

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS



INTRODUCTION

Authentic assessments measure students' application of knowledge and skills based on learning tasks that mirror real-world situations.

A CLOSER LOOK

Authentic assessments are...

- Based on realistic professional tasks.
- Measures of mastery in a given domain or field of knowledge.
- Tools that help learners identify what competencies they have and have not mastered.

Authentic assessments are not...

- Based on arbitrary tasks.
- Measures of proficiency for a single class.
- Dependent on one set of materials (except for some professional certifications).

Examples of authentic assessments

- In a journalism course, students create a news broadcast. Students' knowledge of and skills in news reporting will be evaluated based on their performance. Students rotate through different positions in subsequent broadcasts to demonstrate their mastery of multiple elements of production.
- In a nutrition course, students analyze sample patient meal plans and provide dietary guidelines to meet the patients' nutritional requirements and achieve their health goals.
- In a computer science course, students design a website, app, or digital tool to solve a particular problem or meet the needs of a hypothetical client.
- In a marketing course, students create a marketing campaign for a hypothetical (or real) company to sell a new product in a new market sector.

Five levels of authentic assessments

In the "Assessments Model" table below, authentic assessments are categorized into five levels, with authenticity increasing from Level 1 to Level 5.

Level	Evaluator	Format Examples
1: Case-based selection	Auto-graded	Multiple-choice, true/false, matching, sorting, etc.
2: Case-based short answer	Auto-graded	Fill-in-the-blank, problem sets, document tagging, etc.
3: Case-based long answer	Instructors with rubrics	Short essay, short video presentation, product review, etc.
4: Creation or performance	Instructors with rubrics	Long essay, long video presentation, product/solution pitch, model development, portfolio, etc.
5: Creation or performance in a specific workplace	Instructors with rubrics	Long video presentation, model development, project report, oral examination, job performance, etc.

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THREE STEPS TO DEVELOPING AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS

Step 1: Analysis

Consider the following questions to help you determine the purpose and tasks of your assessment:

1. **What are students supposed to know or do?** Review the competencies and outcomes you have written for the assessment. These should guide what the assessment will ask students to do.
2. **How do students prove they know or can do what they are supposed to?** Consider how a practitioner uses that knowledge or those skills in their professional work.
3. **Who would assess their work in the workplace?** Consider the potential audience and provide guidance for students on how to adapt to that audience.
4. **How would they convey their work?** Choose appropriate formats for the assessment to reflect what is done in the workplace.

For Steps 2 and 3, let the type of assessment (auto-graded or instructor-graded) guide your next actions.

Levels 1-2 (Auto-graded assessments)

Step 2: Context

Create contexts, like cases or scenarios that:

- Represent real-world situations.
- Provide a realistic amount of information or resources.
- Connect with competencies, outcomes, and students' prior knowledge.

Step 3: Question

Develop questions that:

- Directly rely on the use of information provided in the case or scenario.
- Are unique to the associated case.
- Resemble problems students will encounter in the real world.
- Require the application of knowledge rather than memorization.

Levels 3-5 (Instructor-graded assessments)

Step 2: Task

Create tasks that:

- Resemble professional practices (ex. Writing a report or making a presentation)
- Require high-level cognitive skills to provide results, decisions, or solutions.
- Provide sufficient instructions or resources.
- Align with competencies and outcomes.

Step 3: Rubric

Develop rubrics that:

- List different performance levels with a task-specific set of criteria.
- Include a scoring guide and point-specific designations.
- Are presentable to students as a guideline.
- Represent the criteria used in the real-world situations for a specific task.
- Align with the outcomes and competencies.

CHECKLIST

Review your assessment to see if it meets these requirements:

- Auto-graded assessment:
 - Each assessment contains an authentic case or scenario.
 - Each question directly relies on the information provided in the case.
 - The answers are unique to the associated questions.
- Instructor-graded assessment:
 - Each task resembles practices or problems that students will face in their professional fields.
 - The criteria in the rubric truly measure the associated competencies and outcomes.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [How to Create Authentic Assessments](#) by Jon Mueller
- [Creating Authentic Assessments](#) by Canvas
- [Rubrics Tip Sheet](#) by University of Wisconsin Extended Campus