



Project Agreement: 2016-1-UK01-KA202-024533

# European Core Curriculum

## IO1: European Core Curriculum for DV Coordination and Manual



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

## CONTENT

---

<b>GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAINING CURRICULUM .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1. General aim of the training course.....	4
2.2. Target groups.....	4
2.3. Learning objectives.....	4
2.4. Prerequisites for participation.....	4
2.5. Assessment.....	4
<b>DETAILED CONTENT OF TRAINING CURRICULUM.....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1. Short description of content .....	5
3.2. Detailed description of content.....	7
<b>TRAINING CHAPTERS .....</b>	<b>12</b>
 <b>Annex 1. Indicative assessment methods and tools.....</b>	 <b>17</b>

# 1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

---

The “DVCI: Domestic Violence: Coordinating the Strategic Intervention” project aims to increase the skills and expertise of professionals, including statutory commissioners and policy makers, who are responsible for leading and coordinating responses to domestic violence (DV) and other forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG). The DVCI project will develop, test and implement innovative, work-based Continuing Education and Training (CVET) to support the crucial role of DV Strategic Coordination.

Currently, job descriptions and levels of skills and influence differ vastly, and there is no standard training that focuses on strengthening competencies and skills to support the role of DV Strategic Coordination. Professional training in the DV field in the UK and partner countries, Romania, Spain and Greece is focused on supporting a range of front line roles. The DVCI project addresses this gap.

The DVCI objectives are:

- ✓ To share good practice and develop an EU core curriculum and competencies for the DV Strategic Coordination role, involving relevant agencies with responsibility for dealing with DV and VAWG.
- ✓ To develop nationally-adapted curricula for developing and delivering a coordinated community response to DV in the UK, Greece, Romania and Spain.
- ✓ To pilot and accredit innovative work-based Vocational Education and Training (VET) to 160 professionals with responsibility for leading or coordinating DV interventions in four national contexts (45 in UK and Romania and Greece, 25 in Spain).
- ✓ To raise awareness of the need to improve skills of DV coordinators at a local, national and EU level and promote the EU curricula and training to support improved services for victims of DV and VAWG.

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAINING CURRICULUM

---

### 2.1. GENERAL AIM OF THE TRAINING COURSE

The DVCI course will increase the skills and expertise of professionals working at a strategic level, in DV/VAWG coordination. Improved competencies and skills of DV Coordinators will have positive impact on local, national and EU responses to DVA; ultimately ensuring survivors of DVA receive better and more effective support.

### 2.2. TARGET GROUPS

Target groups for the Domestic Violence Coordination training are:

- **DV Strategic and operational leads (primary target group):** policy/decision makers, commissioners and managers of DV interventions, including from local authorities, judicial and police, health and education sector and housing associations.
- **DV Practitioners (secondary target group):** e.g. social workers, police, health workers, teachers, counselors and staff from NGOs responsible for managing and coordinating DV interventions.

### 2.3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. **Understand the dynamics of domestic abuse, other forms of violence against women and relevant legislation**
2. **Understand the key components of best practice when responding to VAWG**
3. **Understand local and national strategy for VAWG**
4. **Understand VAWG governance structures**
5. **Understand how fundraising can support sustainability**

### 2.4. PREREQUISITES FOR PARTICIPATION

All participants will require

- Sign-off from their line manager
- A commitment to all aspects and principles of the course

### 2.5. ASSESSMENT

The assessment for the course will include a range of methods and styles to ensure inclusivity. The assessment methods will include written questions, tests, case studies, a reflective log or portfolio and oral presentations. Details of the assessment methods used are provided in the table below. The assessment methods are flexible and can be subject to change to allow for the individual specialist needs of learners.

### 3. DETAILED CONTENT OF TRAINING CURRICULUM

This course will provide participants with the critical knowledge base, the skills and competencies to effectively respond to VAWG at a strategic level.

#### 3.1. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF CONTENT

The European core training curriculum consists of 6 Chapters and the detailed content of each Chapter is presented in the following table:

Content	Duration (hours)
<b>CHAPTER A: Understanding intimate partner violence (IPV) and violence against women and girls (VAWG)</b>	36 hours
<b>A1. Principles underpinning the course</b>	9 hours
<i>A1.1 The Coordinated Community Response (CCR)</i>	
<i>A1.2 A gendered approach</i>	
<i>A1.3 Intersectionality</i>	
<b>A2. The dynamics of IPV</b>	
<i>A2.1 Introducing Evan Stark</i>	
<i>A2.2 The ‘Typologies’ of abuse by Michael Johnson</i>	
<b>A3. The impact of IPV on children and young people</b>	
<i>A3.1 Children living with coercive control</i>	
<b>A4. Different forms of VAWG</b>	
<i>A4.1 The Istanbul Convention</i>	
<i>A4.2 Define the different forms of VAWG</i>	
<i>A4.3 An overview of the key legislation responding to VAWG</i>	
<b>CHAPTER B: Best Practice</b>	
<b>B1. What is Prevention?</b>	9 hours
<i>B1.1 Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Prevention</i>	
<b>B2. Best practice around service delivery</b>	
<i>B2.1 Early intervention</i>	
<i>B2.2 Survivor-led services</i>	
<i>B2.3 Responding to multiple, diverse and intersectional needs of survivors: ensuring equality of access to services.</i>	
<b>B3. Engaging with perpetrators</b>	
<i>B3. Best practice when responding to perpetrators</i>	
<b>CHAPTER C: VAWG Strategy</b>	
<b>C1. How to improve VAWG structures and measure impact</b>	6 hours
<i>C1.1 How to effectively monitor performance regarding VAWG?</i>	
<i>C1.2 How to develop a dataset for local and national use that supports and relates to the VAWG strategy</i>	
<b>C2. The national landscape</b>	
<i>C2.1 The national approach to VAWG</i>	
<i>C2.2 Where to find current policies, research and good practice</i>	
<b>C3. Developing a local strategy</b>	
<i>C3.1 How to develop a strategy that reflects survivors’ voices and</i>	

*needs*

**CHAPTER D: VAWG Governance Structures**

**D1. The key components of effective VAWG partnership structures** 6 hours

*D1.1 How to set up effective strategic and operational partnerships*

**D2. Influence**

*D2.1 How to influence key stakeholders and use principles of institutional advocacy*

**D3 Femicide studies: findings and learning**

D3.1 National and international findings from femicide and domestic homicide reviews

**CHAPTER E: How fundraising can support sustainability**

**E1. Bid-writing** 6 hours

*E1.1 The key components of bid-writing*

*E1.2 Understanding the national funding context for work related to VAWG*

## 3.2. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF CONTENT

### **CHAPTER A. UNDERSTANDING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS – (9 hours: 1 and 1/2 days)**

#### **Introduction to the chapter:**

This chapter of the training will provide an introduction to the key principles underpinning the course - the coordinated community response, a gendered understanding of violence against women and girls and intersectionality. These three principles will be a consistent thread throughout the course. This chapter will equip learners with some of the critical evidence around intimate partner violence, the tactics used by perpetrators and the barriers faced by survivors when accessing support. It will explore the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people. It will provide an overview of other forms of violence against women and girls, how they are interlinked and the key pieces of legislation responding to violence against women and girls.

#### **a) Main objectives of Chapter A:**

The chapter will provide learners with:

- An in-depth understanding of the Coordinated Community Response Model
- A gendered understanding of violence against women and girls
- Knowledge of the principles of intersectionality in theory and in practice
- An evidence-based understanding of the dynamics of intimate partner violence
- An insight into the impact of intimate partner violence on children and young people
- An overview of other forms of violence against women and girls
- A summary of relevant legislation

#### **b) Key words:**

Intimate partner violence, violence against women and girls, intersectionality, gender equality, women's inequality, coordinated community response (CCR), children living with domestic abuse, violence against women and girls legislation.

#### **c) Expected Learning Outcomes:**

On successful completion of the chapter, trainees will

- **Have an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of IPV and other forms of VAWG.**
- **Have a theoretical understanding of the gendered nature of VAWG as rooted in women's inequality.**
- **Be able to view VAWG interventions through an intersectional lens.**
- **Have an overview of the key legislation responding to VAWG.**

## **CHAPTER B. BEST PRACTICE – (9 hours: 1 and 1/2 days)**

### **Introduction to the chapter:**

This chapter will explore the area of prevention as a core element in a coordinated and strategic response to ending violence against women and girls long-term. Prevention is analysed as part of a wider theoretical framework which views gender inequality as cause and consequence of violence against women and girls. It will address primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. This chapter will provide an overview of what best practice looks like when developing front line services, early intervention initiatives and engaging with perpetrators.

### **d) Main objectives of Chapter B:**

The chapter will provide learners with:

- An understanding of the different types of prevention and practical examples of preventative measures.
- An overview of the key components of best practice when developing and delivering front line services, including early intervention initiatives.
- The key principles of best practice when engaging perpetrators.

### **e) Key words:**

Intimate partner violence, VAWG, best practice around responding to VAWG, prevention of VAWG, early intervention.

### **f) Expected Learning Outcomes:**

On successful completion of the chapter, trainees will:

- **Have an understanding of best practice in the development of preventative initiatives.**
- **Have in-depth knowledge of the key components of best practice in the development and delivery of seamless services and early intervention initiatives.**
- **Be familiar with best practice around perpetrator engagement.**



## **CHAPTER C. VAWG STRATEGY – (6 hours)**

### **Introduction to the chapter:**

This chapter will support learners in critically evaluating the national strategic landscape around VAWG, including where to find current research and good practice. It will explore different tools, such as the logic model to support participants in reviewing local structures, monitoring performance and think more strategically about local outcomes, activities and data recording.

### **g) Main objectives of Chapter C:**

The chapter will provide learners with:

- An overview of the national strategic landscape.
- The tools to develop a logic model or a performance management system to ensure agencies' accountability, record progress and improve partnership performance.
- Insight into ensuring the local strategy is aligned with the national strategic framework while also reflective of the local context and needs.
- An understanding of how to involve women and children survivors into the development of the local strategy and policies and ensure it is reflective of their needs and experiences.

### **h) Key words:**

VAWG Strategy, Partnership Work, Logic Model, Partnership Performance, Dataset, Performance Management

### **i) Expected Learning Outcomes:**

On successful completion of the chapter, trainees will:

- **Have an understanding of the national strategic landscape**
- **Have the knowledge to implement an effective performance monitoring system, including developing a basic dataset that supports and relates to the strategy**
- **Have an understanding of ways to involve women and children survivors of VAWG in the development of the local strategy and policies.**

## **CHAPTER D. VAWG GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES – (6 hours)**

### **Introduction to the chapter:**

This chapter will examine the key components of effective VAWG partnership structures. It will address the principles of institutional advocacy and how to effect change and influence key stakeholders. Finally, it will provide an overview of the key findings and what can be learned from femicide studies or domestic homicide reviews.

### **j) Main objectives of Chapter D:**

The chapter will provide learners with:

- The key components of effective partnership structures, both strategic and operational
- Strategies to effect change and influence key stakeholders
- An overview of findings and learning from femicide studies and domestic homicide reviews.
- Examples of good practice around establishing and running domestic homicide reviews.

### **k) Key words:**

VAWG, VAWG Partnership, Leadership, Institutional Advocacy, Influence, Effective Partnership.

### **l) Expected Learning Outcomes:**

On successful completion of the chapter, trainees will:

- Have an understanding of the key components of effective VAWG partnership structures.
- Be familiar with the principles of institutional advocacy
- Have the ability to influence key stakeholders and decision makers
- Have an overview of the key findings and learning from femicide studies and domestic homicide reviews.
- Be able to explain how to successfully set up a domestic homicide review.

## **CHAPTER E. HOW FUNDRAISING CAN SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY – (6 hours)**

### **Introduction to the chapter:**

This chapter will provide an overview of the national funding context for VAWG. It will explore the key components of successful bid-writing and how fundraising can aid sustainability.

### **m) Main objectives of Chapter E:**

The chapter will provide learners with:

- An overview of the national funding context for VAWG.
- The key elements of successful bid-writing
- Best practice in commissioning services responding to VAWG.

### **n) Key words:**

VAWG commissioning, VAWG fundraising, bid-writing, VAWG funding context

### **o) Expected Learning Outcomes:**

On successful completion of the chapter, trainees will:

- Have an understanding of the national funding context for VAWG
- Be familiar with the key components of successful bid-writing
- Be able to evaluate the benefits of building sustainability into training delivery.
- Understand what good practice looks like when commissioning VAWG services

## 4. TRAINING CHAPTERS

CHAPTERS (30 hours)	Learning Outcomes			ASSESSMENT METHODS <sup>1</sup>
	Knowledge	Skills	Competences	
<b>A. UNDERSTANDING IPV AND VAWG</b>				
<b>A.1 Principles underpinning the course</b>				
A.1.1 The Coordinated Community Response (CCR)	Understanding of the coordinated community response (CCR) model.	Ability to apply the principles of the CCR in day to day work as a coordinator or strategic lead.	Ability to explain the key principles of a coordinated community response (CCR).	Written Question
A.1.2 A gendered approach	Knowledge of the theoretical framework that explains VAWG as cause and consequence of gender inequality.	Ability to view VAWG through a gendered lens.	Ability to explain the concept of a gendered approach and the interconnected nature of VAWG and gender inequality.	Portfolio
A.1.3 Intersectionality	Theoretical understanding of intersectionality.	Ability to analyse VAWG issues through an intersectional lens and apply it in every day work.	Ability to analyse intersectionality and how this may translate into considerations for policy development and the delivery of services.	Portfolio
<b>A.2 The dynamics of IPV</b>				
A.2.1: Introducing Evan Stark	Theoretical understanding of coercive control.	Ability to identify coercive control as a pattern of abusive behaviours and a 'liberty crime'.	Ability to analyse and explain intimate partner violence as coercive control.	Written Question

<sup>1</sup> Assessment methods and tools are given in Annex 1.

A.2.2: The typologies of IPV by Michael Johnson	Theoretical understanding of the typologies of abuse.	Ability to ensure that local services have an in-depth understanding and can appropriately identify the perpetrator and survivor in cases where there appears to be physical violence (violent resistance) or emotional abuse on both sides. Ability to ensure services have an appropriate understanding of situational couple violence and intimate terrorism.	Ability to distinguish different typologies of abuse and ensure that these are referred to by agencies and local services when trying to establish who the perpetrator and survivor are.	Written Question
<b>A.3 The impact of IPV on children and young people</b>				
A.3.1: Children living with coercive control	Evidence-based understanding of the impact of living with coercive control has on children and young people.	Ability to identify the key signs of the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people.	Ability to develop specialist services responding to the needs of children survivors of domestic abuse.	Written Question
<b>A.4 Different forms of VAWG</b>				
A.4.1: The Istanbul Convention	Knowledge of the principles and aims of the Istanbul Convention.	Ability to reference the Istanbul Convention in day to day work.	Knowledge of the Istanbul Convention and implementation and promotion of its principles in day to day work.	Written Question
A.4.2: Define the different forms of VAWG	Knowledge of the different forms of VAWG and understanding of the continuum of violence and links between them.	Ability to identify the different characteristics and similarities for the different forms of VAWG.	Understanding of the different forms of VAWG.	Written Question/ Test

A.4.3: An overview of the key legislation responding to VAWG	Knowledge of the key National and European legislation responding to VAWG	Ability to identify key legislation relevant to VAWG	Ability to reference key VAWG legislation in day to day work.	Written Question/ Test
<b>B. BEST PRACTICE</b>				
<b>B.1 What is Prevention?</b>				
B.1.1 Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Prevention	Knowledge of Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Prevention.	Ability to implement different types of prevention measures.	Knowledge of good practice prevention measures.	Written Question/ Test
<b>B.2 Best practice around service delivery</b>				
B.2.1: Early Intervention	Knowledge of good practice initiatives in VAWG.	Ability to implement early intervention initiatives locally.	Knowledge of good practice in early intervention and how to implement locally.	Presentation/ Written Question
B.2.2: Survivor led services	Knowledge of the key principles of good practice when developing front-line services responding to VAWG.	Develop a local service through meaningful consultation with survivors that is reflective of survivors' needs and experiences.	Knowledge of the principles of good practice in the development and delivery of survivor led services and ability to implement in practice.	Presentation/ Written Question
B.2.3: Responding to multiple and diverse needs of survivors: ensuring equality of access to services.	Understanding the multiple and diverse needs of survivors.	Develop a local service that reflects the diverse needs of its local population	Understand the multiple needs of survivors. Identify and address any potential barriers to accessing services.	Reflective log
<b>B.3 Engaging with perpetrators</b>				
B.3.1: Best practice when responding to perpetrators	Knowledge of good practice when working with perpetrators.	Ability to implement initiatives to appropriately engage with perpetrators	Knowledge of the principles of good practice when engaging perpetrators	Written Question
<b>C. VAWG STRATEGY</b>				
<b>C.1 How to improve VAWG structures and measure impact</b>				

C.1.1: How to effectively monitor performance regarding VAWG?	Understanding how to set up a performance management system to effectively monitor progress.	Ability to develop a performance management framework to measure success locally.	Ability to develop a logic model or theory of change to measure progress and improve partnership work.	Portfolio
C.1.2: How to develop a dataset for local and national use that supports and relates to the VAWG strategy	Understanding how to develop an accurate dataset for local and national use that supports and relates to the VAWG strategy.	Ability to develop a dataset that supports and relates to the VAWG strategy.	Ability to develop a dataset that relates to the strategy, supports progress and captures success.	Written Question
<b>C.2 The national landscape</b>				
C.2.1: The national approach to VAWG	Knowledge of the national VAWG landscape	Ability to refer to the national VAWG strategic approach in day to day work.	Ability to refer to the national approach and ensure that local structures and policies are aligned with the national framework.	Written Question
C.2.2: Where to find current relevant policies, research and good practice	Knowledge of the key sources of information for current VAWG policy development, new evidence and good practice.	Ability to identify current research, policies and good practice.	Keeping abreast of current research, policy and good practice and make reference to it in day to day work.	Written Question
<b>C.3 Developing a local strategy</b>				
C.3.1: How to develop a strategy that reflects survivors' voices and needs	Knowledge of the key principles to ensure a local strategy is reflective of local needs and survivors' experiences.	Ability to involve survivors in the development of the local strategy.	Ability to develop a strategy that reflects survivors voices and needs.	Presentation/Written Question
<b>D. VAWG GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES</b>				
<b>D.1 The key components of effective VAWG partnership structures</b>				

D.1.1 How to set up effective strategic and operational partnerships	Knowledge of the key elements of effective VAWG partnership structures	Ability to set up effective VAWG partnership structures.	Ability to establish and maintain effective VAWG partnership structures.	Portfolio
<b>D.2 Influence</b>				
D.2.1: How to influence key stakeholders and use principles of institutional advocacy	Knowledge of the key principles of institutional advocacy.	Ability to influence key stakeholders	Ability to influence and effect change.	Portfolio/Written Question
<b>D.3 Femicide and Domestic Homicide Reviews: Findings and learning</b>				
D.3.1: National and international findings from femicides	Knowledge of femicide studies and domestic homicide reviews research key findings.	Ability to draw key findings and learning from femicide studies and domestic homicide review research.	Ability to embed learning into policy and practice from femicide studies and domestic homicide reviews.	Portfolio/Written Question
<b>E. HOW FUNDRAISING CAN HELP SUSTAINABILITY</b>				
<b>E.1 Bid-writing</b>				
E.1.1: The key components of bid-writing	Knowledge of the key components of successful bid-writing.	Ability to write a successful funding proposal	Understand how fundraising can support sustainability.	Written Question
E.1.2: Understanding the national funding context for work related to VAWG	Understanding of the national funding context.	Understanding of the national funding context.	Understanding of the national funding context and ability to maximize opportunities for fundraising.	Written Question



## ANNEX 1. INDICATIVE ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TOOLS

---

### **Debate/Group Discussion**

Candidates can, by taking part in debate, confirm their capacity to sustain a considered argument and demonstrate depth of adequate knowledge of a subject. The debate also offers a context where they can demonstrate communication and social skills.

### **Declarative methods or Written Questions**

Here candidates make an evidence-based statement about their learning by responding in writing to preset criteria designed to help them be evaluative. The ability to use critical reflection is important and therefore this method is used in conjunction with other methods that have more independent evaluation built in.

### **Interview**

Interviews may be particularly useful in areas where judgement and values are important. Interviews usually accompany other tools for a more complete assessment of a candidate and to allow for commentary and clarification.

### **Observation**

A third party assesses the candidate's behaviour in a particular setting: there is an opportunity to observe real practice. Assessment criteria are set in advance. This method does not proscribe collaboration with colleagues or fellow learners. Depending on the context, it may be complicated to set up and can be time consuming and costly.

### **Portfolio method/Reflective Log or Diary**

A portfolio is an organised collection of materials that presents and verifies skills and knowledge acquired through experience. It is of particular relevance to validating non-formal and informal learning because it allows the individual candidate to contribute actively to the collection of evidence and also offers a mix of approaches strengthening the overall validity of the process. This is confirmed by the fact that many countries have introduced the portfolio as a central element in their validation approaches.

A portfolio might include documents such as resumes, performance appraisals, references from current and past employers, supervisors and colleagues, and photographs of completed work certified by a referee. If self-employed in the past, a candidate might include evidence of running a business using the skills and knowledge being claimed. There is much evidence in the portfolio literature that the selection process included in portfolio building promotes self-assessment and focuses learners' attention on quality criteria as also documented in the 2007 inventory (as well as its previous versions). In general, we have seen that a good portfolio for validation, in the eyes of

assessors, is characterised by being easy to assess because it is focused on specific matched learning outcomes. The most important risks in the preparation of portfolios identified by the 2007 inventory is when applicants prepare these alone or with little mediation from one tutor. One practice that counters such possible limitations is gathering groups of claimants together specifically to share experience and learning from one another, thus enabling all participants to proceed with greater assurance to preparing their own portfolio for validation. Such sessions can then be complemented with individual tutorials.

One recent trend is use of digital portfolios. Such portfolios offer the possibility to combine text, audio, graphic and video-based presentation of information. They also offer increased capacity to accumulate data that can provide the audience with greater insights into the achievements and successes of the learner. However, digital portfolios carry potential risks, for example the technological novelty of the product can overshadow the purpose of the portfolio and learning to use the technology itself could subsume the learning opportunities of portfolio construction. Further, developing a digital portfolio risks including unnecessary information and material that is not wholly derived from the candidates' own efforts.

Some countries that provide national guidelines, rather than prescribing the methods that should be used for validation, recommend a stage in the process with some form of assessment by a third party (the jury procedure in France) to ensure greater validity and reliability of portfolios. However, the introduction of third party assessment does not solve all problems. It is still important that quality assurance processes are in place to ensure the consistency and transparency of this third party assessment and ensure equality and fairness in the validation process for all candidates. In general, we have seen that a good portfolio for validation, in the eyes of assessors, is characterised by being easy to assess because it is focused on specific matched learning outcomes.

### **Presentation**

Here a candidate makes a formal presentation to a panel of experts. This form emphasises communicative and analytical skills as well as ability to structure complex information clearly.

### **Simulation and evidence extracted from work**

Here a candidate performs in a structured situation modelled on real life. The method allows for testing complex interacting skills sets. It requires clear assessment criteria and may be costly.

There are variations to this popular method, one here a candidate verbally and physically demonstrates their skills. Another variation involves observed role play where actors or peers take on roles to simulate a problem that requires the attention of the candidate.

### **Tests and examinations**

In the formal process of validating learning, tests can dominate because of their qualities of wide applicability across populations, low costs and high levels of perceived fairness. In general a test is set so that candidates respond orally or in writing to present questions (and answers). A test provides direct assessment of specific knowledge and skills. It may advantage candidates with strong written and oral skills and can cause candidate anxiety.

Oral tests may be used to check deep understanding of complex issues and ability to explain them in simple terms.

Many tests employ a multiple choice and true or false format and many well known tests are pretested across populations so that norm referencing of responses is useful. They are considered more objective than many other methods. This type of test is well suited to being completed, marked and graded by computer.

Essays can be used as test items to check the quality and standard of academic writing and use of references, ability to develop a coherent argument, and to confirm extent, understanding and transferability of knowledge and critical evaluation of ideas. Generally, essay tests are easier to prepare but testing is limited to a narrow sampling of content.

Tests become 'examinations' when the test is applied widely and the quality assurance processes that govern the administration of the test questions and the judging of responses are controlled.