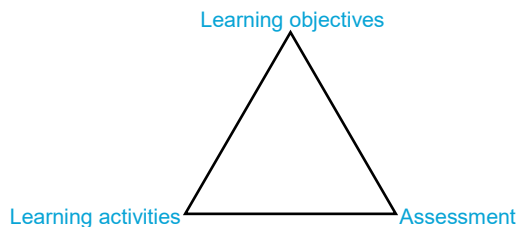


Consistency check for constructively aligned assignments/projects

Constructive alignment

If a course is constructively aligned (Biggs, 1996; Cohen, 1987), the grade will reflect to which degree students master the learning objectives (LOs). The grade is determined through assessment activities that are aligned with the learning objectives, and lastly, the learning activities should mirror the assessment activities.



Consistency check table

It is recommended to develop a consistency check table first (Van de Veen, 2016), especially if there needs to be a quality control check on grading rubrics, or if there are difficulties when trying to develop a good grading rubric from scratch. This will serve as a blueprint for the alignment of the assignment/project that needs to be graded using the rubric. Note that for brevity, this document will only refer to projects, but it is also applicable to assignments, or any other assessment where rubrics could be used for grading.

Steps for constructing a consistency check table

1. First, identify which of the course's LOs must be assessed through the assignment and list them in the far left column.
2. Then, identify the deliverables, or components of the project. If there will be only one deliverable, for example, a report, then break it up into different components (Introduction, Research Question, etc.). Distinguishing between the different components will enable you to pinpoint which parts of the project meets the requirements (and at which levels of achievement), and which do not. A rubric that is based on such a consistency check table is much more transparent to the students, because they will be able to see exactly where things went well and where not.
3. Fill in the criteria on which the deliverables will be assessed in the columns, and distribute them over the learning objectives. Add the percentages. Make sure that the criteria names are short and reflect a quality of the product, not a part of the product. Ask yourself the question 'What quality of [the presentation] am I going to assess?'

The LOs in the example consistency check table in the following column are as follows:

The student is able to...

- LO1: design a foot-bridge over a canal that meets the operational requirements.
- LO2: present to an audience of professionals.
- LO3: work in a group.

	Presentation (group, 25%)	Report (group & individual, 65%)	Contribution (individual, 10%)	Total % per LO
LO1:	Exploration (2%) Considerations & decisions (2%) Drawings (1%)	Exploration (15%) Considerations & decisions (20%) Drawings (10%) Calculations (15%)		65%
LO2:	Presentation technique (10%) Conveying a message (10%)			20%
LO3:		Reflection on group process (individual, 5%)	Contribution to group process (5%) Contribution to product (5%)	15%
Prerequisites		Length, readability		

It is also recommended to add a row for prerequisites, or knock-out criteria at the end of the table. These are criteria which the students have to comply with, but have no significant influence on the total grade because they are not part of the LOs. Once the consistency check table is drawn up, you can easily transfer the criteria to a rubric, or identify misalignment with the LOs.

References

- Cohen, S.A. (1987). 'Instructional alignment: Searching for a magic bullet', *Educational Researcher* 16(8), 16--20.
- Biggs, J. (1996). Enhancing teaching through constructive alignment. *Higher education*, 32(3), 347-364.
- Van de Veen, E. (2016), '*How to assess students through assignments: A guide to creating assignments and rubrics in higher education*', Communicatiereeks, Amersfoort.