

Quality assurance: Attributes and principles in assessment design

Prep–Year 10

Teachers engage in quality assurance processes to ensure the effectiveness of assessment programs. These include:

- engaging in professional conversations about what standards will look like as evidence in student work
- collaborating to design assessment informed by the principles and attributes of quality assessment
- sharing achievement standards/marking criteria with students
- engaging in feedback, moderation and professional conversations and activities.

Quality assurance processes support teachers when planning assessment programs and designing assessment. Assessment-literate teachers use quality assurance processes to develop a shared understanding of the expected quality of learning performance (Willis & Adie 2016). This assists teachers to improve teaching and inform assessment processes. Professional conversations that focus on confirming the use of attributes and principles of assessment in assessment design enhance these processes.

Planning an effective assessment program

Schools develop quality assessment programs that suit their context and students. Teachers use the Australian Curriculum to develop school-based assessment and make informed decisions about:

- the context for teaching and learning
- appropriate pedagogies to support teaching and learning
- how and when to give students feedback about how to progress
- how to assess student learning and what evidence to collect
- reasonable adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment that may be required
- how to report learning progress and achievement.

Teachers plan an assessment program at the same time as the teaching and learning program. Teachers should consider any systemic assessment, such as the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) or any school-determined standardised assessment.

Attributes of quality assessment

Quality assessment provides teachers with the information needed to determine what their students know, understand and can do in relation to the achievement standards. Teachers use information gathered from quality assessment to plan teaching and learning and to support their students to progress in their learning journey.

Quality assessment is characterised by the attributes of assessment — validity, accessibility and reliability. Quality assessment is:

- **valid** if it accurately measures what it is intended to measure, through alignment of what is taught, learnt and assessed
- **accessible** when it provides equity of access so all students have a clear understanding of how to demonstrate their learning
- **reliable** to the extent that the assessment will produce the same consistent, dependable and repeatable result.

Quality assurance processes provide teachers, schools, students and their parents/carers with confidence that assessment is valid, accessible and reliable.

Principles of assessment in assessment design

Teachers plan valid, accessible and reliable assessment programs by referring to the six principles of quality assessment that underpin assessment design and strengthen assessment practices.

[Quality assuring assessment](#) can be used to support teachers to refine their assessment, guide professional conversations about a planned assessment or to reflect (individually or collaboratively) on an assessment that has been implemented.



Aligned

To achieve alignment, schools need to consider four key elements:

- curriculum
- teaching and learning
- assessment
- reporting.

To strengthen alignment, these four elements should continually be reviewed (prior to, during and after the teaching period) through professional conversations to develop a shared understanding of the associated expectations and standards.

For supporting information and resources, see:

- [Planning for teaching, learning and assessment](#) (PDF)
- [Designing quality assessment](#) (AV)
- [Cognitive verbs resources](#).

Equitable

All students must be provided with the opportunity to demonstrate the depth and breadth of their knowledge and skills against the identified standard across all learning areas of the curriculum. Teachers should consider the needs of individual students prior to designing assessment to ensure that the assessment provides each student with this opportunity. Teachers make

reasonable adjustments during the cycle of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure equitable access for all students.

For supporting information and resources, see [Catering for diversity resources](#).

Evidence-based

Teachers must ensure that judgments about student progress and achievement are based on evidence aligned to the P–10 Australian Curriculum achievement standards. Judgments based on evidence can be used to inform teaching, give feedback to students and parents/carers and support school strategic planning. Quality assessment programs provide teachers with sufficient evidence of learning to make defensible judgments about the quality of students' work against the achievement standard.

For supporting information and resources, see:

- [Making judgments](#) (PDF)
- [Task-specific standards](#) (PDF)
- [Standards elaborations resources](#).

Ongoing

Evidence of student progress and achievement should be monitored over time and collected using a range and balance of assessment techniques, modes and conditions appropriate for the learning area, year level, school context and students. Students should have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts within each learning area. Teachers must prepare students for specific assessment demands and employ strategies to ensure student work is their own.

For supporting information and resources, see:

- [Techniques and conditions resources](#)
- [Strategies for ensuring authenticity](#) (PDF).

Transparent

Teachers, students and parents/carers should have a shared understanding of the assessment requirements and the standards against which students will be assessed. Teachers should employ rigorous quality assurance processes to develop this understanding and ensure consistent teaching and learning to support the assessment across cohorts.

Descriptions of the assessment and standards descriptors should be clear and aligned with curriculum to support student understanding. Teachers should model assessment requirements and what the standards look like in context to further support student understanding of the assessment requirements.

Moderation of student responses should also occur to ensure all students have been assessed equally and appropriately.

For supporting information and resources, see:

- [Task-specific standards](#) (PDF)
- [Standards elaborations resources](#)
- [Moderation advice](#) (PDF).

Informative

The fundamental goal of assessment is to provide information to teachers, students, schools and parents/carers about student progress and achievement. This information is most effective when used by teachers to adjust teaching and learning to support students and provide feedback that enables students to progress their learning.

Student and teacher assessment literacy is integral in the effective provision and use of feedback. Providing examples of student work modelled to the standards can support students to develop their assessment literacy and enhance the effect of feedback on student learning.

For supporting information and resources, see:

- [Reporting advice and guidelines](#) (PDF)
- [Feedback](#) (PDF).