

# Initial Assessment

Initial assessment is often used to describe the process taken to collect information about a learner's prior knowledge, skills and experience before they start their studies. It is sometimes referred to as 'diagnostic assessment' or 'diagnostic testing'

## Why would I use technology to aid initial assessment?

- Questions can easily be reused for another purpose or the following year
- Questions can be selected at random (e.g. each learner sees 10 questions randomly selected from 30)
- Questions can be adaptive with the next question released based on the previous answer
- Questions can include multimedia such as images, audio, video or virtual simulations
- Results are calculated automatically
- Information is stored electronically so can be manipulated easily to be reused

## How do I use technology to do this?

As with any initial assessment you need to start by considering:

- What information you want to collect?
- In what format you need this information?
- Whether the information is about skills and knowledge or background information about the student?

This last question will help to guide you in your choice of tool. Some technology is more suited to testing skills and knowledge whilst others are better for collecting background information.

Once you understand your needs you can start to develop the questions you want to ask. Writing good questions for surveys and tests can be tricky however there

is lots of advice available on the web on how to do this.

**Tests in Course Resources** - this is a commonly used tool to collect information about the skills and knowledge of students, delivering a variety of different types of questions.

**Survey in Course Resources** - this tool can be used to collect background information about students.

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