40 pts	285 pts
% of Assessment Points	21%	21%	18%	26%	14%	

Next, review your chart and reflect on three questions:

1. Are all of the course learning outcomes "weighted" in alignment to the importance of each outcome?
2. Do the course assessments address the variety of cognitive levels appropriate to the course and represented in the course outcomes?

3. Do I offer students a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their learning?

If you responded affirmatively to all of these questions, it is likely that you have assigned the appropriate weight to each of your course learning outcomes. If you responded “no” to any of the questions, consider how you might make adjustments to your course.

Concern	Action
My learning outcomes are not weighted in alignment to the importance of each outcome.	Review the value you have placed on each individual assessment. You may want to adjust the weight of certain assessments to ensure that you are putting more weight on the assessments aligned to learning outcomes that are most important to the course.
My course assessments do not address the variety of cognitive levels appropriate to the course and represented in the course outcomes.	You may want to revisit your learning outcomes to ensure that they represent the lower and higher cognitive levels that are most appropriate for your course. If you see that your course outcomes are aligned to only one or two cognitive levels, you might consider revising your learning outcomes and, therefore, your assessments to address the variety of cognitive levels that will help students achieve your goals for the course.
I may need to offer students a greater variety of opportunities to demonstrate their learning.	Review the number of opportunities that students have to earn course points for each learning outcome. If you determine that students do not have enough opportunities, you might consider breaking an assessment into multiple parts (e.g., requiring drafts for a paper that allow students to apply instructor and peer feedback) or creating additional assessments that will allow students to demonstrate their learning.

By making this chart and considering the three reflection questions, you can take a closer look at your course assessments to ensure that they line up with the “big picture,” or larger purpose, of your course and make adjustments where necessary. The ultimate goal is to create an assessment plan that aligns with your course outcomes, reflects what is most important in the course, and clearly communicates to students what they can expect to learn and how their learning will be assessed.