

One can never achieve 100% reliability. Nevertheless, if examiners are alert to a number of major potential assessment errors (pitfalls), they can maximize the reliability of their tests.

Assessment error	Description
First impression	Tendency to rush to judgment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I've seen enough" - "One glance is enough to see whether this presentation has any real potential"
Halo effect	A favourable impression based on certain criteria generally results in a favourable assessment on other criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "That kid has done her very best, that's okay" - "Wow, what a great start to the presentation, I'm sure the content will be just fine too"
Horn effect	An unfavourable impression based on certain criteria generally results in an unfavourable assessment on other criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "During the lectures, those students spent all their time chatting to one another, their work is bound to be rubbish" - "Good grief, why didn't this student use the feedback I gave him about references?"
Logical error	See halo/horn effect: If part A is right/wrong, then B will also be right/wrong: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "This student can write well, so his analysis will also be fine" - "Anyone who can produce a report as quickly as that must have fully understood the question"
Sympathy	Giving a favourable assessment because you get on well with the student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "That student totally understands it, I hope she decides to take our degree programme" - "She really is keen, we should reward an attitude like that"
Antipathy	Giving an unfavourable assessment because you do not get on well with the student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Students from universities of applied sciences (HBOs) - you can easily spot them during the analysis phase" - "This student hasn't used the feedback I gave him about the formulation of the question, I wonder what else he has done wrong..."
Projection	Ascribing your own (good or bad) characteristics to the student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "That student's just like me, she really enjoys writing, you can see that straight away. That article will be great." - "My priority is innovation, but I can find no reference to it in this assignment"
Stereotyping	Attributing characteristics to students based on groups to which they belong: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Girls aren't much good at abstract thought" - "She's the only girl among all these male techies, she's bound to be talented"
Generosity	The tendency to always give above-average assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They had to do a lot of assignments for this subject, there should be some sort of reward for that"
Stinginess	The tendency to always give below-average assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I feel that these products do not yet reflect the right level or attitude to work"
Central tendency	The tendency to always give average assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "No-one gets a 10, it's all about getting a 7 or an 8"

This table was originally drawn up by the faculty MB University of Twente (now part of BMS) under the name of Jobaids for testing. Used with permission.