

Introduction

What is continuous assessment?

As opposed to a summative assessment (which is a single assessment, at the end of the learning process, such as an exam), **continuous assessments** are **regular and frequent** in nature. The continuous assessment technique is an effective instrument to determine and develop your competencies during the learning trajectory. Instead of one 'high stake' assessment, such as an exam, continuous assessments provide you with **multiple opportunities** to **accumulate** a final mark.

The purpose of being continuously assessed

The purpose of being continuously assessed is to enhance the student's learning. It ensures that students invest considerable time in studying, preparing and building on academic skills. This ensures that students are in constant touch with the curriculum/content.

Benefits of being continuously assessed:

- Increasing sense of feeling inclusive
- It is an early indicator of student performance or learning needs
- Provides multiple opportunities to accumulate a final mark

Pitfalls of continuous assessment:

- 'Smaller' assessments are often underestimated by students
- You could be tempted not to make use of all the opportunities and end up regretting it.

How to effectively prepare

Some of your lecturers will adopt a continuous assessment approach, which could take the form of an assignment, short questions, quiz, and online discussion in the discussion board after each topic. This requires students to become independent learners, plan, manage their time, and interaction skills.

The online tasks will have **start dates and completion dates**, deadlines for assignments, and preset times for discussions. Successful completion of the online modules will require independence, planning, time management, interaction skills and taking responsibility for one's own learning.

Students are expected to **study actively and consistently** from the beginning of the term. Information on assessments will be provided ahead of time, usually during the first online lesson.

Plan your course load in such a way that there is room for flexibility. You will have enough time to take care of the most important things as long as you have a **flexible weekly schedule** in your calendar.

Pre-read your materials. Reading is integral to your studies. Make sure you take notes when pre-reading your text/chapters or when listening to an online lecture. **Note taking** clarifies your thoughts and encourages deeper thinking about the topic. You will also **review your notes** later. Make use of **text mapping** strategies such as mind maps which allow you to organise your own ideas or associations, tree diagrams and tables to make notes.

Get a good overall picture of the materials covered for the assessment and organise your materials per topic.

You could also **discuss the assessment topic/s with your peers, tutors, mentors or lecturer** on WhatsApp, Zoom or other social media platforms to prepare well and improve your learning.

Think about the assessment technicalities in advance: assessment dates, duration, materials needed, how many questions you are required to answer and the type of questions that will be asked.

At times you might feel that you did not prepare well enough in advance, however, we recommend that you still **complete the assessment**. The experience will allow you to better anticipate future situations and to learn to deal with unnecessary stress.

It is important to **view your results after each assessment**. If the result is not what you expected you should **contact your lecturer or tutor during their online consultation times** to discuss your results. The lecturer or tutor will provide feedback on how to improve your learning.

It is important to **participate actively** in your online class. In this way, you are preparing for your assessments and gain valuable tips for other tasks. It is good to ask questions if it is a live session or via email and also to question things in a constructive manner.

Sometimes you might lose your study motivation. Remember, that's quite normal too. Thus, it is important to take one step at a time. **Reflect and adapt** if the outcome was not satisfactory.

Summary

To be successful in your continuous assessments make sure you understand the purpose of continuous assessments which are there to enhance your learning. In addition to knowing the benefits and purpose of continuous assessments, it is also important to be aware of the pitfalls of continuous assessments and what steps to follow not to waste the opportunities given to you. Follow the steps outlined to effectively prepare for when you are going to be assessed continuously. Remember, continuous assessments are there to enhance your learning and provide you with multiple opportunities to accumulate a final mark.

Reference List

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. 2020. *On Study Skills And Learning - How To Succeed In Your Studies*. [online] Available at: <http://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/students-guide/welcome-haaga-helia/study-skills-and-learning-how-succeed-your-studies?userLang=en#The%20right%20study%20attitude> [Accessed 14 April 2020].