JIBC ASSESSMENT DESIGN GUIDE

Centre for Teaching Learning & Innovation

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INTRODUCTION

At the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC or the Institute), applied and experiential learning are central to our instructional approach. As such, assessments must reflect real-world competencies, support inclusive practices, and align with institutional values such as Indigenization, equity, and accessibility. They must also be designed to be closely aligned to a course's learning outcomes and instructional strategies. This guide was developed to support faculty, curriculum developers, and instructional designers in creating assessments that are not only rigorous and fair but also responsive to the diverse needs of learners and the communities they serve.

Faculty and program staff can use this guide when developing courses, both in the initial design of the course and when developing course outlines as well as in expanding on assessment descriptions in class syllabi and lesson plans. The guide encourages course developers to be much more deliberate in the selection and description of assessments that will serve to support students in their achievement of the stated course learning outcomes. In this way, we see assessments as an integral component of any course's design, along with learning outcomes and instructional and learning strategies. Developing a robust set of assessments for any course ensures that our intentions for student learning and success are clearly articulated, consistent, and well considered. As well, taken as a whole across a range of courses, our assessments should demonstrate our expertise in our given disciplines as well as confirm our institutional commitment to cultivating and supporting students, public safety professionals and practitioners.

Goals of this Guide

- Clarify the expectations and standards for designing assessments for JIBC courses.

- Provide an overview about how assessments inform the description of a course.

Learning Outcomes of this Guide

As a guide, this document is intended to be a reference that you can return to as you develop your courses and course plans. You should also use this guide as a prompt for your thinking about assessment design. At the same time, by becoming familiar with the guide, you should be able to develop a more deliberate approach to assessment design, including the following possible outcomes.

By the end of this guide, you should be able to:

- **define and distinguish** between assessment, grading, and evaluation within the context of JIBC's curriculum development practices;

- **identify various types of assessments** and their appropriate uses in learning environments;

- **design assessment strategies** that align with specific learning outcomes and activities using backward design principles;

- **apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** and accessibility principles to create inclusive assessment tools;

- **connect assessment practices** to institutional policies, strategic goals, and professional standards in public safety education;

- develop a **commitment to ethical and inclusive assessment practices**, recognizing the impact of assessment on learner motivation, identity, and success; and

evaluate and refine your own assessment practices through reflection, feedback, and engagement with current research.

How to Use This Guide

You can read through this guide from start to finish to give yourself a comprehensive understanding of assessment design in the JIBC context. Additionally, you can use the guide for specific purposes in your design journey. There are definitions, theories, methods, etc., all given detailed descriptions along with tips and cautions. Yet, how does

a curriculum developer get started? No one starts designing a course by reading up on definitions. So don't worry about that. It doesn't make sense simply to read through all the individual pieces here. They only add up to something meaningful in retrospect, so consult as needed. As a curriculum developer, you don't just start designing assessments. Assessments have to be considered in conjunction with the other key components of your course, and you have to be mindful of how your course relates to others in a program. So, there is a lot to keep in mind all at once!

Therefore, the recommended way to use this guide so that it has real impact and results in more robust, well thought out assessments is to use the guide in conjunction with your course design activity. At one moment, it helps to have a broad philosophical disposition about the learning experience of your students and what you want them to achieve in your course; at another moment, you need to be more concerned with the particular documentation of your course, i.e. the course outline and/or the syllabus; at yet another moment, you want to be thinking about the particular design of your course, for example, how to challenge students with a variety of assessments, how to distinguish between different types of assessments.

The following is a suggested approach both for carrying out your course design and for using this guide.

Designing with the Guide at Your Side

1. Start with the Big Picture

Before diving into assessment methods or definitions, begin with your course's intended learning outcomes. Use the guide's section on **Backward Design** to clarify:

- What do learners need to know or be able to do to demonstrate their understanding/knowledge/ability in your course?

- How will learners develop that knowledge/competency?

- How will you know they've achieved it?

This sets the foundation for everything else. Assessments should be designed in conjunction with learning outcomes and activities, not as an afterthought or a detached consideration.

2. Use Definitions as Anchors, Not Checklists

The definitions in the guide (e.g. formative, summative, authentic, holistic) are not just vocabulary—they help you choose the right solution for your assessment intentions. As you plan, ask:

- What kind of learning am I trying to assess?

- Which type of assessment best matches that intention?

- What type of instructional or learning activities must learners complete to achieve the learning outcome and that sets them up for success in the assessment?

- How does an assessment impact the overall result of the course for students?

3. Let Theories Shape Your Thinking

The guide refers to approaches and frameworks like Fink's Taxonomy, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and Trauma-Informed Pedagogy. These aren't just academic—they help you design assessments that are:

- inclusive

- equitable

- reflective of JIBC's philosophical commitments

- aligned with real-world practice

Use these theories to challenge assumptions and broaden your perspective on what assessment can look like. There are various resources on designing courses through an Indigenization lens or an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) lens, for example. You should follow up on what looks most relevant and interesting to you.

4. Match Methods to Your Intentions

The guide describes various assessment types—from presentations to portfolios to field evaluations. Not all will work for your context and circumstances. However, you can increase your knowledge by trying to integrate different methods in your course:

- Choose 1-2 methods that best align with your outcomes and context.

- Use the examples and cautions to adapt them thoughtfully.

- Be prepared to experiment to find the assessment methods that work best for you and your students.

5. Look into the Rubric and Grading Practices to Build Fairness

Once you've chosen your assessment types, use rubric templates and grading strategies to ensure:

- transparency for learners

- consistency for instructors

- alignment with institutional standards

CTLI has developed a [complementary guide for rubric development](#) that you can consult in conjunction with this guide.

6. Reflect and Revise

Your goal will be to develop a coherent course that offers a great learning experience, but this often requires iterative development. Assessment design is not necessarily a one-off activity. Use this guide's emphasis on feedback, reflection, and continuous improvement to pilot your assessments and gather feedback (applying an evaluative frame of mind) and then refining over time to make things more effective and efficient.

FOUNDATIONS OF ASSESSMENT DESIGN

At JIBC, curriculum development plays a pivotal role in shaping the educational experience, and a key part of this responsibility is ensuring that assessment practices are thoughtfully integrated into course and program design. Assessment is not simply a mechanism for assigning grades—it is a structured process for measuring student achievement against clearly defined learning outcomes.

As such, developers must ensure that all assessment strategies are aligned with institutional policies and standards, which are designed to uphold academic integrity, fairness, and consistency across the Institute.

One of the primary responsibilities of curriculum developers is to ensure that course outlines clearly articulate the learning outcomes and the methods by which these outcomes will be evaluated. This includes specifying the types of assessments to be used—such as exams, presentations, projects, or field evaluations—their relative weightings, and any conditions related to attendance, retests, or participation. These elements must be transparent and accessible to students from the outset, enabling them to understand how their performance will be measured and what is expected of them. As a result, a course syllabus or lesson plans should further detail *how* the students will learn or practice the course content to enable or promote success in assessment of the learning outcomes.

Institutional policy also requires that grading schemes be selected and approved during the course development process. These schemes must be consistent with those established by JIBC's academic governance bodies, such as School Curriculum Committees and Program Council, and must be applied uniformly across all offerings of a course. Curriculum developers must work closely with program managers and instructional staff to ensure that these grading schemes are not only appropriate for the course content but also compliant with institutional standards.

The Academic Affairs department provides templates and other guides to help you develop your courses and programs according to institutional expectations. Please refer to the Academic Affairs intranet site for more information, particularly when developing course outlines, to ensure that your design work is captured appropriately and articulated clearly for reviewers during the course development process.

In programs that include practical or field-based components, curriculum developers must also account for external evaluations by employers or supervisors. These assessments must be guided by standardized criteria to ensure fairness and consistency across different work sites. Even in these cases, the final responsibility for grading remains with the Institute, and developers must ensure that this accountability is clearly defined in the course documentation.

In summary, curriculum developers must approach assessment design with a deep understanding of institutional policy and a commitment to educational quality. By embedding robust, transparent, and policy-aligned assessment practices into course development, they help ensure that students receive a fair, meaningful, and supportive learning experience.

Definitions

When developing assessments, a few key terms are necessary for describing the contents of a given course, for both reviewers and students.

Assessment refers to the systematic process of evaluating, measuring, and documenting the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of learners. We use assessments to gather data and insights to improve teaching efficacy, enhance learner comprehension and knowledge, and ensure that educational objectives are being met.

Assessments can take various forms, including but not limited to, written tests, practical examinations, portfolios, and oral presentations, and are often used for grading, feedback, and instructional refinement purposes.

Most importantly, assessments are one of your best indicators to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement for each learner, allowing for personalized learning experiences and tailored instructional approaches. Assessments also play a crucial role in ensuring that your teaching methods and curriculum designs are effectively supporting learners to achieve the desired learning outcomes and reveal areas of improvement for learning. If your goal is to help learners succeed, then assessments serve as a mechanism to help you with that goal.

From the broad definition of assessment, we can find many sub-categories. Assessment has multiple meanings depending on your intentions as an educator. Here are a few qualifying definitions that attempt to sort out different types of assessment. You may use some or all of these in a typical class.

- **Formative Assessment**: Formative assessment is an ongoing process in education that involves gathering information and feedback about a learner's learning progress throughout a learning experience. Its purpose is to provide both teachers and learners with insights into the learner's strengths and weaknesses so that adjustments can be made to improve learning outcomes. Formative assessments are typically not graded but are used to guide instruction. You can conduct these in a variety of ways, from short written exercises to impromptu quizzes to break-out discussions to ongoing feedback during simulation practice debriefs. Classes that have a lot of content to impart should utilize plenty of formative assessments to gain a better sense of how things are going. They are also useful for giving learners more opportunities at active learning.

- **Summative Assessment**: Summative assessment is a type of assessment that evaluates a learner's overall understanding and mastery of a subject or topic at the end of a learning period or course. It is often used for assigning grades and making high-stakes decisions, such as determining whether a learner has met the learning outcomes or graduation requirements. This can include many forms of assessment

that most of us are familiar with, i.e. mid-terms, final exams, or course-long projects and presentations.

- **Alternative Assessment**: Alternative assessment refers to non-traditional methods of evaluating learner learning that go beyond standardized tests or exams. These assessments can take various forms, such as projects, presentations, portfolios, or performance tasks. The goal of alternative assessments is to provide a more holistic view of a learner's abilities and understanding.

- **Academic Assessment**: Academic assessment sharpens the focus to a learner's performance, knowledge, skills, and abilities within an academic or formal educational context. Traditional academic assessments, like academic papers or written exams, are less likely to be utilized outside the academic environment, in contrast to more performance-based assessments.

- **Performance Assessment**: Performance assessment focuses on evaluating the skills and abilities of individuals in a work or professional setting. It can include assessing teamwork, leadership, and other professional skills, distinct from the academic knowledge focus of academic assessments.

- **Authentic Assessment**: Authentic assessment is a type of assessment that tasks learners with demonstrating their knowledge and skills in real-world, meaningful contexts. It often involves real-world problems, projects, or tasks that mirror the complexities of the professional or academic domains for which the learning is intended. Authentic assessments aim to assess practical application and critical thinking.

Holistic assessment: Holistic assessment occurs when a learner's performance, abilities, or attributes are judged in totality, rather than assessing separate elements individually. This may involve assessing a learner's overall performance, including knowledge, skills, behaviour, attitudes, and relationships, without dividing the assessment into distinct categories. Holistic assessment often draws on Indigenous ways of learning and knowing

to explore the development of the person beyond the limited environment of the classroom.

Grading is the process of assigning scores or marks to learners' work, typically to assess their performance on assignments, assessments, and coursework. It is a way to quantify and communicate a learner's level of achievement or proficiency in a particular subject or skill. It is important to think of grades as they relate to performance or knowledge. That is, how successfully are your learners satisfying the learning outcomes of your class? We muddy the waters when we use grades for other non-knowledge-related items, like participation or extra work, unless there is a clear, criterion-referenced way to do so. (See below under "Other forms of assessment" for more details.)

Evaluation and assessment are often used to mean the same thing, and the distinction may simply be preferential. However, for our purposes at JIBC, let us distinguish assessment according to the definition included above and describe evaluation as the work that reviews the quality of the course, as determined by faculty, learners, administrators, and other reviewers.

Evaluation also plays a broader role in reviewing the overall quality of the learning experience. This includes reflecting on instructional effectiveness and how well the course design supports student success.

Assessment Types and Methods

Assessments come in many forms and designs, depending on your intentions. The following are some of the more common assessment methods. Your courses should incorporate variety, not just in the method but in the depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding required to succeed in your course. Recognizing your options during the course design stages will help you develop a greater range of assessment opportunities.

Single-use assessments

Quizzes, Tests, and Exams are used to measure a student's understanding of course content, typically focusing on knowledge recall, comprehension, and the application of

key concepts. These assessments are particularly effective for evaluating foundational learning and ensuring that students are keeping pace with the course material. They can be administered at various points throughout a course—formatively to check ongoing understanding, or summatively to evaluate cumulative knowledge at the end of a unit or term.

Instructors may choose from a variety of formats depending on the learning outcomes they wish to assess. When thinking of alignment with learning outcomes, quizzes, tests, and exams are most commonly associated with cognitive aspects of learning: recall, analysis, synthesis, identifying sequences and procedures, and describing processes. They are less effective for assessments demanding creative problem-solving, emotional resilience, building character and community, and demonstrating more in-depth, complex and nuanced knowledge.

Common formats include:

- multiple-choice questions, which are useful for testing broad content knowledge efficiently;

- true/false and matching questions, which are ideal for assessing recognition and recall; and

- short-answer or fill-in-the-blank questions, which require students to generate responses.

More advanced tests may include problem-solving or scenario-based questions that assess application and analysis skills. Your tests should also align with whatever learning activities you have already conducted throughout your class so that both the content and the format are not met by surprise at the end of a class.

When designing quizzes and tests, it's important to ensure alignment with course learning outcomes, maintain clarity in question wording, and provide a balanced level of difficulty. These assessments should also be clearly described in the course syllabus, including their frequency, format, and contribution to the final grade.

There are two main weaknesses of using quizzes and tests as assessment tools. First, they often emphasize rote memorization and surface-level understanding rather than deeper learning. While they are efficient for assessing factual knowledge and basic comprehension, they may not effectively measure higher-order thinking skills such as critical analysis, synthesis, creativity, or real-world application—especially if the questions are limited to multiple-choice or true/false formats. Second, they are often overused or used exclusively for assessment purposes when variety would enhance the learning experience and guarantee a more accurate understanding of student learning progress.

Written Assignments allow students to demonstrate their understanding through structured, reflective, or research-based writing. These assignments can take many forms, including essays, reports, case studies, reflective journals, or research papers. They are particularly effective for assessing higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and the ability to construct and communicate arguments clearly.

Written assignments are best used when the goal is to evaluate a student's depth of understanding, critical thinking, and ability to apply concepts to real-world or theoretical scenarios. They also provide insight into a student's writing proficiency, organization, and ability to engage with academic or professional sources.

This type of assessment supports academic integrity and independent learning, as students must generate original work and often engage in research or reflection. However, to be effective, written assignments must be clearly structured with defined expectations, including criteria for content, format, length, and referencing. Rubrics are especially helpful in ensuring transparency and consistency in grading, particularly when the assessment requires the instructor's judgment and subjective perceptions.

Of course, recently, the effectiveness of written assignments has been compromised by the use of AI, resulting in automatically generated responses rather than from the intellect of the learners themselves. (See below for some further ideas on how to work with AI in terms of assessment design.)

In course syllabi, instructors should specify the type of written assignment, its purpose, due dates, and how it contributes to the final grade. Consequences for not meeting the expectations of the assignment need to be made clear to learners.

Presentations are often seen as companion pieces to written assignments, with a slight but critical difference in what is being assessed. Presentations allow students to demonstrate their understanding, communication skills, and ability to engage an audience. They can take the form of individual or group presentations, live or recorded, and may include visual aids such as slides, videos, or demonstrations. Presentations are particularly effective for assessing a student's ability to synthesize information, organize ideas logically, and convey key messages clearly and confidently.

As concerns grow around the use of AI to generate written assignments, presentations offer a valuable alternative that emphasizes authentic, real-time demonstration of learning. They require students to internalize content, think critically, and respond to questions or feedback—skills that are difficult to outsource or automate. Presentations also support the development of transferable skills such as public speaking, collaboration, and digital literacy.

Multi-faceted assessments

Projects and Portfolios offer the possibility for students to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and competencies over time. Unlike shorter or more narrowly focused assessments, these methods require students to engage deeply with course content, apply learning in meaningful contexts, and reflect on their development.

A project typically involves solving a complex problem, designing a product, or conducting a sustained inquiry. It often spans multiple weeks and encourages students to draw on various sources, collaborate with others, and manage their own learning process. A portfolio is a curated collection of a student's work that showcases growth, achievement, and reflection across a course or program. It provides a broader view of learning by capturing multiple dimensions of performance, including drafts, feedback, revisions, and final products. More recently, portfolios are available in digital formats known as e-

portfolios and can be a convenient method for students to track and reflect on their own learning progress.

These assessments are particularly valuable in disciplines that emphasize applied learning, creativity, and professional practice. They support the development of transferable skills such as critical thinking, time management, and self-assessment. They are commonly utilized in capstone courses as a comprehensive assessment.

Given growing concerns about AI-generated content, projects and portfolios offer a more authentic and personalized alternative to traditional written assignments. They require original, process-based work that is difficult to replicate using AI tools, making them a strong choice for maintaining academic integrity.

Practical Demonstrations are performance-based assessments that require students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-time, often in simulated or controlled environments. These assessments are particularly valuable in public safety and applied disciplines such as law enforcement, paramedicine, emergency management, counselling, conflict resolution, and corrections, where competence must be demonstrated through action—not just theory.

In these fields, practical demonstrations serve as a hallmark of experiential learning, bridging the gap between classroom instruction and real-world application. They allow instructors to assess not only technical proficiency but also decision-making, communication, situational awareness, and adherence to protocols under pressure. For example, a paramedic student might demonstrate a trauma assessment, or a conflict resolution trainee might role-play a mediation scenario.

These assessments are especially effective for evaluating procedural accuracy, professional behaviour, and the ability to respond to dynamic situations. Because they are grounded in authentic tasks, they provide a high level of validity and are difficult to replicate through artificial means, making them a strong safeguard for academic integrity.

Field or Clinical Assessments evaluate student performance in real-world, practice-based settings. These assessments take place during work-integrated learning experiences, such as clinical placements, internships, practicums, or community-engaged learning activities. They are especially critical in disciplines like paramedicine, law enforcement, emergency management, counselling, and corrections, where students must demonstrate competence in authentic environments.

These assessments assess not only technical skills but also professional behaviour, ethical decision-making, communication, and the ability to adapt to complex, unpredictable situations. They provide a holistic view of learner readiness for professional practice and are often conducted in collaboration with workplace supervisors, preceptors, or community partners, demonstrating the layers of support available to learners. They help students build confidence, develop professional identity, and prepare for the realities of their chosen field.

Discussions constitute a staple of learning and are extremely flexible in terms of their purpose, implementation and evaluation. Their multi-faceted nature makes them an excellent assessment approach for any type of learning. In online contexts specifically, discussions can provide cumulative evidence of engagement and can be collected for review by the instructor. Discussions can occur synchronously in real time, during in-person sessions or via video conferencing, or they can carry on asynchronously over a prolonged period of time. Good discussions require planning and are more effective with a clear purpose and a plan for engagement. For example, instructors can use discussions to establish norms and expectations of engagement for a class, thereby setting the tone for the class in terms of how ideas are intended to be considered and exchanged. Moreover, instructors can not only use discussions as evidence of engagement, but they can also assess the quality of discussion contributions.

Other forms of assessment

Participation and Attendance are often used in courses to help determine a final grade or standing in a course, though they are significantly different than any kind of assessment.

Nonetheless, participation and attendance recognize the value of student engagement and presence in the learning environment. While often considered supplementary, they play a meaningful role in supporting active learning, collaboration, and professional behaviour—especially in courses that rely on discussion, group work, or experiential activities.

Participation assesses how students contribute to class discussions, engage with peers, ask questions, and demonstrate preparedness. It encourages consistent involvement and helps build a learning community. **Attendance**, when used as an assessment criterion, reflects the importance of being present for learning experiences that cannot be easily replicated, such as live demonstrations, simulations, or field activities.

In applied and public safety programs, where teamwork, communication, and reliability are essential professional traits, participation and attendance can serve as indicators of readiness for practice. However, these components must be clearly defined in the course outline, including how they are measured and weighted. Criteria should be transparent—such as frequency of contributions, quality of engagement, or punctuality—and applied consistently.

When used thoughtfully, participation and attendance support accountability, encourage engagement, and reinforce the professional expectations students will encounter in their future careers. When tied deliberately to learning outcomes, participation can also demonstrate how it is a necessary assessment criterion in a course or program.

Peer Feedback and Collaboration are assessment strategies that emphasize the importance of interpersonal skills, teamwork, and reflective learning. These methods are particularly valuable in courses that involve group projects, discussions, or practice-based learning, where students must work together to achieve shared goals.

- **Collaboration** assesses how effectively students contribute to group tasks, communicate with peers, share responsibilities, and support collective learning. This type of work encourages accountability, fosters mutual respect, and mirrors the collaborative environments students will encounter in professional settings—

especially in fields like emergency services, counselling, and conflict resolution, where teamwork is essential. When thinking about learning outcomes, you can see how collaborative assessments go well beyond the basic cognitive functions of recall, identifying and describing to more complex behaviours.

- **Peer feedback** involves students evaluating each other's contributions or performance using structured criteria. This process helps students develop critical thinking, self-awareness, and the ability to give and receive constructive input. It also deepens learning by encouraging students to reflect on quality, standards, and improvement. Like collaboration, this involves higher order thinking and communicating and must be carefully designed so as not to dismissed as easy marks or favours from one student to the next. Rubrics can be very helpful to provide guidance for students as they provide evaluative feedback and commentary.

Self-Assessment is a reflective assessment method that empowers students to assess their own learning, performance, and progress in relation to course expectations and learning outcomes. It encourages metacognition—thinking about one's own thinking—and helps students develop the ability to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and strategies for growth.

As with more sophisticated assessments, well designed self assessments strive for deeper learning experiences, reflecting learner autonomy and accountability, which are essential skills in both academic and professional contexts. Through structured self-assessment activities—such as reflective journals, goal-setting exercises, or self-rating rubrics—students engage in critical reflection and take ownership of their learning journey.

In curriculum design, self-assessment aligns well with learning outcomes related to personal development, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. It is especially effective when paired with instructor or peer feedback, allowing students to compare their self-perceptions with external evaluations and adjust accordingly.

Summary of Assessment Selection Criteria

The following table summarizes various types of assessments, their characteristics, and considerations for course developers:

Assessment Type	Brief Description	Alignment with Learning Outcomes	Quality of Learning Experience	Implications for Grading	Benefit to the Student	Concerns Regarding Grading	Other Comments
Single-Use Assessments							
Quizzes, Tests, and Exams	Structured assessments measuring knowledge recall, comprehension, and application.	Foundational knowledge, terminology, comprehension.	Efficient for assessing broad content knowledge.	Clear criteria, balanced difficulty. Convenient grading.	Ensures foundational knowledge.	May emphasize rote memorization.	Best used in combination with other methods.
Written Assignments	Essays, reports, or reflections demonstrating critical thinking and communication.	Depth of understanding, critical thinking, argumentation.	Supports critical thinking and independent learning.	Rubrics can help clarify expectations. Testing for content knowledge as well as communication skills	Develops critical thinking and writing skills.	Risk of plagiarism or AI-generated content.	Clear structure and expectations are essential.
Presentations	Oral or multimedia presentations showcasing understanding and engagement.	Communication skills, synthesis, engagement.	Encourages engagement and public speaking skills.	Guidelines, rubrics for consistency.	Builds communication and presentation skills.	Subjectivity in the review.	Supports academic integrity and engagement.
Multi-Faceted Assessments							
Projects and Portfolios	Extended tasks or collections of work demonstrating applied skills and integration.	Applied knowledge, creativity, integration of concepts.	Fosters deep engagement and ownership of learning.	Milestones, rubrics, feedback.	Encourages creativity and applied learning.	Complexity in grading multiple components.	Encourages deeper engagement and ownership.
Practical Demonstrations	Performance-based assessments in simulated or	Technical proficiency, decision-making,	Bridges gap between theory and practice.	Detailed rubrics, clear expectations.	Develops practical skills and situational awareness.	Consistency and fairness in assessment.	Essential in applied disciplines.

	controlled environments.	situational awareness.					
Field/Clinical Assessment	Assessment in real-world, practice-based settings during work-integrated learning.	Professional behaviour, ethical decision-making, adaptability.	Provides holistic view of readiness for professional practice.	Standardized tools, structured feedback.	Prepares for real-world professional practice.	Variability in field settings.	Critical for experiential education.
Discussions	Structured classroom or online discussions requiring critical engagement with ideas.	Communication, critical thinking, application of concepts.	Promotes dialogue, active learning, and multiple perspectives.	Rubrics, participation criteria for consistency.	Develops reasoning, listening, and respectful debate skills.	Uneven participation, subjectivity in grading.	Effective when linked to course readings and prompts.
Other Forms of Assessments							
Participation and Attendance	Assessment of engagement and presence in the learning environment.	Active learning, collaboration, professional behaviour.	Supports active learning and accountability.	Transparent criteria, consistent application.	Fosters engagement and professional behaviour.	Subjectivity and bias. Uncertain connection to learning outcomes.	Supports accountability and engagement.
Peer Feedback and Collaboration	Evaluation of contributions to group tasks and peer feedback.	Interpersonal skills, teamwork, reflective learning.	Enhances learning outcomes and interpersonal skills.	Clear guidelines, rubrics for fairness.	Builds teamwork and reflective skills.	Fairness and consistency.	Enhances learning and professional skills.
Self-Assessment	Reflective evaluation of one's own learning and progress.	Personal development, critical thinking, lifelong learning.	Promotes reflective, self-directed learning.	Specified purpose, tools, contribution to grade.	Encourages self-awareness and personal growth.	Accuracy of self-perception.	Promotes reflective, self-directed learning.

Pedagogical Influences on Assessment Design

Assessments are not something you just conjure up after you've done the hard work of your course design. Designing assessments is an interwoven aspect of your entire course,

so it is imperative that your assessment reflects the overall design and intentions of your course. Better alignment results in greater integrity of your course/program.

The result of intentional design is more relevant and reliable course content, learning activities, instructional methods, and assessment for learners. That includes integrating the broader principles of your course design, taking into account such institutionally driven priorities such as the following:

Indigenization

Indigenization refers to the process of integrating Indigenous knowledge, pedagogies, and perspectives into educational systems. By embedding the concept of Indigenization into educational assessments, your course can foster a more inclusive, respectful, and culturally rich learning environment. This is one of our key commitments from the JIBC strategic plan, and incorporating Indigenous perspectives in curriculum represents a type of action that educators can take to demonstrate reconciliation practices in a very applied context with real benefits to learners, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

What does this look like in practice?

Incorporating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the content of assessments has the potential to enhance the quality of both your course and its assessments and helps bring your course in line with our broader institutional commitments. Consider how to make assessments align with Indigenous principles of holistic and community-minded learning, using techniques such as oral presentations, storytelling, community projects, and collaborative assessments alongside traditional written exams and papers. Indigenization encourages educators to think of assessment in more holistic terms as well, valuing not just cognitive but also emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects of learning. This is particularly crucial in public safety education, where understanding and respecting cultural diversity can significantly impact the quality and effectiveness of care, especially for Indigenous communities that have unique health needs and cultural perspectives.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Integrating EDI into assessment design means recognizing and addressing the diverse identities, experiences, and needs of your students. It involves creating assessment practices that are fair, accessible, and responsive to systemic barriers that may affect student performance. This is not just a matter of fairness—it's a matter of educational quality and integrity.

What does this look like in practice?

EDI-informed assessment design may include offering multiple ways for students to demonstrate learning (e.g. written, oral, visual, or practical formats), ensuring accessibility for students with disabilities, and being mindful of cultural and linguistic diversity. It also means critically examining grading practices for bias, using inclusive language in assessment prompts, and creating opportunities for students to bring their lived experiences into their work.

In public safety and applied fields, where practitioners serve diverse communities, EDI-aligned assessments help prepare students to think critically, act ethically and professionally, and serve equitably. By embedding EDI into assessment, educators foster a learning environment where all students feel seen, supported, and empowered to succeed. See below in the next section for a more detailed description of some applications of EDI in assessment design. If we take a public safety profession, let's say paramedics or corrections officers to name just two, we recognize that we want more from our graduates than just the accumulation of information. Instead, we intend our programs and courses to cultivate well rounded, thoughtful, and highly competent professionals.

Accessibility

Assessment is not just a measure of learning—it's a reflection of how learning is supported. Designing accessible assessments is a critical part of inclusive course design, ensuring that all students, regardless of ability, have equitable opportunities to

demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Accessibility is not an add-on; it is a foundational principle that should be embedded from the start.

Integrating accessibility into assessment design means proactively removing barriers that might prevent students from fully participating. It aligns with legal obligations, institutional commitments, and—most importantly—educational values that prioritize fairness, dignity, and respect for all learners.

What does this look like in practice?
Accessible assessment design includes offering extended time or alternative formats for students with disabilities, using clear and simple language in instructions, ensuring compatibility with screen readers and assistive technologies, and avoiding unnecessary sensory or cognitive load. It also means designing assessments that are flexible and adaptable—such as allowing students to choose between written, oral, or visual formats when appropriate.

In applied and public safety education, where learners come from diverse backgrounds and may face a range of challenges, accessible assessments help ensure that all students can succeed—not just those who fit a traditional mold. By embedding accessibility into assessment design, educators create more inclusive, equitable, and effective learning environments.

Trauma-Informed Pedagogy

Trauma-informed pedagogy recognizes that students may carry the effects of trauma into the classroom, which can impact their ability to learn, engage, and perform. Assessment practices that are trauma-informed prioritize safety, trust, and empowerment, helping students feel supported rather than judged.

What does this look like in practice?
Trauma-informed assessment design includes offering flexibility in deadlines where possible, avoiding high-stakes surprises, and providing choices in how students demonstrate learning. It also involves using clear, predictable structures and creating

opportunities for reflection and self-regulation. Instructors may also consider the emotional impact of assessment content and avoid triggering scenarios when possible.

In public safety and applied fields, where students may be exposed to emotionally intense material (be it simulated or real-world practicum environments) or have lived experience with trauma, this approach is especially important. Trauma-informed assessments foster resilience, reduce anxiety, and support student well-being while maintaining academic rigor.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing students' cultural identities and experiences in the learning process. When applied to assessment design, it ensures that students from diverse backgrounds see their knowledge, values, and ways of learning reflected and respected.

What does this look like in practice?

Culturally responsive assessments may include open-ended tasks that allow students to draw on personal or community experiences, use examples from diverse cultures, or offer multiple formats for demonstrating learning. It also involves being mindful of language, avoiding cultural bias in test questions, and creating space for students to express their identities.

This approach is particularly relevant in multicultural classrooms and public-facing professions, where cultural competence is essential. By designing assessments that are inclusive and affirming, educators help students feel seen, respected, and motivated to engage deeply with the material. This helps support student autonomy and reaffirms that clear message about the types of public safety professionals we want our learners to become.

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is the ability to use digital tools effectively, ethically, and critically. As technology becomes increasingly embedded in education and the workplace, assessments must evolve to reflect and support the development of digital competencies.

What does this look like in practice?

Assessments that integrate digital literacy might include tasks that require students to research online, evaluate digital sources, create multimedia presentations, or collaborate using digital platforms. It also involves teaching students how to use digital tools responsibly, including understanding issues like data privacy, AI use, and digital citizenship. If there are tools and/or technologies that are particularly relevant for your discipline, assessments can invite a greater familiarity for those wishing to understand how technology is used in professional practice. E-portfolios offer an excellent example that address many of the issues embedded in digital literacy.

Incorporating digital literacy into assessment design prepares students for the realities of modern work and life. It also encourages creativity, collaboration, networking, and critical thinking—skills that are essential across disciplines.

AI, Productivity, and Learning

A current example of this involves the use of AI, both for developing assessments (from the instructor's perspective) and for what is expected of assessments (from the student's perspective). The discussion about AI and assessment is enough to fill another guide, and rather than prescribe any direct action, it seems better to let this topic jump off into its own research and discovery.

CTLI has developed a guide for dealing with AI at a high level of attention, with guidance for faculty. For instructors and curriculum developers, ensuring that any assessment work upholds the principles of Academic Integrity that is expected of students is essential. Currently, AI functions as a productivity tool at different levels of usage, from course development to instruction. Additionally, students have their own motivations with regard

to the use of AI, and having substantial discussions with students about technologies such as AI is a recommended part of any class activity, especially when sharing expectations between instructors and students. At the same time, a concerted planning effort around the types of assessment and their purpose will also mitigate opportunities to use the technologies for short-cuts and/or inappropriate usages.

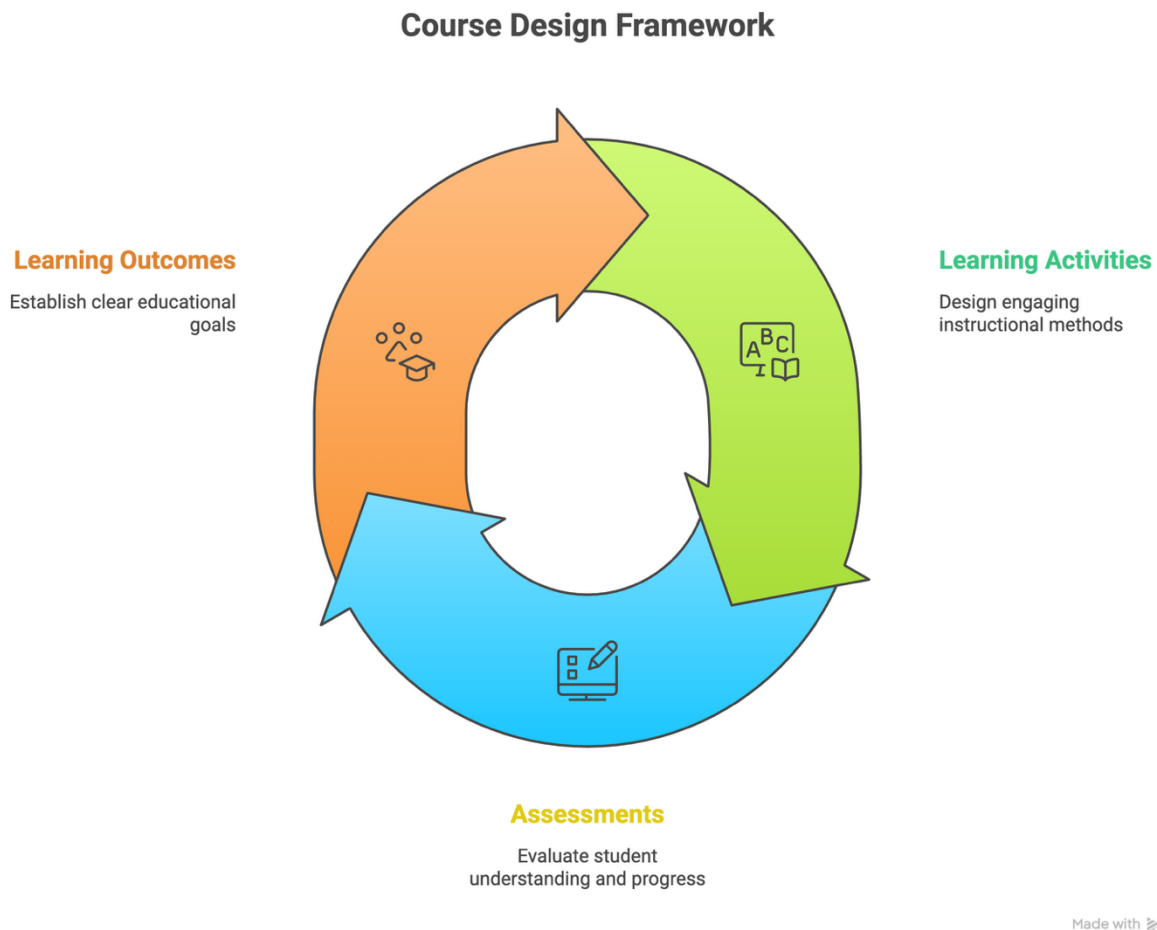## What does this look like in practice?

Any guidance for educators should move beyond simply communicating rules about AI use. Instead, you should fundamentally redesign assessment structures at the program level to integrate AI purposefully, ensure learning validity, and prepare students for a world where AI is a pervasive tool. The overbearing dominance of AI in current education discourse should give us pause and invite discussions about our assessments, our assessment strategies, and our goals for learning. The general advice in this guide seeks for us to develop substantial, authentic assessments that focus more on process and less on distinct products that can be created on demand. These practices by themselves should mitigate the low-level risks posed by AI such as assignment generation and test taking.

Aligning Assessment to Learning Outcomes (LOs) with "Backward Design"

Now that you have considered some of theories and themes that can inform your assessment choices, we can look at the application of these ideas in the design of your courses.

Creating assessments is one of the core fundamental outputs of your course design, so it is important you come up with assessments that are going to be challenging, relevant and interesting to your learners. Even more important, your assessments need to address whatever learning outcomes you have established for your course.

We can see assessments as being one piece in the essential framework of a teaching and learning experience.

Course Design Framework

Learning Outcomes

Establish clear educational goals

Learning Activities

Design engaging instructional methods

Assessments

Evaluate student understanding and progress

Made with Napkin

Figure 1- Course Design Framework

Whether you are designing practical hands-on assessments or a written academic paper, it is essential that whatever you have your learners doing relates directly to your stated learning outcomes. Otherwise, you run the risk of asking your learners to do something for which they have not been prepared.

Understanding "alignment" in course design

Course design alignment between learning outcomes, learning activities, and assessments is a fundamental principle in education. This alignment ensures that the course objectives are effectively met and that learners have a clear and coherent learning experience. Several educational theorists and researchers have emphasized the

importance of alignment in course design. Here's an explanation of this concept with references to support it:

Alignment in course design refers to the intentional and systematic coordination of three key components:

1. **Learning Outcomes:** These are the specific, measurable, and observable statements that describe what learners should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of a course or learning experience. Learning outcomes set the direction for the course and provide a clear understanding of what is expected of learners.

2. **Learning Activities and Teaching Strategies:** These are the methods, activities, and instructional approaches used by educators to facilitate learning. They encompass lectures, discussions, group work, assignments, projects, and various teaching techniques employed to help learners achieve the learning outcomes.

3. **Assessments:** Assessments include quizzes, tests, assignments, projects, and other methods used to measure whether learners have achieved the intended learning outcomes. They provide evidence of learning and guide instructional decisions.

Alignment between these components ensures that each element supports and reinforces the others, creating a cohesive, transparent, and effective learning experience. Alignment provides the following indicators to help instructors gauge the learner's development:

1. **Direction:** Learning outcomes serve as a roadmap for course design. They provide clarity on what learners should learn, as well as the depth and breadth of that learning, allowing instructors to select appropriate learning activities and assessments that directly align with these outcomes.

2. **Relevance:** When learning activities and teaching strategies align with the learning outcomes, learners are more likely to see the relevance of their learning and identify

what is expected of them. Engaging activities that connect to the desired outcomes can enhance motivation and interest in the subject matter. Alignment of these components further supports learners' development of deep learning, often associated with the ability to make meaning or sense of the knowledge acquired, compared to surface learning, which, as suggested, shows limited knowledge acquired.

3. **Progress:** Assessments should measure the extent to which learners have achieved the intended learning outcomes. When alignment exists, assessments become reliable indicators of learner proficiency, providing instructors with valuable data on learner performance.

4. **Feedback:** Alignment enables a feedback loop for instructors to assess whether learners are making progress toward the desired outcomes. If learners are not meeting the outcomes, adjustments can be made to teaching strategies and activities to better align with the activities and assessments.

Putting Alignment into Practice (i.e. Backward Design)

In order to develop learning outcomes, it helps to think about the skill(s) and information you want the learners to gain by the end of the course. For a much more detailed discussion about learning outcomes and their composition, please refer to our *JIBC Guide to Developing Course and Program Goals and Learning Outcomes*.

With assessments, we should see a reflection of your intentions in your learning outcomes, both in the type of action expected of learners as well as the depth and type of learning.

Consider a course learning outcome that seeks to reflect the requirements of the employers.

For example:
The employers require their employees to perform CPR.

Learning outcome

At the end of this course, learners will be able to perform CPR according to industry-specific standards.

From learning outcome to assessment

Then, to design the assessment, refer to one learning outcome at a time, and ensure that you are assessing the particular skill listed under the learning outcome.

In the above example the assessment would be:

- *Perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on a training manikin in accordance with current workplace first aid and resuscitation guidelines. This includes assessing the scene for safety, evaluating the condition of the individual, initiating chest compressions and rescue breaths, using an automated external defibrillator (AED), and communicating effectively with team members and emergency services as part of a coordinated workplace emergency response.*

In the above example, since the learning outcome involves an action, the assessment is to demonstrate the process (practical) and not explain (theoretical). Explaining the process would be a necessary subordinate step along the way in this learning experience, but the ultimate assessment would necessarily involve the actual practice, even if only in a simulated environment.

From outcome to assessment to activity

The last stage of backward design is learning experiences or teaching activities. These activities should teach the students what you are going to assess them on. You should not assess learners on something they are not learning. For the example here, at a very basic level, the learning activity might be something like:

- The instructor introduces the meaning of CPR and its importance.

- The instructor explains the steps of CPR and then demonstrates it on a manikin.

- The instructor asks students to practice CPR on the manikin while supervising them.

With your newly composed learning outcomes, you should have a much clearer idea of what students need to do to demonstrate their learning. By clearly defining what students should know, be able to do, or value by the end of a course, you can create assessments that align with these outcomes.

For example, if a learning outcome focuses on critical thinking, the assessment might include case studies or problem-solving tasks that require students to analyze and evaluate information. Conversely, for the same outcome, we can anticipate that a set of closed multiple-choice questions will likely not allow students to demonstrate critical thinking. Similarly, if a learning outcome emphasizes practical skills, the assessment could involve hands-on projects or demonstrations. Your goal as a designer of the course is to ensure that your assessments are meaningful, targeted, and reflective of the intended educational goals and learning outcomes.

Alignment Guide (Course Level)

Use the following table to align your learning outcomes to activities and assessments.

	Learning Outcomes	Content Topics	Learning Activities	Materials & Resources	*Assessment Method*
	Relevant learning outcomes from course outline	Content topics to be covered for a given unit of instruction	Learning activities; e.g. reading, research, case study, written assignment, discussion, group project, etc.	Any materials and resources required for the module; e.g. textbook pages, online LMS, PowerPoint presentation, links, video/audio, media, other reading	*Types of activities to gauge student learning*

- LINKS to DOWNLOADABLE ALIGNMENT GUIDE

- Alignment guide with examples

Equity-minded considerations

Designing courses necessarily depends upon the clear alignment between learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment strategies. This itself is a considerable task in the curriculum development process. Additionally, in recent years, educators have become much more mindful of the type of assessment to include in this alignment, giving much more attention to questions of inclusion and equity. As it turns out, a sharper focus

on inclusion and equity helps ensure that assessments maintain rigour and depth while being more available and practical for a wider variety of students.

What does it mean to design an equity-minded assessment? Equity involves the heightened realization that each student brings a unique background and set of experiences to the classroom, and success is not predetermined by a student's identity and social history. Therefore, by taking a position to be equity-minded, we work to ensure the learning success of all students toward the achievement of a course's stated learning outcomes. This does not mean the same as "treating everyone equally," which implies an equal standing among all students. Instead, we recognize and validate differences in backgrounds, knowledge, identity, ways of learning and knowing.

Equity-minded design overlaps with several other perspectives in the educational environment, depending on how one approaches course design work. Some educators will recognize equity-minded design as upholding principles of trauma-informed practice, particularly as applied to teaching and learning contexts. Others may recognize characteristics of culturally responsive teaching and Indigenization practices, as well as inclusive teaching. Course designers who apply principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) will also recognize equity-minded principles in their own assessment design practices. These are all concepts that can be seen as interweaving, with each bringing a different but important focus but working toward a common goal of helping all students succeed in their efforts to learn and develop their skills and knowledge.

We should acknowledge that equity-minded design can apply to the process of design as well as the final products in the assessments themselves. This process involves the designers recognizing their own biases and limitations in conjunction with the invitation to students to participate in the design process. Assessments that are produced in this manner are more likely to be more equitable and coherent as a result, as well as demonstrating the following characteristics:

- Cultural relevance and sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students. This includes incorporating examples, language, and contexts that are familiar and accessible to all students.

- Recognizing limitations and mistakes of the past in educational systems and structures that served to reproduce power imbalances among different groups of people based on their identities.

- Variety in the use of measures to capture the diverse strengths and abilities of students. For example, projects, portfolios, presentations, and performance assessments.

- Use of reviewing rubrics to identify and eliminate biases that could disadvantage certain groups of students. This involves ensuring that assessment content is relevant, fair, and free from stereotypes or cultural assumptions.

- Clear and transparent criteria provided to students to help them understand what is expected of them in assessments. These criteria can be used to inform a grading rubric.

- Prioritizing accessibility for all students, including those with disabilities or learning differences. This may involve providing accommodations, such as extended time or alternative formats, to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

- Provision of timely feedback. This involves providing timely and constructive feedback that helps students understand their strengths and areas for improvement, and that empowers them to take ownership of their learning.

- A focus on continuous improvement rather than correction or punishment. Equity-minded assessment is an ongoing process that involves reflection, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

As you develop your assessments, it is important to be able to review your own practices and design choices so that your assessments not only align with your teaching, but you hold yourself to the same standards that you expect of your students. Like any industry, the educational practices we grew up with have evolved over time, taking into consideration new ideas, research discoveries, and evidence-based practices. Sometimes it is difficult to break away from the systems and structures that we came through ourselves as students. But if we recognize that those systems were not perfect to begin with, then we can begin to think more creatively and openly about how to improve our practices, and equity-minded design offers good ideas in that direction. Change to assessment does not need to happen all at once. It is possible to improve courses over time with thoughtful revisions and adjustments taking all of the above into account and committing to staying in touch with educational developments in the areas of teaching and instructional design.

Incorporating Universal Design for Learning into Backward Design

As described above, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a proactive framework that guides the creation of flexible learning environments and assessments that accommodate the diverse needs of all learners. Rather than retrofitting accommodations after the fact, UDL encourages instructors to design assessments that are accessible and meaningful from the outset.

Opportunities for Diverse Assessments

To begin, we should recognize the limitations inherent in traditional assessments, such as timed exams and essays. While exams often prioritize rote memorization, essays might not fully engage students in deep synthesis if the focus shifts to mechanics over critical thinking. We encourage you to explore a spectrum of assessments, each offering unique advantages and challenges. Your role is to find a balance that supports learning in its various forms, from memorization to critical analysis and skill-building.

Institutional Constraints with UDL Principles

Often, personal teaching philosophies clash with institutional requirements or accreditation standards, particularly around assessment methods. However, UDL can help with a reconceptualization of assessment designs that align with student learning outcomes, leveraging its principles to overcome these constraints. By diversifying assessment methods, you can make your courses more accessible and engaging, ensuring that all students can demonstrate their learning effectively.

UDL-Informed Assessment Strategies

Adopting a UDL approach requires a shift in perspective: think of assessments not as endpoints but as ongoing check-ins that guide the expansion of student knowledge. This entails:

- Prioritizing clarity in learning outcomes and objectives to align assessments meaningfully with course goals.

- Balancing high-stake and low-stake assessments to encourage continuous engagement and learning.

- Managing workloads thoughtfully to ensure assessments are meaningful and doable.

- Utilizing feedback and rubrics to provide clear, actionable insights into student performance.

UDL as Innovation

Consider integrating innovative assessment methods, such as multimedia projects, e-portfolios, and collaborative assessments. These approaches not only cater to diverse learning preferences but also mirror real-world tasks, enhancing the relevance and applicability of learning experiences.

Reflecting on and Refining Assessment Practices

We only improve as professional educators with ongoing reflection and revision of our practices. In this way, our growth as educators never ceases. It is important to consider

how assessments can be redesigned to better support all students, suggesting a thoughtful examination of barriers and potential UDL-informed solutions. Engage with students in this process to ensure assessments are relevant, challenging, and aligned with their learning goals.

If you take a deep dive into UDL, you commit to an educational practice that values diversity, inclusivity, and meaningful learning. Implementing UDL in assessment design enriches the learning experience for students and overall adds depth to your repertoire as an instructor.

Examples:

School of Criminal Justice & Security:
In a Corrections and Rehabilitation course, students could choose to write a policy brief, design a restorative justice circle protocol, or create a visual mind map explaining rehabilitative models in correctional institutions.

School of Health, Community and Social Justice:
A Health Emergency Management course might let students choose between developing a response plan as a written document, a narrated presentation, or a collaborative simulation project.

School of Community and Social Justice:
In a Gender-Based Violence Prevention course, students could submit an advocacy toolkit, write a letter to a policymaker, or build a resource website to raise awareness each assessed using the same rubric but allowing varied modes of expression.

GRADING

Courses and programs at JIBC all employ some type of grading system. This can be a multi-level grading such as letter grades or percentages, or a course might simply be pass/fail or complete/incomplete. In any case, course designers must have a rationale for

the type of grading that has been chosen for a given course. This is usually a decision for a program into which fit a collection of courses rather than designing a grading system on a course-by-course basis. So, your system may be determined for you already, but it is important nonetheless to understand how grading needs to be an accurate reflection of the evaluation of any assessment.

Grading, as the mechanism for interpreting and communicating assessment outcomes, must align with the learning outcomes and the real-world competencies required in the field. Choosing a grading approach—whether criterion-referenced, pass/fail, or competency-based—is a critical design decision because it influences how students engage with the material, how instructors provide feedback, and how performance is ultimately judged.

An effective grading strategy ensures that assessments are fair, transparent, and supportive of both learning and accountability while maintaining a focus on learning as opposed to the achievement of a particular letter or number. At the very least, a final grade should attempt to demonstrate an achievement of the learning outcomes.

Grade schemes

The Grade Schemes – Quick Reference Guide serves as a concise guide for determining the appropriate grading scheme to use at the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC), in alignment with Policy 3304 (Grading Policy). It outlines four distinct grade schemes:

- Letter Grade (JIBC1)

- Mastered/Not Mastered (JIBC2)

- Complete/Incomplete (JIBC3)

- Pass/Fail (JIBC4)

The Quick Reference Guide provides a comparative overview of their intended use, course suitability, impact on GPA and academic progression, and transcript representation. The

document emphasizes that in cases of discrepancy, the official policy or procedure should take precedence over the quick reference.

To use the guide effectively, instructors and program staff should match the grading scheme to the nature of the course and its evaluative components. For example, theoretical and academic courses with multifaceted assessments are best suited to the Letter Grade scheme, while practical or competency-based courses may benefit from the Mastered/Not Mastered or Complete/Incomplete schemes. The Pass/Fail option is recommended for shorter courses with graded components where a specific pass threshold is required. Each scheme includes guidance on how passing criteria should be communicated in course outlines, ensuring transparency and consistency in evaluation standards.

ASSESSMENT AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

JIBC uses two educational technology tools that can be very helpful for setting up and managing assessments. In both cases, these tools incorporate much more than assessment considerations and are meant to be regarded as institute-wide technologies. While its not essential for course developers and instructors to be comprehensively familiar with all the functions of each of these tools, it is important to be familiar with the potential of each. Anyone wanting to become more familiar with these tools should contact CTLI for further information and training.

Blackboard Ultra

The first, Blackboard Ultra, is our institutional Learning Management System (LMS) which we use to host courses, both in online and blended formats. Ultra has a number of assessment tools built within it that course developers can leverage to organize their assessments. Ultra is also very convenient for the administrative aspects of assessment

such as grade management. The many links below will take readers to recorded trainings for the use of Blackboard Ultra and its many helpful functions.

Assessment How-Tos (Blackboard Ultra)

Once you have designed your assessments, you will need to set them up in your courses. For online courses, we have several guides to help you. Be sure that you have completed your design tasks before setting your assessments up in a course environment.

How to set up an assessment in Blackboard Ultra

- How to create assignments

- How to create tests

- How to create groups for group assignments and activities

- How to create journals

How to organize your Grade Centre

- Using Blackboard Gradebook

- How to set up the Overall Grade

- Marking Assignments or Tests

- How to Submit Learner Grades

How to create assessable discussion areas

- How to create discussions

- How to Grade discussions

How to add a rubric to your assessment

- How to create and grade with Rubrics

PebblePad

The other ed tech tool that has a major focus on assessments is PebblePad. PebblePad is a powerful e-portfolio and learning design platform that can be strategically leveraged to strengthen assessment in both post-secondary education and training contexts. Its value lies in supporting authentic, reflective, and longitudinal forms of assessment that move beyond traditional tests and essays. PebblePad offers a number of attributes and benefits that assessment designers will find useful, including the following:

- **E-Portfolio Functionality:** Students can collect, curate, and showcase evidence of their learning over time.

- **Showcasing Achievement:** Students can curate portfolios for employment, credentialing, or professional registration. They can also build evidence-based portfolios that resemble professional practice (e.g. demonstrating competencies for nursing, policing, paramedicine, education).

- **Reflection Tools:** Encourages metacognition and critical self-assessment.

- **Workbooks & Templates:** Instructors can design structured assessment activities (e.g. guided reflections, checklists, competency tracking).

- **Feedback Integration:** Allows iterative instructor, peer, and even external (e.g. workplace supervisor) feedback.

- **Scalability:** Works for individual courses, entire programs, or across an institution.

- **Longitudinal Tracking:** Programs can track student growth across semesters or years, linking assessments to graduate attributes or professional standards.

- **Customization:** Workbooks allow instructors to align assessments closely with specific course or program learning outcomes.

Choosing to integrate PebblePad into your course or training experience involves a significant instructional design decision, and this is something you would be considering at the early stages of assessment design. It involves a number of benefits for tracking and

managing assessments, and it involves a deliberate move toward a more robust assessment structure for your curriculum. If you are considering implementing PebblePad, it is important to get involved with an appropriate ed tech specialist who can discuss options with you.

CONCLUSION

This guide includes a lot of information—some of which may not appear directly in your course outline. That's intentional. Designing assessments isn't just about filling in sections of a document; it's about thinking deeply and clearly about what your course is really trying to achieve and how your assessments can support that.

As you work through your assessment design, you'll be prompted to consider not only the specific goals of your course and what you want your learners to take away, but also broader educational values—like experiential learning, equity, Indigenization, and inclusion. These ideas are essential to creating meaningful, respectful, and effective learning experiences.

Taking the time to design your assessments thoughtfully will help you clarify your intentions, align with institutional expectations, and ensure your course reflects the standards and values of JIBC. Ultimately, your work should result in clear, well-structured assessment descriptions that support both student success and academic integrity.

With this guide, you'll have the tools and examples you need to design assessments that are purposeful, aligned, and ready to be shared with confidence.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS