

Assessing Against Learning Outcomes, Module 2

2.1 Assessment Validation

So, why do we need to validate our assessments? Assessment validation is a regular review process that we use to check that our assessments actually do assess the learning outcomes of the course thereby ensuring that they have produced evidence which is valid, reliable, flexible, fair and current.

Let's briefly unpack what we mean by these. Validity has a number of facets or aspects to it, such as face, content, criterion and construct. You may have heard of these before. In a nutshell, validity answers the question to what extent does the assessment measure what it claims to measure?

Reliability is the degree to which the assessment produces stable and consistent results. In other words, if we were to deliver the same test over and over again with the same or different assessors, and the same or different students, then we would expect results within a predictable range.

Flexibility refers to the extent to which an assessment can be adapted to meet individual needs. For example, if one of our students is sight or hearing impaired, can we modify our test and still ensure that it is valid?

Fairness refers to the extent to which the assessment may require specialist knowledge or may have a bias for or against a particular gender, cultural origin, or first language for example.

And finally, currency relates to how closely the assessment aligns with current contexts, tests and materials, for example, in a test preparation course, are the assessment tasks used in class the same version as the real-world test, or have the tasks been superseded?