

Glossary of Assessment Terms

- Achievement* - successful accomplishment in relation to a holistic task or goal.
- Assessment* - the process of gathering, recording and using information about students' responses to educational tasks with the intention of assisting learning, planning teaching and reporting achievement.
- Assessment Criteria* - the specific means and standards by which achievement is judged.
- Assessment Task* - the specific activity or product through which learning is encouraged and judgements are made about student attainment.
- Attainment* - *achievement of a particular objective.*
- Convergent Assessment* - assessment which aims to discover *if* the student knows, understands or can do a particular pre-determined thing.
- Continuous Assessment* - assessments carried out over a period of time to produce a composite mark or grade.
- Coursework Assessment* - course-based work used to produce a 'coursework grade' that is created using explicit guidelines.
- Criterion-referenced Assessment (CRA)* - assessment whereby the success criteria relate to explicit standards.
- Diagnostic Assessment* - detailed one-to-one assessment to determine an individual student's specific weaknesses, misconceptions and, less commonly, strengths.
- Divergent Assessment* - assessment which tries to discover, openly and flexibly, *what* the student knows, understands or can do.
- Evaluation* - the process of conceiving, obtaining and communicating information for the guidance of educational decision-making (Note: *Assessment* and *Evaluation* are used interchangeably, especially in the USA. In the UK assessment usually refers to individual performance while evaluation usually refers to curricula, programmes of study or institutions.)
- Feedback* - evaluation information that steers development on the basis of performance (not expectations).

Formative assessment - less detailed than diagnostic assessment, but still individually focussed assessment which takes place whilst work is in progress and is intended positively to support learning and future performance.

Grading system – the process by which a teacher arrives at a symbol or number that is used to represent a pupil's achievement.

High stakes testing - An assessment process with social consequences for the candidate that extend beyond the assessment situation.

Ipsative assessment - assessment in which students' performance or progress is compared with their own previous performances or progress.

Learning Objectives - what students are *intended* to learn

Learning Outcomes - what students *actually* learn.

Low stakes testing - an assessment process which has only pedagogical consequences for the candidate.

Measurement – The process of assigning numbers or categories to performance, according to rules and standards

Moderation - the process of comparing assessments (e.g. by two or more examiners) to agree standards and grades.

Norm-referenced Assessment (NRA) - assessment where the performance of an individual is compared with the performance of a larger group. A rank order is typically produced.

Performance Assessment – Observing and judging a student's skill in actually carrying out a physical activity (e.g. giving a speech) or a product (writing a monograph).

Reliability - the degree to which assessment is consistent over time and across assessors.

Summative assessment - used at the end of a unit of teaching to ascertain, summarise and communicate to the student and others what has been learned by the student.

Test - A formal, systematic procedure for obtaining a sample of pupil's behaviour; the results of a test are usually used to make generalisations about how pupils would have performed on similar occasions.

Validity - the degree to which an assessment assesses what it purports to assess.