



Checklist for a Course Assignment and Associated Grading Criteria

This checklist has been created for instructors who are designing course assignments and grading criteria (or rubrics) for evaluating those assignments. This is a critical part of course design, second only in importance to writing clear course goals and learning objectives. As McKeachie and Svinicki assert, “Planning assignments and out-of-class activities is even more important than planning for class meetings.”¹ The checklist can be used for self- or peer-review of the assignment/assessment package.

Please check all that apply (responding as if you were a student in the course) and comment below in the space provided on what you checked AND what you did not check:

- Assignment is clearly related to a course goal (or several goals).
- Assignment seems an appropriate way to measure this goal/these goals—good fit.
- Assignment is strategically placed in the course at a time when students need it for assessing their progress.
- You would find this assignment interesting and/or fun.
- You would find this assignment challenging and rewarding.
- You could reasonably complete the assignment in the time allowed and to the standards established (given what you know about who takes this course).
- Assignment description, any other hand outs, and grading criteria clearly communicate the expected learning outcomes for this activity.
- The grading criteria make you eager to do this assignment.
- The grading criteria instill confidence that you could do this assignment well and to yours and the instructor’s high expectations.
- The learning outcomes for this assignment are specific/distinct.
- The learning outcomes for this assignment are measurable and use good verbs.
- The learning outcomes for this assignment are clear.
- The learning outcomes for this assignment are related and logically sequenced.
- The learning activity and evaluation plan constitute one logical, integrated process.
- This primary goal of this process is student learning.
- The process is flexible, not rigid.
- The process emphasizes judgment, rather than objectivity.
- The process involves students integrally.
- The process presents the instructor’s primary role as that of a teacher, rather than a gatekeeper.²

Comments:

¹ W. J. McKeachie. and M. Svinicki, *McKeachie’s Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers*, 12th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), p. 15.

² The final six items in this checklist are derived from the twelve principles for managing the grading process that are outlined in chapter two of B. E. Walvoord and V. J. Anderson, *Effective Grading: A Tool for Learning and Assessment* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 9-16.