

Assessing Learning Outcomes in the Context of Covid-19

10 considerations for assessing learning outcomes and reducing unnecessary assessment load

1. **An Outcomes-based Approach to Learning is a key feature of teaching and learning at Trinity.** Learning outcomes are concrete statements describing essential learning demonstrated by students at the end of a course or programme.
2. **Learning outcomes identify** what/how students are able know and do and behave at the end of a process of learning. Learning outcomes are **written at a threshold pass level**.
3. **All assessment should to be aligned to learning outcomes and enable students to demonstrate achievement of outcomes.** *Example:* After consulting this document, all readers should: 1. Develop insight into the importance of learning outcomes for redesigning assessment; 2. Identify redundant or pre-assessed learning outcomes in modules/programmes to which they contribute; 3. Evaluate which learning outcomes still need to be assessed and modify assessment practice appropriately.
4. **Identify essential programme or year outcomes before focusing at module level learning outcomes.** Establish which of these outcomes students have already been able to demonstrate through teaching, learning, and assessment in semester one.
5. **Identify any important LOs not yet demonstrated/assessed.**
6. **Working with other academics in your team,** decide on how to prioritise the outstanding LOs that still need to be assessed.
7. **Investigate** if any of the remaining outstanding LOs can already be deemed to have been demonstrated by students. Can any of the essential programme/year outcomes be deemed to have already been assessed?
8. **Establish if there is any redundancy of learning outcomes.** Which learning outcomes have been assessed elsewhere? Is there a real need for multiple achievements of the same outcome, or is this just adding to assessment burden?
9. **Can the assessment of outcomes be consolidated?** Where students have not yet been able to demonstrate achievement of certain LOs, is the achievement of these LOs able to be demonstrated through other components of assessment in the module?
10. **Is it possible to reduce the volume of assessment?** Consider integrating assessments and whether it is possible through fewer assessments to enable students to demonstrate the achievement of multiple/all outstanding learning outcomes.

Remember the guiding principles for using outcomes in academic practice.

All outcomes should be:

- Written in the future tense, e.g. 'by the end of this programme of study, you will be able to... [+ verb]'
- Explicit and clearly expressed
- Limited in number
- Expressed with an assessable verb (indicating the relation of the outcome to a domain or type of learning)
- Written with a level of learning/learner in mind.

For more information around learning outcomes, consult the extended resource documents ['Learning Outcomes at Trinity'](#).

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This document is not a statement of formal university policy, but a teaching and learning resource written from a pedagogical perspective. It is not intended to be prescriptive.

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