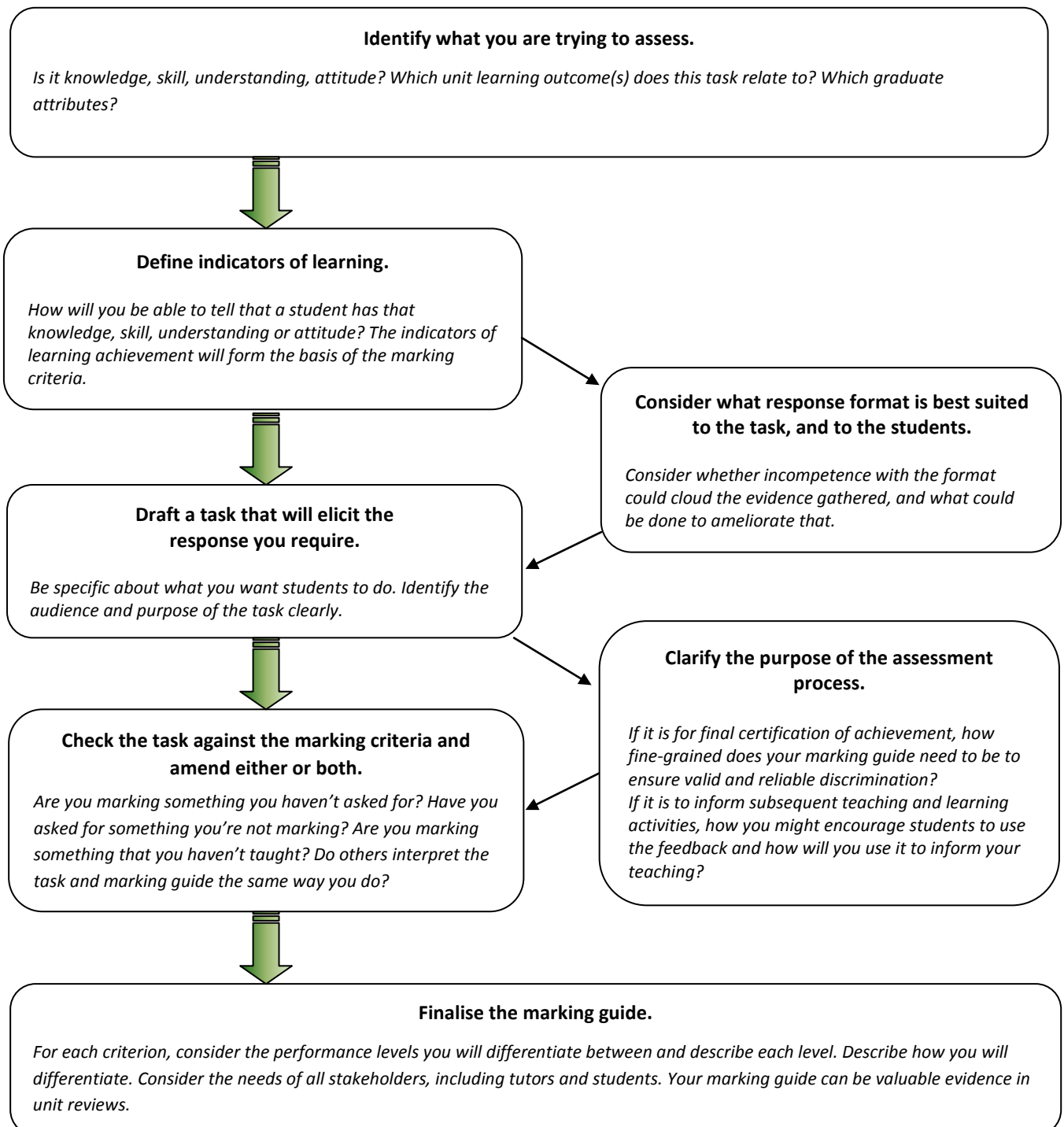# A short guide to creating good assessment tasks

Assessment in education is a process in which we determine what is to be assessed, create the assessment instrument(s), and interpret the results. Those results may be used to inform further learning and/or for certification of achievement.

It is not possible or feasible to assess ALL learning. Students perform assessment tasks with some level of accomplishment, and it is from this performance that underlying ability is inferred.

Assessment tasks also tell students what learning we value in our unit. This should align with what we value in our course and our university, and with what will be valued in the students' future careers.

Identify what you are trying to assess.

Is it knowledge, skill, understanding, attitude? Which unit learning outcome(s) does this task relate to? Which graduate attributes?

Define indicators of learning.

How will you be able to tell that a student has that knowledge, skill, understanding or attitude? The indicators of learning achievement will form the basis of the marking criteria.

Consider what response format is best suited to the task, and to the students.

Consider whether incompetence with the format could cloud the evidence gathered, and what could be done to ameliorate that.

Draft a task that will elicit the response you require.

Be specific about what you want students to do. Identify the audience and purpose of the task clearly.

Clarify the purpose of the assessment process.

If it is for final certification of achievement, how fine-grained does your marking guide need to be to ensure valid and reliable discrimination?
If it is to inform subsequent teaching and learning activities, how you might encourage students to use the feedback and how will you use it to inform your teaching?

Check the task against the marking criteria and amend either or both.

Are you marking something you haven't asked for? Have you asked for something you're not marking? Are you marking something that you haven't taught? Do others interpret the task and marking guide the same way you do?

Finalise the marking guide.

For each criterion, consider the performance levels you will differentiate between and describe each level. Describe how you will differentiate. Consider the needs of all stakeholders, including tutors and students. Your marking guide can be valuable evidence in unit reviews.

Before handing out your task, check that you have:

☐ Provided information about the appropriate format and presentation.

☐ Indicated special instructions, such as a particular citation style or headings.

☐ Specified the due date and the consequences for missing it.

☐ Articulated performance criteria clearly.

☐ Indicated the assignment's point value or percentage of the course grade.

☐ Provided students (where appropriate) with models or samples.

After the task has been completed, check for validity and reliability:

☐ Do others interpret the marking guide the same way you do?

☐ Do you interpret the marking guide the same way at different times with different students' work?

☐ Does the evidence collected allow appropriate inferences be drawn?

☐ Does the task yield similar results over time with similar populations in similar circumstances?

☐ Does the evidence collected discriminate finely enough between different levels of student performance to meet your requirements?

If the answer to any of the above questions is "No", review and improve your task. Designing great assessment tasks is an iterative process.

Where to find out more

Contact the Centre for Learning and Development on 6304 2554 or by email cld@ecu.edu.au for further assistance on writing or reviewing your assessment tasks and marking guides.

ASKe 1, 2, 3 Assessment and feedback leaflets http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/Resources/

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