



## Assessment: Underlying Principles of Assessment

The policy on assessment requires consideration to be given to the following principles when devising an assessment program for the course of study.

- Information is gathered through a process of continuous assessment.
- Balance of assessments is a balance over the course of study and not necessarily a balance over a module or examination period.
- Exit achievement levels are devised from student achievement in all areas identified in the syllabus as being mandatory.
- Assessment of a student's achievement is in the significant aspects of the course of study identified in the syllabus and the course program.
- Selective updating of a student's profile of achievement is undertaken over the course of study.
- Exit assessment is devised to provide the fullest and latest information on a student's achievement in the course of study.

*These principles are to be considered together and not individually in the development of an assessment program.* Exit assessment must satisfy concurrently the six principles associated with it.

### Continuous assessment

The major operating principle is continuous assessment. The process of continuous assessment provides the framework in which all the other five principles of balance, mandatory aspects of the syllabus, significant aspects of the course, selective updating, and fullest and latest information exist and operate.

This is the means by which assessment instruments are administered at suitable intervals and by which information on student achievement is collected. It involves a continuous gathering of information and the making of judgments in terms of the stated criteria and standards throughout a course of study.

Decisions about levels of achievement are based on information gathered, through the process of continuous assessment, at points in the course of study appropriate to the organisation of the learning experiences. Levels of achievement must not be based on students' responses to a single assessment task at the end of a course or instruments set at arbitrary intervals that are unrelated to the developmental course of study.

### Balance

Balance of assessments is a balance over the course of study and not necessarily a balance within a module or examination period.

Within the course it is necessary to establish a suitable balance in the general objectives, assessment techniques and instruments/tasks, conditions and across the criteria. The exit criteria are to have equal emphasis across the range of summative assessment. The exit assessment program must ensure an appropriate balance over the course of study as a whole.

### Mandatory aspects of the syllabus

Judgment of student achievement at exit from a course of study must be derived from information gathered about student achievement in those aspects stated in the study area specification as being mandatory, namely

- the general objectives of *acquiring, applying* and *evaluating* and
- the study area core.

The exit criteria and standards stated for the course must be used to make the judgment of student achievement at exit from a course of study.

## Significant aspects of the course of study

Significant aspects refer to those units/electives/contexts that ASPA selects in accordance with the particular structure of the module. Significant aspects can complement mandatory aspects or be in addition to them. They will be determined by the context of Ski Patrolling and the needs of students at that course to provide a choice of learning experiences that is appropriate to the location of the course, the local environment and the resources available.

The significant aspects must be consistent with the general objectives of the study area specification and complement the developmental nature of learning in the module.

## Selective updating

In conjunction with the principle of fullest and latest information, information on student achievement should be selectively updated throughout the course.

Selective updating is related to the developmental nature of the course of study and operates within the context of continuous assessment. As subject matter is treated at increasing levels of complexity, assessment information gathered at earlier stages of the course may no longer be representative of student achievement. The information therefore should be selectively and continually updated (not averaged) to accurately reflect student achievement.

The following conceptions of the principle of selective updating apply:

- a systemic whole subject-group approach in which considerations about the whole group of students are made according to the developmental nature of the course and, in turn, the assessment program. In this conception, developmental aspects of the course are revisited so that later summative assessment replaces earlier formative information
- an act of decision-making about individual students — deciding from a set of assessment results the subset which meets study area specification requirements and typically represents a student's achievements, thus forming the basis for a decision about a level of achievement. In the application of decisions about individual students, the set of assessment results does not have to be the same for all students. However, the subset, which represents the typical achievement of a student, must conform to the parameters outlined in the course's study plan for the module.

Selective updating must not involve students reworking and resubmitting previously graded assessment tasks. Opportunities may be provided for students to complete and submit additional tasks. Such tasks may provide information for making judgments where achievement on an earlier task was unrepresentative or atypical, or there was insufficient information upon which to base a judgment.

## Fullest and latest information

Judgments about student achievement made at exit from a course of study must be based on the fullest and latest information available. This information is recorded on a student profile.

*Fullest* refers to information about student achievement gathered across the range of general objectives. *Latest* refers to information about student achievement gathered from the most recent period in which the general objectives are assessed. As the assessment program in a module is developmental, fullest and latest information will most likely come from the last day of the course.

Information recorded on a student profile will consist of the latest assessment data on mandatory and significant aspects of the course, which includes the data gathered in the summative assessment program that is not superseded.