# Identifying Assessment Challenges in My Course

**GOAL:** Outline your assessment distribution and identify challenges with your assessments, including alignment to learning outcomes, workload, distribution, balance, and weighting.

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## STEP 1:

## Count the number of graded assessments in your course and add them to the table below. Count each instance of repeated assessments (e.g., weekly quizzes, discussion posts, bi-weekly problem sets, etc.).

## *Example:* 10 weekly quizzes (worth 3.5% each) + 2 reflection papers (10% each) + 1 mid-term exam (15%) + 1 final project (30%) = 14 total assessments (12 low-stakes, 2 high-stakes)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Total # of Graded Assessments in my Course: |  |  | # Due in weeks 1-3 |  |
| # of Low-Stakes Assessments (≤10%): |  |  | # Due in weeks 4-6 |  |
| # of High-Stakes Assessments (>10%): |  |  | # Due in weeks 7-9 |  |
| **Ask yourself:** What would students’ workload be if they had this assessment distribution in all 5 of their courses? |  |  | # Due in weeks 10-end |  |

## STEP 2:

How are your course learning outcomes assessed and what is the distribution of low- and high-stakes assessments for each outcome? List each of your **course learning outcomes** in the Column 1. List each **graded assessment** that is used to assess each outcome (e.g., exam, reflection paper, discussion post, performance, problem sets) in Column 2, and the **weighting** towards the final grade in the Column 3.

* If a major assessment is broken down into multiple graded submissions (e.g., students submit an outline, annotated bibliography, and final paper), enter each submission on its own line.
* Some assessments, especially cumulative or end-of-semester assessments, may assess multiple outcomes. List these assessments beside each relevant learning outcome.
* Some outcomes may be assessed by one assessment, and others may have multiple assessments.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Learning Outcomes** | **Graded Assessment** | **Weighting** |
| [Course learning outcome 1] |  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| [Course learning outcome 2] |  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| [Course learning outcome 3] |  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| [Course learning outcome 4] |  |  |
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**Questions to ask yourself based on the table above:**

* Which assessments would you like to keep doing, given that they are effective at assessing a particular learning outcome or multiple learning outcomes?
* Are any course learning outcomes not being assessed sufficiently or effectively?
* Are any course learning outcomes being assessed “too much”? Could you remove an assessment and still effectively assess that learning outcome? What does each assessment contribute to the overall assessment of that learning outcome?
* For key learning outcomes, do students have low-stakes opportunities to practice skills or check their understanding before completing high-stakes assessments?
* Are the assessments of key course learning outcomes weighted more heavily?
* Are the weightings for each assessment appropriate for the amount of work expected?

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| If you notice any challenges, questions, or issues with your **assessment flow, organization, or distribution**, or **weighting** based on these questions, make notes in the table below. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Challenges, Questions, Issues, Things to Consider Changing |
| Flow, Organization, Distribution |  |
| Weighting |  |
| Workload (student) |  |
| Workload (instructor/TA) |  |

## STEP 3:

What other challenges or issues arose with your course assessments? Add to the table above.

* **Flow/organization/distribution:** assessment distribution over the semester, timing or deadlines
* **Weighting**: student or instructor perception that weighting was unfair, unbalanced, or not aligned with learning outcomes
* **Workload (students):** student perceived or your received feedback about too much or too little work, many incomplete or late assessments or requests for extensions, high stress or anxiety
* **Workload (instructor/TA):** grading or feedback workload too high, feedback not being used, time spent solving challenges with automatically graded assessments or assessment technology

## STEP 4:

Based on your work above, identify **three challenges or issues** related to your course assessments that you’d like to address for your next course offering. Make a note of those priorities in the table below.

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| --- |
| **Challenges or Issues to be Addressed** |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

# Prioritizing Changes to my Assessments

**GOAL:** Identify three changes you’d like to make to your assessments, potential solutions, and the supports and resources you will need to make those changes.

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In this worksheet, you will identify three changes to make to your assessments for your next offering. Although you may decide to make more than three changes, it’s important to keep this process manageable and to prioritize those changes that are most important or needed. When identifying potential changes and solutions, ensure that the changes still align with, and support students’ progress towards meeting your course learning outcomes.

Resources available to support your brainstorming of potential solutions:

* Handout 1: Finding the Balance between High and Low Stakes Assessments
* Handout 2: Common Challenges and Potential Solutions for Balancing the Workload, Flow/Organization, and Weighting of Course Assessments

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessment Changes**(copy from the last table in Worksheet 1) | **List of Potential Solutions and Important Notes** | **Selected Solution and Brief Rationale** | **What questions do I still have? What support/resources will I need to make this change** (e.g., technology, TA support, physical space, etc.)? |
| 1. |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |

## Peer Feedback and Ideas

Copy or record the feedback and ideas suggested by your colleagues during the action learning set on Day 2 of the workshop.

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| --- | --- |
| **Change** | **Peer Feedback and Ideas** |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |



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# Outlining my Course Assessment Plan

**GOAL:** Outline and note details about each of your course assessments, paying special attention to the timing, workload, engagement or delivery mode.

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Outline the details of each of your course assessments in this table. Depending on your course, a variation of this table may be helpful to share with your students at the start of the semester.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessment** | **Associated course learning outcomes** | **Weighting for final course grade**  | **Engagement or Delivery Mode\*** (how will students complete or submit the assessment? Synchronous in-person, synchronous virtual, asynchronous)  | **Timing, Frequency** (e.g., due date, how often students complete this assessment) | **Expected Student Workload\*\*** (expected time to complete) | **Additional Notes** (e.g., logistics, grading, feedback, technology, use of drop lowest score or best of policy, etc.) |
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## \*Refer to our [Delivery and Engagement Modes for Each Course Element](https://otl.uoguelph.ca/system/files/Handout%202%20Delivery%20and%20Engagement%20Modes%20%281%29.pdf) handout

## \*\*For estimates of workload, see the [Student Workload Calculator](https://cat.wfu.edu/resources/tools/estimator2/) and [Time on Task](https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/tls/course-design/online-courses/time-task)

# Planning my Next Steps

**GOAL:** This worksheet helps you to plan your next steps for finalizing the changes to your assessments.

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As you move forward with your course changes and planning, consider the following questions.

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| **What questions do I still have? What do I still need to learn?** (e.g., about your course, your teaching space, your students) |
| **What decisions do I still need to make to finalize my assessment plans?**  |
| **What would I like more feedback on?** (stop by one of our [drop-in sessions](https://otl.uoguelph.ca/summerprogramming#Open%20Virtual%20Drop-In%20Sessions) throughout the summer!) |
| **What support and resources do I need to implement the assessment plans I’ve chosen?** Consider your physical space, technology, TAs or course support, etc. |

Register for other[OTL Summer 2021 Programming sessions](https://otl.uoguelph.ca/summerprogramming) for additional opportunities to connect with colleagues, share your ideas, gather peer feedback, and get support for your course planning.



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