

Assessment Blueprint Explainer

Assessment blueprints come in different shapes and sizes. The Department’s original Assessment Blueprint assisted teachers in designing quality assessments, while the updated one accompanying the Assessment Design modules does the same. Each blueprint is similar to the other in many ways. Below *you* will find a brief description of both blueprints, as well as the major ways in which they differ. Teachers should feel free to use whichever blueprint best suits their planning needs.

The Department’s Assessment Blueprint defines the:

- ✓ Standards measured
- ✓ Relative importance of the standards on the assessment
- ✓ Item types, number, point value
- ✓ Depth of knowledge of each item

In addition, the *blueprint* form has a checklist to help you check for other important aspects of assessment *such as*:

- ✓ Appropriateness of individual item design
- ✓ Consistency in administration and scoring
- ✓ Appropriate length and format

The Assessment Blueprint comes with a guide that provides information for using and completing the document and is available in [PDF](#) and [Word](#) formats.

The Assessment Design Modules’ Assessment Blueprint includes six steps:

1. Determine the primary purpose of the assessment
2. Identify the standard or standards you will assess
3. Identify the skill or skills addressed in each standard
4. Identify the level or levels of rigor of each skill
5. Identify possible types of assessment items
6. Write and/or select assessment items

These steps show a process of *backward* design, in which you first determine which standard or standards you plan to measure, second design your assessment to measure mastery of the standard or standards and third plan your instruction.¹

Major Differences Between the Blueprints:

The Department’s Assessment Blueprint is different in two main ways from the one used in the modules accompanying the Assessment Design Toolkit.

1. The original Assessment Blueprint includes an extra section for you to determine the relative importance of a standard. New Jersey includes this section to help teachers prioritize those standards that have value beyond the current year – either in the next level of the subject, in other academic disciplines, or in life/college/career. Ideally, time spent teaching a standard should align to its relative importance.
2. The original Assessment Blueprint uses the Webb’s Depth of Knowledge chart to determine the cognitive complexity of a question, whereas other assessment blueprints, including the one in the Assessment Design Toolkit, uses Bloom’s Taxonomy to determine rigor. It is important that teachers consider the levels of rigor in their assessments, but it does not matter which tool teachers use to guide their thinking.
3. Finally, the updated blueprint takes into account the skills addressed being measured.

¹ Moody, Michael, and Jason Stricker, *Strategic Design for Student Achievement* (2008).