



## What is an Assessment Artifact and Measure?

To assess course outcomes an assessment artifact (For example: exam, paper, or project) and measure is needed (for example: a rubric, a scoring guide, or selected questions on an exam)

### Examples of Assessment Artifacts and Measures:

What follows is a glossary of types of assessment artifact(s)/measure(s) that can serve as effective program or course assessments. No single assessment artifact(s)/measure(s) works well in all situations and for all purposes. Some assessment artifacts and measures will fit certain types of content and outcomes better than others.

Selecting the right assessment artifact/measure will ensure the results of the assessment are valuable, meaningful, and actionable, and that their use will lead to improvement.

**Comprehensive exams** measure the extent to which students have synthesized the knowledge and skills they were expected to acquire during their course of study. Effective comprehensive exams typically require written responses to questions, but these exams may also include one or more of the following test items: multiple choice, matching, and true/false.

**Culminating experiences** are generally designed for students in the last semester before completing a program of study. The purpose of the experience is to give students the opportunity to practice integrating the knowledge and skills they are expected to have acquired during the course of their study. Assessing students' performances during this experience could be conducted using a single final assessment (e.g., exam, performance, paper) or a series of assessments administered throughout the experience.

**Performance assessments** require students to perform a task or complete a project that is as representative as possible of the kind of real-world tasks or projects they will be expected to perform in their chosen field. For example, students whose chosen field will require they know how to repair an automobile transmission should be evaluated on their performance repairing an *actual* automobile transmission. Students whose chosen field will require they write proficiently should be evaluated on a real-world writing task.

**Portfolios** are collections of student work that are used to demonstrate student growth and achievement over time. The portfolios may be used to challenge students to provide evidence of their achievement and to reflect upon their learning and growth through their program of study, with a particular emphasis on their strengths and how they plan to address their weaknesses. A portfolio may contain all or some of the following: research papers, process reports, tests and exams, case studies, audiotapes, videotapes, personal essays, journals, self-evaluations and computational exercises.

**Written assignments** are among the most valid of assessment artifact(s)/measure(s) as they require students to demonstrate their learning by articulating responses to questions, prompts, etc. Written work can also serve as very reliable assessments when they are evaluated using carefully crafted rubrics with clearly defined performance criteria. Written assignments may include literary analysis papers, proposals, dissertations, research papers, reviews, scientific reports, reflective essays, expository essays, and position papers.



## **Assessment Artifact and Measure Scoring**

Scoring criteria help faculty evaluate student work fairly, equitably and consistently. It is often used when an assessment can potentially have more than one correct way of responding. Identifying a scoring criteria is specifically important when multiple sections of one course are taught by different faculty. In that case, faculty should make sure that the same rubric, scoring guide or selected questions are used in all sections, and that all faculty are trained to use them similarly.

### **Additional Resources:**

[Assessment Tools from Teach the Earth](#)

[Methods of Assessment](#)

[NILOA Assignment Library](#)