CRITERIA, CRITERION ELEMENTS AND STANDARDS

Purpose

This policy outlines TASC's position on criteria, criterion elements and standards included in TASC-accredited course documents to facilitate criterion-based assessment.

Criterion-based assessment identifies the extent of learner achievement within the scope of the course by measuring student achievement against a set of defined standards. Criterion elements specify the components or characteristics of each criterion to support a consistent understanding and application of the criteria and standards.

This policy supports course developers to identify and articulate appropriate criteria, criterion elements and standards for inclusion in proposed TASC-accredited courses. It aims to demystify assessment language and support teachers by providing a common understanding of key terms.

Policy statement

Criteria:

- **Directly relate to the course learning outcomes**
  Criteria are drawn directly from the skills, knowledge and understandings defined by the learning outcomes and reflect all key aspects of the learning outcomes.

- **Specify what students will be assessed on**
  Criteria outline what will be measured in relation to achievement of the learning outcomes.

- **Are distinct and of equal substance**
  Each rating is weighted equally in the calculation of a student's final award. Accordingly, each criterion within a course will represent an equal contribution to the achievement of the learning outcomes, to the extent possible. For clarity, criteria and criterion elements should be organised in such a way that minimises overlap. This will prevent, for example, a student being penalised across two or more criteria for the same lack of understanding.

- **Allow for meaningful award distinctions to be articulated in award algorithms**
  The number of criteria included in a course must provide adequate evidence for conferral of an award, with sufficient 'steps' to ensure valid and robust differentiation.

  - A 150 hour Level 1 course will have 6-8 criteria
  - A 150 hour Level 2 course will have 6-8 criteria
  - A 150 hour Level 3 course will have 7-9 criteria, including at least 5 externally assessed criteria.

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Criterion elements:

- **Identify discrete components or characteristics of each criterion**
  Criterion elements provide a 'breakdown' of a criterion to ensure all teachers and students have a consistent understanding of the key components of each criterion. Each element should comprise of a single main idea, with one or more aspects.

- **Do not indicate order of importance**
  While each criterion element will be assigned a number, this numbering supports ease of reference only and does not imply that one particular element is more or less important than another.

- **Include, where relevant, a criterion element relating to referencing**
  TASC takes the issue of academic integrity very seriously and students are expected to display academic integrity in all TASC-accredited courses. Courses that require students to reference the work and ideas of others will include, as appropriate, relevant criterion element/s that recognises the progression of sophistication with which a student may acknowledge the work of others.

Standards:

- **Specify how student achievement of the criterion will be measured**
  Standards provide clear and succinct, unambiguous measures enabling the consistent assessment of student achievement of each criterion. Definitions of key phrases and concepts are included as required to support consistent understanding.

- **Include descriptors for each element providing specific measures of student achievement**
  Descriptors allow teachers to identify the standard a student has achieved in relation to a specific element. Each descriptor must be clear and concise and must directly relate to its particular criterion element.

- **Identify a clear progression from C to B to A ratings**
  Descriptors for a particular criterion element will be framed in a consistent way, with key words used to highlight the progression in achievement of that element, as appropriate. The standards for a B rating will build on the standards for a C rating, and the standards for an A rating will build on the standards for a B rating.

Collectively, the criteria, criterion elements and standards:

- **Reflect the size and complexity of the course**
  Terminology used across the criteria, criterion elements and standards will use terminology appropriate to the level of complexity of the course. Generally, shorter courses will require fewer criteria than longer courses to cover the learning outcomes. While the number of criterion elements may be similar, courses with greater complexity may include more 'meta' elements than courses with a lower level of complexity.

- **Balance student opportunity with clarity and usability**
  Descriptors for each standard must be clear and meaningful, providing opportunity for

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students to demonstrate achievement against the criterion. The number of elements in each criterion will effectively represent the characteristics of the assessment criterion and present an achievable quantum of assessment. Similarly, the criterion ought to be clear and concise, while providing students with the opportunity to be assessed against the learning outcomes.

Related policies

- Everyday adult standards

Related procedures

- No related procedures

Supporting information

- Attachment 1: Example criterion, criterion elements and standards
- Australian Qualifications Framework
- Levels of Complexity – Senior Secondary Education

Definitions

Criterion-based assessment

> A form of 'outcomes assessment' that identifies the extent of learner achievement against the learning outcomes as the student progresses through the course requirements. Criterion-based assessment does not compare and rank learners in relation to one another. Rather, assessments are made against defined standards based on the evidence of each learner's work. Learners must therefore be given sufficient opportunities throughout the course to demonstrate improvement and consistency of achievement (that is, students must be assessed on each criterion multiple times throughout the duration of the course).

Legislation

Before accrediting a course, TASC must be satisfied that the assessment processes used, or to be used, to determine whether a student has achieved the learning outcomes of the courses are adequately provided for and of sufficient standard (Section 26(3)(iii) of the *Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification Act 2003*).

TASC determine matters relating to the assessment of TASC-accredited courses under sections 31 and 33 of the *Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification Act 2003.*

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Attachment 1: Example criterion, criterion elements and standards

Criterion 2: Communicate in spoken English

Criterion
Specifies what will be measured in relation to the achievement of course-level learning outcomes.
Criterion must be clear and succinct and will always start with a verb.

Standards
Specifies how student achievement of the criterion will be measured.

Criterion Elements	Rating A The Learner:	Rating B The Learner:	Rating C The Learner:
(E1) Information - creation - communication	creates and communicates information using **clear** and **concise language** in oral interactions	creates and communicates information **competently** in oral interactions	creates information for oral presentation
(E2) Ideas and opinions - communication - use of support material	orally communicates ideas and opinions using **selected evidence** and **examples**	orally communicates ideas and opinions **supported** by **examples**	orally communicates ideas and opinions
(E3) Text structure - context - purpose - audience	structures oral texts **appropriately** and **effectively** for **different** contexts, purposes and audiences	uses text structures to create oral texts for **familiar** and **some unfamiliar** contexts, purposes and audiences	uses **basic** text structures to create oral texts for **familiar** contexts, purposes and audiences
(E4) Tone - audience - purpose	creates formal and informal oral texts using a **variety** of tones to **suit different** audiences and purposes.	creates formal and informal oral texts using **appropriate** tone for **intended** audience and purpose.	creates formal and informal oral texts using tone for **some intended effect**.

Note: Element numbering is not an indicator of importance.

Criterion elements
Specifies the components or characteristics of the criterion – a breakdown.

Descriptor
Specifies what standard a student has achieved in relation to a specific element.

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