

Draft principles for assessment in the era of artificial intelligence

The following 20 principles were developed by the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation following discussions concerning the future of assessment held with academic departments, academic support units, academic leadership, and Senate committees between September 2025 and May 2026. These principles reflect insights distilled from these conversations and consultations, as well as research on innovative institutional frameworks and promising pedagogical strategies being tested and adopted at universities across the world.

Importantly, these principles are not intended to guide the use nor address responsible governance of artificial intelligence (AI) at the university, work that is being led by the university's AI taskforce and that is also informed by existing policies, including the university's Senate-endorsed [Ethical Framework for Educational Technologies](#). Rather, they are intended to guide and inform the design and support of learning assessments at the university at a time when AI continues to transform teaching and learning practices by introducing new affordances while simultaneously destabilizing traditional approaches to the evaluation of student learning.

These principles, which also reflect the five institutional priorities outlined in Brock University's [Academic Plan](#), are presently undergoing further consultation, including with the newly-formed Teaching and Learning Practices Working Group of the university's AI Taskforce, prior to being brought back to the Senate Teaching & Learning Policy Committee for recommendation to Senate for potential endorsement. It is understood that these principles will be reflected in assessment practices that are appropriate for specific disciplines. To that end, specific assessment practices and practical strategies that align with these principles and that are suitable for implementation at the university will be shared by the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation.

A. Reality

1. Appreciating the proliferation and widespread integration and adoption of AI and supporting structural changes to assessment that reflect this reality
2. Preparing students for the contemporary workplace and integrating AI skills into program and course outcomes, where appropriate

B. Collective decision-making

3. Reaffirming the freedom of individual instructors to determine their pedagogical approach concerning AI and assessment, while empowering

collective faculty decision-making within disciplinary contexts (e.g., a program-level approach to assessment)

C. Individual agency

4. Where AI skills are not integrated into program or course outcomes, supporting agency of instructors who may wish to engage with AI at different levels
5. Where AI skills are not integrated into program or course outcomes, supporting the agency of students, some of whom may wish to opt-out of engaging with AI

D. Consistency

6. Adopting a common framework and terminology across the university when describing assessment in the context of AI
7. Encouraging collaboration and consistency concerning the approach to AI within teaching teams, including the primary teaching team such as teaching assistants, lab demonstrators, and marker-graders and specialist contributors such as professional librarians and learning services staff.

E. Inclusion

8. Ensuring that assessment practices remain accessible (e.g., tool use, student support needs, language, etc.) alongside necessary structural change by resisting reactive, punitive, and potentially exclusionary practices that undo progress towards universal design for learning
9. Where feasible, reducing the assessment burden (e.g., the number of discrete/non-sequential summative assessments, which have increased in the AI era) on both students and instructors, thereby alleviating instructional workload while reducing pressure to engage in academic misconduct

F. Purpose, authenticity, and applicability

10. Valuing assessment *of* learning, assessment *for* learning, and assessment *as* learning
11. Aspiring towards assessment design that preserves the necessary friction of intellectual struggle, and challenges students to embrace the vulnerabilities and desirable difficulties inherent in development
12. Cultivating the critical thinking and discernment required for students to interrogate the assumptions of AI tools (or any source) and be able to evaluate their own intellectual contributions

G. Efficacy

13. Debunking false promises of technology-mediated approaches, and recognizing the limitations of detection- and surveillance-based responses to academic integrity concerns
14. Acknowledging that whereas any approach to assessment carries weaknesses, a combination of complementary approaches to assessment greatly enhances overall assessment integrity (the “Swiss cheese model”; [Rundle, Curtis, & Clare, 2020](#))
15. Promoting assessment practices that draw on uniquely human capacities for creativity, connection, and knowledge exchange

H. Affirming academic integrity

16. Fostering an environment of trust in which students take accountability for coursework, highlighting both the origins of intellectual effort and their positional human voice
17. Sharing clear expectations specific to use of AI with students, describing allowable use and disclosure requirements
18. Highlighting connections between learning outcomes, assessments, and acting with integrity, and engaging students in opportunities to reflect on academic integrity as academic practice

I. Proactive instructor development

19. Continuously developing capacity to explore the use, benefits, and harms of AI in teaching and learning by remaining open to experimentation and through routine evaluation of emergent tools
20. Working in community to build and share best practices and to contribute to the ongoing development of quality alternative assessment alongside AI

Consultations that informed the development of the draft principles:

Senate Committees:

- Senate Teaching & Learning Policy Committee
- Senate Graduate Studies Committee

Academic Departments/Faculties/Faculty groups¹:

- Faculty from Masters of Public Health program
- Environmental Sustainability Research Centre
- Department of Child and Youth Studies, Undergraduate Program Committee
- Department of Psychology, Undergraduate Program Committee
- Department of Finance, Operations, Information Systems
- Faculty from the Faculty of Social Sciences
- Department of Geography, Tourism Studies
- Faculty from MIWSPFA
- Department of Applied Disability Studies
- Department of English Language and Literature
- GenAI and Assessment Community of Practice
- Brock University Faculty Association

Student Associations:

- Brock University Students' Union
- Graduate Students Association

Academic Leadership

- Associate Deans
- Deans

Academic Support Units:

- Centre for Pedagogical Innovation
- Academic Integrity Advisory Committee
- Student Accessibility Services
- Student Ombuds

¹ Academic departments across the university were invited to participate in these discussions.